

Mendocino College Board of Trustees Response and Title IX Review

The 2000–2001 Grand Jury made recommendations for the Mendocino-Lake Community College (College) Board of Trustees (Board), which the Board stated were either already implemented or would not be implemented because they were not warranted. However, the college administration currently is implementing some of the recommendations.

Method of Investigation

The Grand Jury reviewed the responses of the Board, interviewed the College President-Superintendent (President), and attended Board Meetings. The Grand Jury reviewed the United States Department of Education Office for Civil Rights “Clarification of Intercollegiate Athletics Policy Guidance: The Three-Part Test” (the Clarification).

Background Information

In the summer of 2001, the Board selected a new President who began October 15, 2001.

Findings

1. Recommendation A stated: “The Board revise the Policy manual to make it a usable document.”

The Board response was that this had already been implemented. However, the College administration reports that much of the information in the Board handbook was outdated and the process is underway to update the Board policies and put the administrative regulations in a separate handbook.

2. Recommendation B.2. stated: “The Board establish clear procedures and expectations for communication between the new President and the Board to ensure that Board receive information in a timely manner.”

Even though the Board response said that the recommendation would not be implemented because it was not warranted, the new President has initiated several procedures to keep the Board informed. The format of the President’s monthly reports has changed, noting substantive activities. In the past contracts were never on the Board agenda; contracts are now on the agendas for approval quarterly. Another change is that new employees do not begin work until their names appear on a Board agenda.

3. Recommendation G stated that the Board should reach out more to the public. This recommendation has been partially implemented. More information about the College is appearing in local newspapers. However, the College still does not provide audio or video tapes of the Board

meetings so that public who cannot attend the meetings have access to information.

4. Recommendation J stated that each Board member be given a copy of the Brown Act. Trustees noted that each member of the Board now has a copy of the Brown Act.
5. The Review of Responses “Title IX at Mendocino-Lake Community College” recommended that the Board “direct the Administration to follow the law and implement programs to ensure gender equity.”

The Board responded that the College is in compliance with Title IX because the College meets Part Two of the Three-Part Test: “an institution can show that it has a history and continuing practice of program expansion which is demonstrably responsive to the developing interests and abilities of the underrepresented sex.” (the Clarification)

Even though the College has added one or two programs over the past ten years, the percentage of female athletes is still only 21% or 30%, depending on which set of figures the College uses. (The College response stated that the Grand Jury used incorrect figures, but the figures were those presented in the April 4, 2001 memo to the College Vice-President for Instruction from the Dean of Instruction.) The College has plans to add women’s basketball in 2002–2003.

Comment

The Grand Jury commends the new President for her leadership in establishing a nursing program, a vital necessity for local health care and the work force, and her stated goal to get “maximum input from the whole institution” in making decisions for the College. The Grand Jury encourages the College community to work with and support the President as needed changes are implemented.

The College should continue to encourage input from citizens and the local professional communities.

The Grand Jury suggests that the 2002–2003 Grand Jury review the athletic activities for youth in the county and the opportunities to transition to both inter- and intra-mural athletics at the College.