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CUNY rips DeVos' proposed Title IX changes

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Proposed federal changes to how schools handle sexual assault allegations would endanger students, the City University of New York said today in the school's official response to Title IX revisions recently floated by U.S. Department of Education Secretary Betsy DeVos.

"We fervently oppose measures that make it harder for students to come forward, receive justice and, above all, to partake of the invaluable educational opportunities that CUNY provides," CUNY interim chancellor Vita Rabinowitz said in a statement.

A team of CUNY leaders, chaired by Brooklyn College President Michelle Anderson, a scholar in the law of rape and sexual assault, authored the university's response to DeVos' proposed changes to Title IX — the federal law that prohibits sex-based discrimination.

CUNY said that the guidelines would unfairly limit the definition of sexual harassment by mandating that it be "both severe and pervasive" and that it would restrict the circumstances under which colleges can respond to allegations.

The university criticized the reduced responsibility of colleges to probe and sanction sexual harassment, and the "costly, burdensome, and unwise" grievance procedures for formal resolution of complaints. CUNY added that the proposed revisions weaken the due process rights of students.

"CUNY's own mission mirrors the civil rights purpose of Title IX," the team wrote. "The University's promise of enhancing educational 'equal access and opportunity' for students from underserved communities heightens CUNY's commitment to the gender equality mandate in Title IX."

State University of New York Chancellor Kristina Johnson, State education commissioner MaryEllen Elia and New York Attorney General Letitia James have submitted similarly derisive responses to DeVos' proposal.

Read CUNY's full response [here](#).