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Interim Sexual Misconduct Policy

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Dear Colleagues:

As I mentioned in a recent message to the campus community, now that our students are back on campus, it is time to roll out a new policy and set of procedures for addressing sexual misconduct. The move is part of our longstanding commitment to maintaining a safe campus.

For the past six months, the nation has been awash in stories about sexual assaults on college campuses. During the same period, the U.S. Department of Education has launched Title IX investigations of 85 campuses across the nation, including three in Michigan. Even before all of those developments, we chose to be proactive and examine our University's policies to ensure they are sound, fair and within the scope of new federal guidelines.

We began early last year to examine our policy. A campuswide committee was formed, and we enlisted the aid of a national law firm with expertise on Title IX. While we wanted to make sure we are in compliance with recent federal guidelines, an even more important reason to launch the review was our commitment to having a campus that is a safe and welcoming environment. We wanted to make sure we did not have procedures in place that discouraged any campus community member from reporting misconduct. It was simply the right thing to do.

The WMU Sexual and Gender-Based Harassment and Violence, Intimate Partner Violence, and Stalking Interim Policy and Procedures are now in effect. The policy is outlined on the Web. The site includes links that will allow you to download the complete 35-page document. There is also a second very important downloadable document—a four-page list of campus and community resources that include organizations that provide public safety, medical and counseling assistance.

I urge you to study both documents carefully, taking particular note of the passages that outline employee reporting responsibilities. The policy and procedures are correctly labeled "interim." Before we finalize them for the start of the fall 2015 semester, we would like your feedback. To that end, an external and anonymous tool has been established. Please provide your comments about the new policy and procedures.

Working together, we will develop a final policy version that is fair, effective and reflective of our campus values. Thank you, in advance, for your help in the coming weeks and months.

Best regards,

John M. Dunn
President