SMU PRESIDENT NAMES TASK FORCE MEMBERSHIP

DALLAS (SMU) – SMU President R. Gerald Turner has appointed 20 members to the Task Force on Sexual Misconduct Policies and Procedures, established September 28 to re-examine how the University handles allegations of sexual misconduct among students.

Turner said the Task Force will review benchmark practices nationwide and hear perspectives of local and national experts to determine whether any updates or changes are needed at SMU. The examination will take into account adherence to state and federal laws, especially Title IX of the Education Amendments of 1972, which requires colleges and universities to investigate and provide internal grievance procedures for such allegations.

“Although our procedures are examined regularly, and mirror those of many other institutions, the Task Force will be a timely opportunity to broaden deliberations and conversation on this critical matter,” Turner said. “Its focus will include not only how sexual misconduct allegations are addressed at SMU, but also how the University can strengthen prevention and education on this important topic.”

Through the Task Force, “we aim to be proactive in determining what may need to be adjusted and to be responsive to those who are questioning the conduct review system at colleges and universities nationwide, including SMU,” Turner added.

The grievance process mandated by Title IX is provided at SMU through its student Code of Conduct, which outlines the University’s standards of responsible student behavior and
procedures for hearing complaints and determining University sanctions. Students also are advised that they can file criminal charges. To facilitate that process, SMU Police provide campus investigation reports to the Dallas County District Attorney’s Office. The student conduct review process and criminal procedures occur independently and separately of each other.

Task Force membership will include a representative of the Dallas County District Attorney’s Office, as well as other external experts, in addition to SMU officials. “We are especially pleased that we will have the participation of the District Attorney’s Office as an extension of our ongoing, productive relationship,” Turner said.

Members are:

- Kelly Compton, executive director of the Hoglund Foundation and SMU trustee;
- Jim Burnham, attorney and former Dallas County assistant district attorney;
- Martin Camp, assistant dean for Student Affairs, SMU Dedman School of Law;
- Karen Click, director of the SMU Women’s Center;
- Dennis Cordell, associate dean of general education and professor of history, SMU Dedman College of Humanities and Sciences;
- Jeanne Tower Cox, Dallas civic leader, SMU trustee and parent;
- Monique Holland, SMU senior associate director of Athletics;
- Anita Ingram, SMU associate vice president and chief risk officer;
- Monika Korra, SMU student;
- Ellyce Lindberg, chief prosecutor of grand jury/intake, office of Dallas County District Attorney;
- Steve Logan, senior executive director of SMU Residence Life and Student Housing;
- Alex Mace, president of the SMU student body;
· Courtney Underwood Newsome, executive director, the SANE Initiative;

· Rick Shafer, SMU Chief of Police;

· Rachany Thi Son, SMU law student;

· Cathey Soutter, director of SMU Counseling and Psychiatric Services;

· Tom Tunks, SMU professor and former University associate provost;

· Vanessa Uzoh, SMU student and residence hall assistant;

· Lori White, SMU vice president for Student Affairs;

· Beth Wilson, SMU associate vice president for Institutional Access and Equity and executive assistant to the SMU president.

SMU trustee Kelly Compton, chair of the Board’s Student Affairs Committee, will chair the Task Force. Staff support will be provided by Troy Behrens, assistant vice president for Student Affairs.

“The Task Force has an impressive membership of leaders who will engage in careful and thoughtful deliberations,” Compton said. “We are grateful for the time they are willing to commit to this process. By working together, I am confident we will reach a productive outcome.”

“SMU is committed to fostering a healthy and supportive environment, to holding members of the community accountable if they violate the rights of others, and to providing care and counseling to the victims of sexual misconduct,” Turner said in announcing the Task Force. “At the same time, we encourage respect for the rights of all concerned while investigations and processes unfold.”

The Task Force will begin meeting in October; changes that need to be implemented quickly will be forwarded to President Turner as they are developed. The full report of the Task Force should be completed on or before March 1, 2013.

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