

Violence Against Women Act (VAWA) Negotiated Rulemaking Committee Meetings

Opening Remarks of Jamienne Studley,
Acting Under Secretary for the U.S. Department of Education
February 24, 2014

- Good morning. My name is Jamienne Studley, and I am the Acting Under Secretary here at the Department of Education.
- Welcome back for the second of three negotiating sessions that will focus on developing new regulations that will implement the parts of the Violence Against Women Act (VAWA) that amend the Clery Act.
- As you know, since VAWA was signed by President Obama in March of last year, developing and implementing updated regulations has been a high priority for the Department of Education.
- These negotiations are a critical step in the process to develop regulations that will help to address the prevalence of sexual assault, domestic violence, dating violence, and stalking on our Nation's campuses and to better protect the rights of our students.
- As Assistant Secretary Brenda-Dann Messier stressed in her opening remarks during the last negotiating session, we at the Department believe that even one such incident of violence is one incident too many. We know that students cannot be successful if they do not feel safe, secure and welcome on campus.
- And those of you around the negotiating table, who represent exceptional experience and expertise, will help us ensure the safety of our nation's students.
- During the first negotiating session, we had the chance to hear from all of you on the challenges we face and opportunities that we have to craft a rule that will ensure that colleges and universities across the country take action to prevent, and respond promptly and effectively to, incidents of sexual assault, domestic violence, dating violence, and stalking when they occur.
- As a former college president at Skidmore, and an advocate for students and women in other roles, I am especially clear on the significance of these rules and the sensitive balances that must be struck.

- As we move forward in the drafting process, we hope that you will continue to speak out and help us achieve a comprehensive, effective, and fair rule that protects the rights of all students.
- At the conclusion of the last negotiating session, the committee agreed to form two subgroups, one focused on issues related to stalking and one on training and prevention.
- I would like to express my heartfelt thanks to the subcommittee chairs, Laura Dunn and Nancy Cantalupo, as well as to the subcommittee participants, for their work and dedication in these areas. Both of the subcommittees provided valuable advice, and we hope that we have accurately captured your ideas in the draft regulations that we have distributed to the committee.
- We are grateful to all of you dedicating your time and sharing your expertise with us as we work through these challenging issues. I appreciate all of your hard work and guidance. Your feedback during the first session and in subsequent subcommittee meetings has already been immensely helpful to us, and we look forward to our continued collaboration.
- On behalf of Secretary Duncan, I thank you for participating in this very important rulemaking.