

Title IX Annual Report 2022-2023

From the Title IX Coordinator

Abbi Halkola, Title IX Coordinator

This reporting year concluded with the announcement of the delayed release of the Biden administration Title IX updated regulations. While our team initially anticipated spending the summer updating policies, training materials, and websites, we instead pivoted to completing summer projects and looking ahead to the Fall 2023 semester. This past year was busy with the onboarding of a new investigator and the completion of our Title IX survey, which is administered to our student population every three years.

We also want to recognize the many individuals on campus who have volunteered their time to ensure our students are receiving support and due process through the Title IX process. These staff and faculty members serve as investigators, decision-makers, advisors, informal resolution facilitators, and appellate officers. Our office could not effectively complete this important work without the volunteer service of our community.



Michigan Tech is an EOE that provides equal opportunity for all, including protected veterans and individuals with disabilities.

mtu.edu/title-ix

Sexual Harassment and Gender Discrimination

The chart on the right represents the sexual harassment and gender discrimination cases that were reported to the Title IX office between May 1, 2022 and April 30, 2023 involving at least one party affiliated with Michigan Tech. The categories represent how the incident was initially reported to the Title IX office.

Overall, there were 49 cases during the Summer 2022, Fall 2022, and Spring 2023 semesters. Most cases do not go through the Formal Grievance process, because that process requires a Formal Complaint submitted by the complainant or Title IX Coordinator. Supportive measures are offered to all parties regardless of whether or not a formal complaint is filed.

Supportive measures are non-disciplinary, non-punitive individualized options that are designed to restore or preserve equal access to programs and activities without unreasonably burdening the other party. They are available immediately, continuously, and ongoing as appropriate.

For those cases where a formal complaint was submitted, the parties can choose either the formal option which includes a notice of allegations, investigation, hearing where decision-makers determine responsibility, and appeal or the informal resolution option where the parties work with a facilitator to arrive at a conclusion.

Cases Reported May 2022-April 2023

12	Sexual Harassment	8	Gender Discrimination
8	Sexual Assault	10	Other Sexual Misconduct
1	Dating/Domestic Violence	1	Online Sexual Misconduct
7	Stalking	2	Pregnant & Parenting

Important Terminology

Complainant | The person who allegedly experienced sex/gender based discrimination, sexual harassment and/or sexual misconduct, regardless of whether they chose to report the conduct to the university or authorities.

Respondent | A person alleged to have violated the sex/gender based discrimination, sexual harassment and/or sexual misconduct university policy. Respondents can only be held accountable under university policy if affiliated with Michigan Tech.

Formal Complaint | A document filed by a complainant or signed by the Title IX Coordinator alleging sexual harassment against a respondent and requesting that Michigan Tech investigate the allegation of sexual harassment. A formal complaint also allows for informal resolution.

Applicable University Policies

When cases of sexual harassment are reported to the TIX Office, they are reviewed by the Sexual Misconduct Allegation Review Team. This group reviews each case to conduct a safety assessment and determine the applicable university policies. Due to the scope of the TIX policy, other policies may apply, such as the Student Code of Conduct, Board of Trustees Policy 5.3, or Employee Code of Conduct.

Comparing the Data

2018-2019	63 cases	"Me Too" was first tweeted on October 15, 2017
2019-2020	51 cases	Students moved to remote in March 2020
2020-2021	33 cases	Health and Safety Levels limited students and employees on campus
2021-2022	63 cases	Campus resumed most activities
2022-2023	49 cases	Effective collaboration with internal departments impacting case count

The Equal Opportunity Compliance and Title IX department strengthens Michigan Tech's commitment to a just and respectful community that is accessible to all individuals and free from discrimination, harassment, and sexual misconduct

Staffing Changes

Over this reporting period, the Title IX Office conducted a successful search to fill the role of Investigator by Heather Saari. Heather came to Michigan Tech after serving the community as a forensic interviewer for Dial Help. In that role, she utilized trauma-informed practices to conduct interviews with a variety of populations. Heather has a Bachelor of Arts in Sociology and a Master of Science in Criminal Justice. She has been able to leverage her extensive education and training and has adapted quickly to working in higher ed. Heather has been a welcome addition to the department!

Title IX Training Across Campus

Training and education are major components of the work that is done by the Title IX office. In addition to ensuring our campus community is adequately prepared to recognize, respond and report sexual harassment on our campus, there are a variety of state and federal training requirements. We appreciate all of the time that is dedicated to these efforts. By adjusting our timeline for assigning incoming first-year students in the summer of 2022, over 90% had completed required training prior to coming to campus. We anticipate similar results in 2023.

Title IX Survey Highlights

722	Participants in the eduOutcomes National Sexual Misconduct Campus Climate Survey
32.5%	Participants reporting receiving inappropriate comments or gestures
9%	Participants reporting experiences of domestic violence
2.35%	Participants reporting experiencing rape
4.14	Average score on a 5-point scale regarding the University clearly communicating behavioral and academic expectations
4.18	Average score on a 5-point scale regarding the Institution seen as a positive force and faculty and staff demonstrating high moral character
95.25%	Participants reporting understanding of Title IX and its role on campus

Looking Ahead to Academic Year 2023-2024

2023 Sexual Misconduct Climate Survey

A regularly distributed Title IX climate survey concerning sexual misconduct is a best practice. We know from research that victims rarely report sexual assault. Official statistics underrepresent the extent of the problem on any one campus. Understanding climate issues, such as students' knowledge about reporting policies and resources for victims, their attitudes about prevention, and their perceptions about how their community is addressing the problem of sexual violence, are critical pieces of information for improving campus responses.

In January 2023, we administered a survey to undergraduate and graduate students. The survey offers us an understanding of the prevalence of incidents of sexual violence on campus and provides us with helpful information regarding students' thoughts and opinions on the sexual misconduct climate. These results have been carefully reviewed both by Title IX staff and the TIX Awareness Committee to find opportunities to improve our programs and services. Please contact titleix@mtu.edu for a copy of the full report.

New TIX Federal Regulations

In July of 2022, the Department of Education released their proposed Title IX regulations with intentions to strengthen the protections provided to individuals that experience sexual harassment/assault on campuses nationwide. These protections also expanded the language to explicitly address the LGBTQIA+ population and pregnant/parenting individuals. During the 60 day review/comment period, over 240,000 public comments were submitted for consideration, nearly doubly what was submitted during the Trump administration overhaul of Title IX. In order to effectively consider all comments and concerns, we now expect the new Title IX regulations to be released some time in October 2023. This will inevitably impact University policy but our team is prepared to address the changes whenever they are released.



Reporting Options for Sexual Misconduct

Report a Concern.....www.mtu.edu/concern

Title IX Coordinator.....titleix@mtu.edu
906-487-3310

Public Safety & Police Services.....906-487-2216

2021-22 Title IX Staff

Title IX Coordinator.....Abbi Halkola

Deputy Coordinator.....Beth Lunde-Stockero

Investigator.....Heather Saari

Gender Equity in Athletics.....Suzanne Sanregret, PhD

Title IX Partner.....Rhys Edwards

Other Title IX positions include investigators, advisors, decision-makers, informal resolution facilitators, and appellate officers. Current Michigan Tech faculty and staff serve in these positions on a volunteer basis.

Opportunities with Title IX

Training Available | We offer a variety of trainings and presentations (upon request) that are beneficial for students, faculty, and staff. If you have a specific need related to discrimination, harassment, and/or sexual misconduct, we will work with you to customize a presentation for your department. Training sessions are presented in-person by the Title IX coordinator and also through various virtual training platforms.

Join the Committee | The Title IX Awareness Committee meets monthly to share information, complete projects, participate in special presentations, collaborate with local organizations, and more.

Please contact the Title IX Office if you are interested in any training or committee opportunities.