

Testimony from the University of Vermont on H. 183

March 11, 2021

Wendy Koenig, Director of Federal and State Relations, UVM

INTERCOLLEGIATE COUNCIL

- **CHARGE:**
 - This must be narrowly defined to prevention / education.
 - The main goal be one of sharing ideas regarding prevention strategies
 - Response is dictated by federal law, and compliance is most appropriately in the hands of individual campuses. Investigation and adjudication cannot not be the focus of this group.
 - This Council does not need to be legislatively required and appointed. This could be a joint effort among campuses.

- **PARTICIPANTS:**
 - We suggest a single representative (Title IX Coordinator), with ability to delegate. It is imperative that participants not be pulled away from their primary campus tasks, which in the end hurts our ability to prevent and respond to sexual violence.
 - Allow UVM and other campuses be able to appoint a student to any council that is created.
 - The representatives from the Network should not be advocates, but rather impartial educators.

- **LIABILITY RE BEST PRACTICES:**
 - Best practices is a very loaded term and, if advanced via this legislation, could create additional liability for our campuses if not strictly adopted. Additionally, while all participants are well intentioned, to establish a “best practice” would require national expertise.
 - Advise using the word ‘promising’ rather than ‘best.’ Campuses should individually decide what is Promising or Best for their campus given a whole array of factors.

- **DATA SHARING AND PRIVACY:**
 - The science does not support use of annual climate surveys, and requiring that these occur is a substantial administrative burden.
 - A well-designed climate survey takes expert input to design and takes an expert statistician to evaluate. It also is important for a campus to determine an appropriate cycle of surveys or response rates drastically decline and the usefulness of those surveys is severely diminished.
 - Campuses have a responsibility to protect the privacy of their students. When and what data can be discussed publicly is a precise legal question.

REPORTING:

- The annual report be authored by Legislative Counsel, not the Network. It is important that campuses remain in an impartial stance. A report issued by an advocacy organization jeopardizes our ability to do so.

- ADMINISTRATIVE:

- 1-2 meetings per year should be the cap. Perhaps one per semester so campuses can review what went well, as well as what initiatives are being planned for the coming semester.