Five questions for Valerie Simons[1]
[2]

The recent 50th anniversary of Title IX and the federal announcement of proposed changes to the regulations made for fresh headlines on the topic. Regardless of the news cycle, the matter always is on the mind of Valerie Simons, the Chief Compliance Officer and System Title IX Coordinator for the University of Colorado.

“This area is one in which we are always trying to improve, always trying to do better,” Simons said. “Because the issues of sexual misconduct, discrimination and harassment remain for many, unfortunately. We want to do everything we can to prevent it in the first place and respond to it promptly as soon as we have notice of it.”

Last week, shortly after the U.S. Department of Education released proposed changes to Title IX, Simons shared a communication[3] with the CU community. It notes, among other points, that the newly proposed regulations are not final and are subject to notice and comment.

“They do not change our current sexual misconduct policy and our campus-based discrimination and harassment policies,” Simons said. “It’s important to note, we already prohibit discrimination based on sexual orientation, gender identity and gender expression, both as Regent Policy and as state law. Basically, the proposed changes, which I expect won’t take effect for a couple of years, are reinforcing what we as a university and state already protect.”

Simons is convening a systemwide group with representation from all four campuses to review the proposed changes and to seek input from all stakeholders – students, faculty and staff – about what changes if any CU would need to make.

“We really are trying to lead for our system, our community and the state in this area,” she said.

You took on your role as Chief Compliance Officer and System Title IX Coordinator on an interim basis last October, and now the position is permanent. What are your responsibilities in this new role?

There are three main areas of responsibility.

One, I supervise the campus-based equity offices. That’s the Office of Institutional Equity and Compliance[4] at CU Boulder, the Office of Equity[5] at CU Denver and CU Anschutz, and the Office of Institutional Equity[6] for UCCS.

Second, I supervise University Risk Management[7] at the system level.

Finally, I’m responsible for supervising the Ethics and Compliance Program[8] for system employees.

I’m housed within the Office of the President and report directly to the president.

What does your office primarily oversee, and how does the office interact with the campuses?

Each campus equity office has primary responsibility for the enforcement of three policies: the Sexual Misconduct, Intimate Partner Violence and Stalking policy; their campus-based Discrimination and Harassment policy; and the Conflict of Interest in Cases of Amorous Relationships policy.

While the campuses have the primary jurisdiction for enforcement of these three policies, the system takes the lead with the hearing process, including assigning hearing officers and advisers, which is currently required for sexual misconduct cases. We also, as requested by the campuses, facilitate appeals. Those are the primary things we, as a system office, help navigate for the sexual misconduct cases, namely because of the changes over the past few years to Title IX and federal law, which required a hearing process.

My position really came from a request from the campuses for a system-level place to align all of our practices and procedures where needed and to provide a place systemwide to hold the hearings.

What are the top priorities for you and your office?

One of things that’s really promising and encouraging about my position is that, in all of the areas that I supervise now, there’s a theme for all of them, which is promoting and sustaining a safe learning and working environment. That’s really top-of-mind.

More specifically, we also try to remove barriers that may prevent equitable access and opportunity. Finally, in everything we do, we must uphold the highest standards of ethical and legal behavior.

Before you began your system role, you served as Associate Vice Chancellor and Title IX Coordinator at CU Boulder, from 2014 to 2021. How did you come to specialize in this area in your career?

I am a civil rights attorney by practice and training.

I also have a personal and professional background in civil rights. I grew up in Denver as part of the desegregation order through Denver Public Schools. When I talk about that "safe and equitable educational experience," that's really been the theme of my whole life. It's about understanding equal opportunity and access, yet also understanding there are true barriers to many people achieving that opportunity and access.

From understanding that early on, I dedicated my career to working for that and trying to ensure that for everybody.

After college, I went to law school, and have been a civil rights litigator pretty much my entire career until I came to CU Boulder. I worked for the U.S. Department of Justice, Civil Rights Division, Education Section. I worked as a trial attorney on behalf of the United States in federal court litigation, enforcing federal civil rights laws, including Title IV, Title VI and Title IX. After that, I transitioned back to Colorado, where I represented primarily K-12 and college students and their parents in civil rights matters.

You're a leader not just at CU, but for the state, as you chair the Sexual Misconduct Advisory Committee at the Colorado Department of Higher Education. What does this post entail?

In 2019, the General Assembly passed a state sexual misconduct bill, Senate Bill 19-007[9]. As part of that bill, it created the Sexual Misconduct Advisory Committee. In late 2019, the Colorado Department of Higher Education sought nominations to this committee, whose job was to make recommendations to the General Assembly and institutions of higher education regarding sexual misconduct policies and methods to reduce sexual misconduct, and to draft reports regarding those recommendations.

I was nominated to be on that committee and then was voted to chair in 2019 and again in 2021. We have produced three reports for that committee, in 2020, 2021 and 2022.

One other thing I just did: One of the recommendations of that committee was to convene the higher education institutes' Title IX coordinators. So it's very similar to what we did for the CU system, which is try to bring together all our best practices, align them, and bring that model to the state: Let's start talking about how we're responding to, yet again, new Title IX regulations. I did that on June 23, which was the 50th anniversary of Title IX.

Tenure list: June 2022[10]

The CU Board of Regents on June 23 approved 92 tenure awards and appointments.

CU Boulder
Effective Aug. 15, 2022, unless otherwise noted

Awards of tenure:
Chunmei Ban, Mechanical Engineering, College of Engineering and Applied Science **Agnes France Marie Beaudry,** Mathematics, College of Arts and Sciences **Samuel L. Boyd,** Religious Studies, College of Arts and Sciences **Melissa Lee Braaten,** School of Education **Jed Richards Brubaker,** Information Science, College of Media, Communication & Information **Nancy Rodriguez Bunn,** Applied Mathematics, College of Arts and Sciences **Lijun Chen,** Computer Science, College of Engineering and Applied Science **Joelle M. Cruz,** Communication, College of Media, Communication & Information **Zoe Rebecca Donaldson,** Molecular, Cellular & Developmental Biology (MCDB), Psychology and Neuroscience, College of Arts and Sciences **John A. Evans,** Aerospace Engineering Sciences, College of Engineering and Applied Science **Casey Lynn Fiesler,** Information Science, College of Media, Communication & Information **Ian G. Grooms**, Applied Mathematics, College of Arts and Sciences **Eve-Lyn Hinckley,** Environmental Studies Program, College of Arts and Sciences **Mija H. Hubler,** Civil, Environmental and Architectural

Engineering, College of Engineering and Applied Science **Jedediah A. Kallen-Brown,** Computer Science, College of Engineering and Applied Science **Mary Beth Leonardi,** School of Education **Benjamin Levin,** School of Law **Ben Livneh,** Civil, Environmental and Architectural Engineering, College of Engineering and Applied Science **Henry Barrett Lovejoy,** History, College of Arts and Sciences **Ann Marie Madigan,** Astrophysical and Planetary Sciences (APS), College of Arts and Sciences **Robert Andrew Marshall,** Aerospace Engineering Sciences, College of Engineering and Applied Science **Tomoko Matsuo,** Aerospace Engineering Sciences, College of Engineering and Applied Science **Samira Mehta,** Women and Gender Studies, College of Arts and Sciences **Irina Overeem,** Geological Sciences, College of Arts and Sciences **Dennis Vadimovich Perepelitsa,** Physics, College of Arts and Sciences **Andrew Philips,** Political Science, College of Arts and Sciences **David Requiro,** College of Music **Linds West Roberts,** University Libraries (effective July 1, 2022) **Erin E. Schauster,** Advertising, Public Relations and Media Design, College of Media, Communication & Information **Julio Cesar Sepulveda Arellano,** Geological Sciences, College of Arts and Sciences **Sandeep Sharma,** Chemistry, College of Arts and Sciences **Scott Gordon Skinner-Thompson,** School of Law **Joel E. Swanson,** Herbst Program for Engineering, Ethics & Society, College of Engineering and Applied Science **Scott Anthony Taylor,** Ecology and Evolutionary Biology, College of Arts and Sciences **Brian Dennis Valente-Quinn,** French & Italian, College of Arts and Sciences **Stephen A. Voida,** Information Science, College of Media, Communication & Information **Philip Bradley White,** University Libraries (effective July 1, 2022) **Majid Zamani,** Computer Science, College of Engineering and Applied Science

UCCS

Effective June 25, 2022

Awards of tenure:

Gia Barboza, School of Public Affairs **Christine Biermann,** Geography & Environmental Studies, College of Letters, Arts & Sciences **Gedare Bloom,** Computer Science, College of Engineering and Applied Science **Tara Cepon-Robins,** Anthropology, College of Letters, Arts & Sciences **Sang-Yoon Chang,** Computer Science, College of Engineering and Applied Science **Samantha Christiansen,** History, College of Letters, Arts & Sciences **Lissanna Follari,** Teaching & Learning, College of Education **Helen Graham,** Nursing, Helen and Arthur E. Johnson Beth-El College of Nursing and Health Sciences **Irina Kopaneva,** Communication, College of Letters, Arts & Sciences **Michael Landon-Murray,** School of Public Affairs **Karin Larkin,** Anthropology, College of Letters, Arts & Sciences **Keston Lindsay,** Human Physiology & Nutrition, Helen and Arthur E. Johnson Beth-El College of Nursing and Health Sciences **Brandon Runnels,** Mechanical & Aerospace Engineering, College of Engineering and Applied Science **Max Shulman,** Visual & Performing Arts, College of Letters, Arts & Sciences **Diane Stutey,** Counseling & Human Services, College of Education **Patricia Witkowsky,** Leadership, Research and Foundations, College of Education

Appointment with tenure:

Henrietta Williams Pichon, Leadership, Research and Foundations, College of Education (effective June 24, 2022)

CU Denver

Effective June 24, 2022

Awards of tenure:

Moatassem Abdallah, Civil Engineering, College of Engineering, Design and Computing **Ryan Brown,** Economics, College of Liberal Arts and Sciences **Zixia Cao,** Business School **Annika Mosier,** Integrative Biology, College of Liberal Arts and Sciences **John Ronquillo,** School of Public Affairs **Jonathan Shaffer,** Psychology, College of Liberal Arts and Sciences **Lucinda Soltero-González,** School of Education & Human Development **Erik Sommerfeld,** Architecture, College of Architecture and Planning **Kai Yu,** Mechanical Engineering, College of Engineering, Design and Computing

Appointments with tenure:

Ester de Jong, School of Education & Human Development **Rashmi Gangamma,** School of Education & Human Development **Marvin Lynn,** School of Education & Human Development

CU Anschutz Medical Campus

Effective June 24, 2022

Awards of tenure:

Tina Brock, Clinical Pharmacy, Skaggs School of Pharmacy and Pharmaceutical Sciences **Joseph Cleveland,** Surgery, School of Medicine **James Costello,** Pharmacology, School of Medicine **Tessa Crume,** Epidemiology, Colorado School of Public Health **Sarah Faubel,** Medicine, School of Medicine **Theresa Grover,** Pediatrics, School of Medicine **Christian Hopfer,** Psychiatry, School of Medicine **Ethan Hughes,** Cell & Developmental Biology, School of

Medicine **Daniel Matlock,** Medicine, School of Medicine **Shelley Miyamoto,** Pediatrics, School of Medicine **Philip Reigan,** Pharmaceutical Sciences, Skaggs School of Pharmacy and Pharmaceutical Sciences **Nichole Reisdorph,** Pharmaceutical Sciences, Skaggs School of Pharmacy and Pharmaceutical Sciences **Olivia Rissland,** Biochemistry & Molecular Genetics, School of Medicine **Joseph Saseen,** Clinical Pharmacy, Skaggs School of Pharmacy and Pharmaceutical Sciences **Prem Subramanian,** Ophthalmology, School of Medicine **Carmen Sucharov,** Medicine, School of Medicine **Catherine Velopulos,** Surgery, School of Medicine
Appointments with tenure:
Warren Binford, Pediatrics, School of Medicine **Vineet Chopra,** Medicine, School of Medicine **Jason Christie,** Physiology & Biophysics, School of Medicine **Linda Cook,** Epidemiology, Colorado School of Public Health **Casey Greene,** Biochemistry & Molecular Genetics, School of Medicine **Melissa Haendel,** Biochemistry & Molecular Genetics, School of Medicine **Lauren Nicholas,** Health Systems, Management & Policy, Colorado School of Public Health **Christina Sun,** College of Nursing

CU Denver's Learning Assistant Program celebrates 10th anniversary[11]

Panelists share tips for preventing, coping with gun violence[12]

UCCS works to close cybersecurity workforce gaps[13]

NOAA and CU Boulder expand research partnership[14]

Researchers find two FDA-approved drugs that curb symptoms of Alzheimer's Disease[15]

Staff Council elects new leadership[16]

The University of Colorado Staff Council (UCSC[17]), a systemwide governance group, recently elected new leadership for the new fiscal year.

Members of the 2023 FY UCSC Executive Committee officially took on their roles July 1. They are:

JáNet Hurt, Co-Chair

Alan Slinkard, Co-Chair

Kimberly Slavsky, Vice Chair

Christina Beck, Treasurer (incumbent)

Missy Sernatinger, Secretary (incumbent)

Daniel Steinke, Communications Officer

Ryan Untisz, ex officio Past Chair

Tara Dressler, ex officio Past Vice Chair

Slinkard last year served as parliamentarian. Steinke succeeds Kimberly Slavsky as communications officer.

Molenaar named CU Boulder's dean of engineering[18]

Camley earns Fulbright Award to push non-invasive cancer treatments into the future[19]

Veteran medical researcher in Colorado waits for a test on drug he thinks will stop Parkinson's[20]

Department of Energy awards $39 million to labs working to create greener buildings[21]

WATCH: Political Science Professor talks possible political shift in Colorado[22]

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