



UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION  
OFFICE FOR CIVIL RIGHTS

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June 8, 2020

**Via email only:**

Danielle Slota, Director, Office of the President  
[dslota@highline.edu](mailto:dslota@highline.edu)

Dr. John Mosby  
President  
Highline College  
P.O. Box 98000  
Des Moines, Washington 98198

Re: Highline College  
OCR Reference No. 10202039

Dear Dr. Mosby:

This letter is to inform you of the disposition of the above-referenced complaint filed against Highline College (College) with the U.S. Department of Education (Department), Office for Civil Rights (OCR). The complainant alleged that the College discriminates against male middle school students on the basis of sex by hosting and coordinating the Expanding Your Horizons (EYH) conference for middle school female students only.

As explained below, prior to completion of OCR's investigation, the College expressed an interest in voluntarily resolving the complaint and signed the enclosed Voluntary Resolution Agreement (agreement) to address the complaint allegation.

OCR investigated this case under the authority of Title IX of the Education Amendments of 1972 (Title IX), which prohibits discrimination on the basis of sex in educational programs and activities receiving federal financial assistance. Because the College receives federal financial assistance from this Department, it is required to comply with Title IX.

The regulation implementing Title IX, at 34 C.F.R. § 106.31(a), states that no person shall, on the basis of sex, be excluded from participation in, be denied the benefits of, or

*The Department of Education's mission is to promote student achievement and preparation for global competitiveness by fostering educational excellence and ensuring equal access.*

be subjected to discrimination under any educational program or activity operated by a recipient.

OCR's investigation to date indicates that the EYH conference is designed to give middle school girls access to topics and hands-on activities in science, technology, engineering and math (STEM). The College's website regarding the 2020 conference indicated that the conference would host approximately 40 workshop facilitators for 300-400 middle school girls, which would include information sharing, workshops with other girls, and meeting women in STEM industries, education and training.

Although OCR's review of the promotional and registration materials for the EYH conference does not indicate that boys are prohibited from attending or that boys would be excluded if they registered to attend, OCR noted concerns that these materials used the term "girls" when referring to participants or registrants, which may lead to the exclusion of some students based on sex.

In accordance with Section 302 of the OCR *Case Processing Manual*, a complaint may be resolved at any time when, before OCR issues its final determination, the recipient expresses an interest in resolving the complaint allegations and OCR determines that it is appropriate to resolve the issues under investigation with an agreement. In light of the College's willingness to address the concerns identified by OCR comprehensively without further investigation, OCR determined that entering into a voluntary resolution agreement was appropriate. Subsequent discussions with the College resulted in the College signing the enclosed agreement, which when fully implemented, will address the issue raised in this complaint.

This letter is not a formal statement of OCR policy and should not be relied upon, cited, or construed as such. OCR's formal policy statements are approved by a duly authorized OCR official and made available to the public.

This concludes OCR's investigation of the complaint. The complainant may have the right to file a private suit in court regardless of OCR's determination.

Please be advised that the College may not harass, coerce, intimidate, or discriminate against any individual because he or she has filed a complaint or participated in the complaint resolution process. If this happens, the complainant may file another complaint alleging such treatment.

Under the Freedom of Information Act, it may be necessary to release this document and related correspondence and records upon request. In the event that OCR receives such a request, we will seek to protect, to the extent provided by law, personally identifiable

information, which, if released, could reasonably be expected to constitute an unwarranted invasion of personal privacy.

OCR will monitor the implementation of the agreement and will close the complaint when OCR determines that the terms of the agreement have been satisfied. The first report under the agreement is due by **December 1, 2020**.

I wish to thank you and your staff for the cooperation extended to OCR during the investigation of this complaint. If you have any questions regarding this letter, please contact Tania Lopez, senior attorney, at (206) 607-1623 or via email at [tania.lopez@ed.gov](mailto:tania.lopez@ed.gov).

Sincerely,

Sarah Dunne  
Chief Attorney

cc: H. Bruce Marvin, Assistant Attorney General  
Via email only: [HBruce.Marvin@atg.wa.gov](mailto:HBruce.Marvin@atg.wa.gov)