

Verbatim Questions for President Alexander by Topic

Questions for President Alexander from the Faculty Senate regarding allegations of his role in Title IX violations and response to victims of sexual assault and misconduct during his presidency at Louisiana State University

The questions and comments in this document were generated by faculty Senators in their apportionment groups during a meeting of the Faculty Senate on 3/11/21. Some additional questions were added by the groups later that evening and the next day. All questions and comments are copied verbatim here.

Additional comments and questions gathered from the Forum registration site will be sent in a separate file.

Respectfully submitted on 3/14/21 by Selina Heppell, Faculty Senate President.

RESPONSE TO REPORTS FROM LSU

How did you not know what was happening in Athletics when Coach Miles' conduct was in question upon your arrival? Why didn't you follow up more with the concerns that were brought forward to you?

What did you know when? Timing is important here. Did President Alexander know about how potentially explosive this problem was while he was interviewing here, and what did he disclose?

What type of legal advice did he get at LSU about how to respond to this? And what action did he take, or didn't take, as a result?

In what ways did financial pressures related to the sports program encourage a laissez faire attitude towards issues of campus sexual abuse?

According to the Husch Blackwell report, in August 2016, you issued a "Presidential Charge" to create a task force to review policies, practice and procedures related to Title IX and provide recommendations to the president. The report cites many findings from that report, but cannot find any response from you, specifically, any documentation memorializing how the Task Force Report was assessed or addressed by leadership of the University; I would infer this includes you, since you gave the charge. One of the task force members said that the report and recommendations "went nowhere". In my experience leading task forces commissioned by leadership at OSU, no response is unheard of. If as you say in your letter of Monday March 8, you are "fully in support of regular reviews that assist any university in improving how it addresses misconduct, and your commitment to preventing sexual misconduct is decades long", why did you not ensure that the hard work of this committee was at least responded to, and ideally acted upon?

According to your letter on Monday March 8, you said that information you had received throughout your LSU tenure is that Title IX complaints and violations were fully investigated and that results were appropriately documented. However, Section IV, pages 36 – 46 of the Husch Blackwell report documents multiple instances where concerns about gaps in the processes, failure to follow documented best practices, and in fact places where LSU was not following federal guidance regarding Title IX compliance were brought to university leadership attention and that there is no response. If you didn't know, does this mean that you abdicated your responsibility with respect to Title IX? Or does it mean that you ignored these complaints? Or something else?

In 2011 when the "Dear Colleague Letter" was sent by the Obama administration, you were president of California State Long Beach. As you were a president, I believe it is reasonable to expect that you knew of the directives in that letter. In fact, the California State system is cited as the first statewide system to appoint a system wide Title IX coordinator in 2014. In 2013, you joined LSU and were presented with a very serious Title IX case. And yet, it took you 3 years to start a Title IX office at LSU. If your "commitment to preventing sexual misconduct is deeply personal and decades long", and since you were not new to the president's job, presumably informed about the federal directives regarding Title IX, what took you so long?

When presented at the time of your hire at LSU in 2013 with a recommendation from then Athletic Director Alleva that Coach Miles could be fired for cause based on his behavior as it relates to Title IX, you decided not to dismiss him. Can you please explain this decision, particularly in light of the recent response to the Husch-Blackwell report by the University of Kansas to dismiss Coach Miles and the athletic director that hired him?

In your letter of Monday, March 8, you cite that in the face of significant budget cuts, you were able to initiate the Title IX program and put policies in place. However, the structure of your Title IX office followed neither federal guidance nor nationwide best practices. You have cited lack of budget, and imply that within this letter. How do you reconcile budget as being the reason to have an egregious understaffed Title IX office when the LSU football program was staffed with a jaw dropping "eleven full-time coaches; thirteen analysts; nine individuals connected to athletic training, nutrition and strength and conditioning; four individuals to handle equipment; four employees to manage video production; three graduate assistants; a "General Manager;" a "Director of Player Development;" a "Special Assistant to the Head Coach;" an "Assistant Athletics Director – Football;" an "Assistant Director of Operations;" a Coordinator of Football Operations; a Coordinator of Defensive Operations; a Coordinator of Offensive Operations; an Associate Athletics Director of Football Recruiting and Alumni Relations; an Assistant Director of Recruiting Operations; a Senior Consultant; an Assistant Director of On- Campus Recruiting Operations; an Assistant Director of Player Personnel; and a Coordinator of Football Relations. This does not include a bevy of student workers whose responsibilities have been described as "coloring cards" for football recruits and their families," according to the Husch-Blackwell report, page 138.

In response to a formal presentation and request from the director of the under-resourced Title IX office to fully staff the office for approximately \$330K, you responded by not providing those resources claiming budget constraints. How can you justify this, given how small a budget ask this is to align the institution with best practices nationally?

What extenuating circumstances exist in the situation?

We have read conflicting statements regarding your relationship with student Darius Guice. Can you clarify what that relationship was?

Did you have the funds to staff the Title IX office sooner than it was staffed?

How would you characterize your relationship with the LSU Faculty Senate and other faculty leadership there?

Found statement to be weak. How can this happen without him knowing as president at LSU?

Why was having a losing record as a coach grounds for dismissal when that same person's record of sexual misconduct was not grounds for firing?

Why did you go against the recommendations of the LSU AD to fire Miles? What did you think your role was at LSU in that decision? What have you learned from your thinking about how that process played out?

DISCLOSURE AT HIRING

When did you become aware of any potential investigations into Title IX violations at LSU? Did you disclose this knowledge to OSU's Board of Trustees, and if so, when did this disclosure occur?

Did you have any knowledge of potential Title IX investigations prior to your interview at OSU? If so, did you disclose it during the interview?

Were you asked about LSU's Title IX performance during your interview with OSU? If so, what was your response?

Was this situation a factor in your decision to leave LSU?

There was nothing about this given to the committee. Why wasn't that reported by him during the process?

Did you disclose this incident to board and if so, what did you tell them?

USE OF PRESIDENTIAL POWER

Were there situations where you personally and unilaterally overturned the decision and finding of responsibility for sexual assault while at LSU?

It is reported that Alexander intervened in cases at LSU and overturned them. How many did he personally intervene in? What was the basis for deciding to intervene in the ones that he did? What criteria did he have for deciding to overturn cases that had been decided by the bodies reporting to him?

At LSU, did he review student cases? One article said that he overturned a case involving a student he knew well. Is this something you did in cases of sexual misconduct?

Should the President of a university have the authority to overturn the findings or recommendations of a committee designated to investigate charges of misconduct?

Did you overturn findings of responsibility for sexual harassment or sexual assault when students appealed to you?

Did you personally and unilaterally overturn the decisions and findings of responsibility for any sexual assault cases? Why?

Please tell us how your actions at LSU regarding Coach Miles and prominent athletes did or did not privilege individuals with considerable institutional power, over those with very little institutional power.

When there is financial and reputational risk associated with doing the "right thing" -- such as terminating a winning football coach facing serious allegations of sexual harassment -- what values guide your decision making?

PERSONAL RESPONSIBILITY AND ACCOUNTABILITY

With great power comes great responsibility. To date, you do not seem to have shown any true responsibility for any of these serious outcomes at LSU. What aspects do you take responsibility for? What do you think this responsibility is here at OSU?

What can F. King Alexander do to assure us that he will have the courage to do what is right from this experience?

You've said you take responsibility. Taking responsibility also means to make things right. How are you going to make this right with LSU? With OSU?

How does the president respond to what the students are saying? What is the responsibility of a president in a situation like this. What does it mean to take ownership?

Alexander's contract says he can be fired for conduct that harms or embarrasses the university. Does Pres Alexander or the Board think that this is what is happening?

Is Pres Alexander willing or planning to travel to LA to testify in their legislative hearings?

VALUES AND CHARACTER

President Alexander, what have you learned about yourself as a leader and your values in this process? How will you lead differently moving forward?

President Alexander - What does your apparent lack of disclosure to the Board of Trustees about these concerns and issues in the hiring process say about your integrity?

How dare you (Alexander) even apply to work at OSU and bring your (hidden) horrible past performance here? How dare you bring this trauma to our community? (obviously rhetorical, but that's how i'm feeling as i hear more details.)

What have you done and not done to show your commitment to Title IX?

The LSU Title Review report provides detailed information on your incomplete and inadequate actions following the Title IX incidents at LSU and your lackluster reaction to calls from the LSU faculty and community to make much-needed changes. What are your plans to not repeat the same repudiated approach here at OSU that would tarnish all the good work on Title IX achieved at OSU over the last decade?

Why do you think you deserve to be president of OSU, what have you learned and how will you lead differently?

Why do you deserve a chance to lead OSU? What about your record suggests you are best positioned to represent and advocate on behalf of survivors of sexual violence and harassment at OSU when you failed to do so at LSU?

RESPONSE TO VICTIMS

1 in 3 women in the world will experience violence in her life. 1 in 6 American women will experience rape or attempted rape. 3% of American men have experienced rape. 1 in 5 college women, 1 in 16 college men have been sexually assaulted. I am very concerned about the impact on our support services for those survivors in our OSU community who are now re-traumatized by this. How are we supporting students, faculty, and staff survivors?

This news is devastating for a lot of our community, who are survivors of sexual assault. How can we/should we work with SARC to provide support to OSU community. SARC has a small staff. Does SARC need more funding?

What actions will you take to ensure that the victims receive responsive, effective support and efficient investigations? For example, would you consider providing full scholarships for victims (undergraduate or graduate students) for every term and every year that they have had to live under the stress of ongoing investigation into their harasser?

Many people were harmed by transgressions that were overlooked, particularly survivors at LSU. While expressing regret, you have not apologized to them in your public statements. Have you spoken to survivors at LSU to apologize? If no, why not?

OSU has worked very hard to create an institutional culture that supports survivors. Why should we trust you are the best person to lead our institution in this work, given the evidence of dishonesty, mismanagement, poor decisions, and lack of care for survivors at LSU?

TRUST AND COMMITMENT MOVING FORWARD

What can we expect from you going forward that will restore our trust in your leadership? How can you set an example of owning and learning from mistakes?

Why should OSU students trust you now to hold their safety as one of your highest goals? What specific actions will you take to demonstrate that to them?

How can faculty and students be assured that personal relationships will not stand in the way of you getting to the truth of allegations and responsibility that might surface at OSU?

How will you assure that justice and equality are assured for all students and faculty regardless of their gender, race, ability, age, etc.

What can we expect from you going forward that will restore our trust in your leadership? How can you set an example of owning and learning from mistakes?

Why should OSU students trust you now to hold their safety as one of your highest goals? What specific actions will you take to demonstrate that to them?

President Alexander, what do you think your actions at LSU convey about your priorities around commitment to survivors and those who have experienced gender-based violence?

President Alexander, what do you have to say to survivors at OSU, LSU, and beyond who may not be trusting your leadership or feel safe under your leadership right now? How can you take efforts to understand the impact of your actions on survivors and those who have experienced gender-based violence? How do you plan to rebuild trust with our community?

How will you create accountability for staff and faculty and their handling of issues of gender violence, racism, and other forms of discrimination and mistreatment?

What does he think he needs to do to regain confidence from everyone at OSU?

What did you learn from your experience at LSU that will help you not repeat the same mistakes here at OSU?

One of the goals in Oregon State University's Mission statement is the following:

"A CULTURE OF BELONGING, COLLABORATION, AND INNOVATION - Building an organizational culture founded on the values of inclusion, mutual respect, good physical and mental health, collaboration, and humility, so that people from every background are welcomed and thrive, our community is diverse, and our leadership advances both excellence and innovation."

In light of this mission statement, how does OSU maintain its credibility with you at its helm?

The trust between the president and faculty, staff, students, alumni and stakeholders has been broken. What is the path forward to re-establish that trust?

How can we trust your leadership for the thousands of young people currently enrolled at OSU?
How will you protect and defend them?

How would you answer an OSU student who asks you that it appears that you care more about athletics and financial matters than all students?

In the past, a faculty member at OSU has left after a Title IX investigation. This person was not fired but instead left quietly. A number of the people impacted by the behavior of this person and involved in the investigation feel strong institutional betrayal by OSU for not taking stronger action. And many are still feeling the repercussions. What do you propose to do to rectify the ongoing sense of institutional betrayal?

Your actions and omissions at LSU and your communications about this period since you've come to OSU do not reflect OSU values. How do you plan to represent OSU's highest ideals and gain the trust of the university community given your very concerning track record?

SPECIFIC ACTIONS AT OSU

When will members of the university community not represented by the Faculty Senate -- including undergraduate and graduate students, classified staff, alumni and volunteers -- have an opportunity to ask you questions about your ability to lead OSU?

Will there be a student forum for the president?

Will you have a forum where you take questions from students?

What will be done differently at OSU?

How will you strengthen the support for SARC and CAPS?

What will you do, not only to address the damage following an incident, but also to transform campus culture and structures to prevent gender violence?

What does President Alexander mean that we (Universities and Colleges) can learn from this report? How can we change?

President Alexander, what will your relationship with student athletes at OSU be? How did your relationship with student athletes at LSU impact the failures there?

What kind of oversight does the Title IX office at OSU have over Athletics and what challenges has the Title IX office identified as it relates to athletics? If challenges have been identified, how have they been addressed? Who conducts oversight of our Title IX office?

In your recent letter to OSU faculty, you listed the differences between OSU and LSU policies as they relate to Title IX. What in the OSU policy would prevent the specific problems that occurred at LSU from happening here?

What are your priorities related to athletics vs academics?

Please describe the Title IX measures that are in place at OSU, and where, in light of your experience at LSU, they need to be strengthened or further supported?

Given what happened at LSU, what is your compass regarding how OSU should move forward?

What is he planning to do that he is “committed” to supporting Title IX?

What initiatives to improve Title IX accountability did President Alexander start at OSU before the US News and World Report came out in November?

How can we ensure that the university allocates enough funding to the on campus institution in the student health services (SARC, Survivor Advocacy and Resource Center) in order to support a staff size representative of the size of the student body? In doing so, it would make filing, handling, and resolving each case with the attention it deserves.

Going forward, how would you lead efforts that would make OSU a leader in best practices at universities regarding these issues, i.e. going beyond only checking legal boxes by having an established Title IX office?

What actions will you take to prevent gender-based harassment/bullying on campus? Waiting for reporting by a victim to do anything about it is putting responsibility on the victim to solve the problem. Title IX investigations should be the "last ditch" effort by a victim to receive support. What can we (with you in the lead) do differently to prevent it or stop it before it gets there?

Will you commit to making gender-based harassment/ career bullying a form of Scientific and Scholarly misconduct when committed by faculty, coaches, or other leadership at OSU (<https://research.oregonstate.edu/ori/scientific-and-scholarly-misconduct>) because any form of harassment in a learning environment cannot be separated from the perpetrators success as a scholar. This recognition would aid in making sure disciplinary actions can be taken by, for example, tenure and promotion committees** (note - the faculty member in question thinks this is true. While title IX findings are not allowed into tenure and promotion, scientific misconduct is.)

Instead of building a new football stadium, will you consider putting \$\$ and time into creating a better campus culture and learning environment? Or perhaps at a minimum finding a donor to contribute and putting an equal amount \$150m towards making the campus a safer, more effective learning environment?

Another way of asking would be:

Given all the scandals in US college athletics, including the present one at LSU, how can OSU President accept donor dollars for athletics, including construction of a new wing of the stadium and **luxurious seats**? Should OSU president work with the OSU Foundation to set priorities that would benefit student education/success and faculty research, which will also bring more revenue to the university with less scandals?

CALLS FOR RESIGNATION

Does Pres Alexander have an intention and/or a timeline for considering resignation from OSU?

Why haven't you resigned yet?!?!?

Given the gravity of the situation that occurred at LSU while you were President, as described in the Husch-Blackwell report, and the way in which this has come to subsequently come tonight to light, why should the Faculty Senate not immediately render a vote of no-confidence in you as the President of Oregon State University?

Do you feel that you should remain the president of OSU or any other university?

Are you considering resigning to prevent OSU's reputation from being further tarnished by your past?

Are we assuming benevolence of white men (that he really didn't know what was happening at LSU)? Would a person of color be immediately fired if something like this came out about them?

What is the harm for survivors of sexual violence in keeping President Alexander in his position at OSU?

OTHER QUESTIONS

How do you feel this incident has impacted the reputation of OSU?

What is the gross annual income you and your family (father, brothers, wife) receive from organizing the for-profit set of Oxford Roundtable symposiums. What is the total gross income generated for you family by these symposiums since 1989?

Given the change in administration and the Department of Education leadership, can you make a clear and declarative statement as to how matters of sexual harassment or sexual violence will be handled on campus and whether any changes will be instituted?

Why is it important to combat sexual abuse on college campuses, and how have his actions helped to combat SA?"

Have you watched Picture a Scientist? If a similar situation to the harassment by a scientist from Boston University as presented in the film happened here, would you have the guts that the president of BU eventually found to fire the harasser?

COMMENTS

Your email seems to avoid taking direct accountability and suggests you don't think you had the authority to act. We find that impossible to believe.

We seem under equipped to implement Title IX. Involving faculty more in governance might help us avoid these kinds of problems.

One faculty member said his students were just resigned that this is what goes on. Athletics sits higher in the pecking order. Students are just here to fund these higher priorities. "I have never had that conversation with students before, but this is how they are feeling."

I'm also concerned that he tried to reassure us that OSU's EOA office reports directly to him. Not ok.

This seems to be getting in the way of OSU to carry out its mission. It's a big distraction and is the only conversation. It's crowding out our other work and is harmful to the university. This is

what OSU is associated with, and if Pres Alexander stays here, that association will be even more harmful.

Mine is a comment more so than a question - but in my opinion King Alexander needs to go. His mea culpa to the OSU community showed he takes no accountability for what happened at LSU, remarking only that OSU has processes to prevent what he permitted at LSU. Not good enough. Not even close. His unwillingness to hold himself accountable or demonstrate leadership in rooting out sexual harassment makes him unfit and unqualified to serve as president of this institution. His insinuation that he fired Les Miles for anything other than on the field performance has no basis in fact and is frankly insulting in the level of gullibility required to believe him.

While I feel we need to be cautious in regard to assuming that any accusation against a member of the OSU community automatically condemns them as guilty of a transgression (so-called "cancel culture" - everyone deserves their day in court and should be presumed innocent until...), I have to admit that the issues raised about President Alexander's role in the Title IX issues at LSU are troubling since the most recent information as reported in the press was his active knowledge of and decision to not pursue investigations and possible actions against individuals accused of Title IX violations. His close association with the LSU football team in this regard also raises questions. While seemingly unrelated, the decision to proceed with Reser expansion plans at this time strike me as tone deaf and also may speak to Pres. Alexander's priorities w.r.t. NCAA over other aspects of the presidential role.

My concerns were raised considerably by Pres. Alexander's message to the OSU community a few days ago. The tone was basically - "I didn't know what was going on, I thought everything was fine, it wasn't my responsibility, and it won't be my responsibility at OSU since it is done differently here". That is hardly the sort of leadership position we grew to expect during the Ed Ray years. I would like Pres. Alexander to own this issue and to address concerns that he is deflecting any responsibility rather than being forthright.

I am with those above who believe Alexander is demonstrating that he is not university president material because he continues to refuse to accept that as President of LSU he had final accountability over the University response. I'm embarrassed that he's our president right now and regardless of the outcome of any investigation, I believe he needs to stand up and be accountable. Also he should be subject to the same policies and censure as any other staff or faculty member. Otherwise all the work we have done at OSU in recent years around sexual harassment and violence comes to nothing.