Plenary Session III
Campus Sexual Assault from the WICHE Region’s Perspective

Monday, May 11, 2015
3:15 – 4:45 pm
Columbia Ballroom
Plenary Session III:
Campus Sexual Assault from the WICHE Region’s Perspective

This session, building upon the first session on campus sexual assault from the federal perspective, will focus on this issue from both the state government perspective and the individual institutional perspective. Commissioner Jeanne Kohl-Welles, state senator from Washington, will present the specifics of and rationale for the bill she and colleagues have been pursuing in the Washington State legislature this session. In preparation for presenting this bill, Kohl-Welles did considerable research on what other states have done to respond to this issue, as well as how best to make Washington State’s law complementary to the federal laws. Kohl-Welles will be joined by Ellen Taylor, assistant vice president for student life and director of the counseling center, University of Washington, who has been responsible for crafting the University of Washington’s response to issues of campus sexual assault. For campuses this is without doubt one of the most vexing issues institutions have faced. How do we respond to this? Our criminal justice system is built on the premise of “innocent until proven guilty.” But that concept is severely tested in an environment where the presumptive victim must survive in the same campus environment as the presumptive perpetrator. It is further exacerbated by the unwarranted but often real sense of guilt, shame, or embarrassment experienced by the victim, leading many to suffer in silence. These situations are further complicated by the competing jurisdictions between campus judicial and student services and the criminal justice system outside of the university’s bounds. Rape and other serious sexual violence incidences are among the most heinous crimes, punishable as felonies with severe penalties. Being accused of such a crime, let alone being convicted, can irreparably affect a person’s future and often, perhaps too often, colleges are reluctant to impose such serious repercussions on a student, preferring to work on correcting the individual’s behavior. Yet we have laws for a reason. While we may debate whether many college students are adolescents or adults, the law holds almost all college students to be adults and subject to the constraints imposed on adult behavior. But …

I look forward to a great discussion of a difficult but exceptionally important subject.

Speakers:
Jeanne Kohl-Welles, WICHE vice chair, and senator, Washington State Senate; and Ellen Taylor, assistant vice president for student life, and director of the counseling center, University of Washington

Facilitated Discussion on Campus Sexual Assault from the WICHE Region’s Perspective

Facilitator:
David Longanecker, president, WICHE
Biographical Information on the Speakers and Facilitator

Senator Jeanne Kohl-Welles has served in the Washington State Senate since 1995 after serving for three years in the State House. In addition to her current position as ranking member (former chair) of the Senate Higher Education Committee, she sits on the Senate Ways & Means and Law & Justice committees, and on the Joint Higher Education Committee, the Washington State Institute for Public Policy Board, the Committee on Advanced Tuition Payment, the University of Washington Women’s Center Anti-Trafficking Task Force, and the Education Committee of the National Conference of State Legislatures (NCSL). She is a co-chair of NCSL’s annual summit to be held in Seattle in August and served on NCSL’s Executive Committee and as president of NCSL’s Women’s Legislative Network. Sen. Kohl-Welles holds a Ph.D. in sociology of education and M.A. in sociology from the University of California (UC), Los Angeles, and a B.A. and M.A. in education from California State University (CSU), Northridge. She was an adjunct faculty member at the University of Washington 1985-2010, and was the principal investigator with two U.S. Department of Education-funded research studies on women and girls in school athletics and school-based sexual abuse prevention programs. She serves as an expert witness in Title IX lawsuits. Sen. Kohl-Welles served as assistant dean/coordinate of women’s programs at the UC, Irvine, educational equity specialist for the U.S. Department of Education Region IX assisting school districts in implementing Title IX, and as a consultant for the U.S. Office for Civil Rights in assessing Title IX compliance of high schools. She was co-founder of the California Network of Women in Education, taught sociology and women’s studies courses at CSU, Long Beach and was a public school teacher. Sen. Kohl-Welles has sponsored major legislation enacted on sex discrimination and sexual misconduct in schools and in higher education institutions throughout her legislative career, including a “Penn State” bill preventing sexual abuse of minors on college campuses, and her campus sexual violence bill that passed the legislature last month. She is a speaker on human trafficking and women as political change agents with the Humanities Washington Speakers Bureau. She speaks internationally on women and public policy and politics as well as on human trafficking.

David Longanecker has served as the president of the Western Interstate Commission for Higher Education in Boulder since 1999. Previously, Longanecker served for six years as the assistant secretary for postsecondary education at the U.S. Department of Education. Prior to that he was the state higher education executive officer in Colorado and Minnesota. He was also the principal analyst for higher education for the Congressional Budget Office. Longanecker has served on numerous boards and commissions. He has written extensively on a range of higher education issues. His primary interests in higher education are: expanding access to successful completion for students within all sectors of higher education, promoting student and institutional performance, assuring efficient and effective finance and financial aid strategies, and fostering effective use of educational technologies, all for
the purpose of sustaining the nation’s strength in the world and increasing the quality of life for all Americans, particularly those who have traditionally been left out in the past. He holds an Ed.D. from Stanford University, an M.A. in student personnel work from George Washington University, and a B.A. in sociology from Washington State University.

Ellen Taylor earned her doctorate in clinical psychology from the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign. She has spent her career in university counseling centers where her clinical work has focused on women’s issues, including women’s identity development in young adulthood, recovery from experiences of gender-based violence, and variations of gender identity and expression. Taylor was on the staff of the counseling center at Oregon State University for 13 years, the last five of those as director. She moved to the University of Washington (U.W.) in 2007, where she is director of the counseling center as well as assistant vice president for student life, providing oversight and support for disability resources for students, student conduct, the career center, and health and wellness. Taylor has provided training for community organizations on issues relating to college mental health, leadership development, social justice, organizational change, and creating inclusive workplaces. She currently serves on the Elements of Excellence Committee of the Association of University and College Counseling Center Directors; she co-chaired this committee for the past two years. In 2013 she was asked to chair the U.W. president’s task force on sexual assault. This interdisciplinary task force issued a report in November 2013 with several recommendations for enhancing the prevention and response efforts on the U.W. campus, most of which have been implemented or are now being rolled out.