

Compliance Chats Podcast

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| Podcast Title: | ABOUT THE OFFICE OF INSTITUTIONAL EQUITY (OIE) | Podcast Date: | August 2018 |
| Host: | Omar Andujar | Guest Speaker(s): | Elizabeth Conklin |
| Purpose | In this interview with Elizabeth Conklin, listeners will learn about the Office of Institutional Equity, its focus areas, and other related information. | | |
| About Guest Speaker(s) | Elizabeth serves as the Associate Vice President of the Office of Institutional Equity (OIE) and as UConn’s Title IX Coordinator and ADA Coordinator. Elizabeth is responsible for overseeing each of OIE’s areas of focus, including discrimination case management, campus-wide trainings for diversity awareness and sexual harassment prevention, search and hiring affirmative action and equal employment opportunity compliance, and various diversity and harassment prevention initiatives. Elizabeth earned her law degree from the University of Oregon School of Law, and she is a cum laude graduate of the University of Connecticut, where she earned a Bachelor’s Degree with an independent double major in Political Science and Peace Studies. | | |

SUMMARIZED PODCAST

HOST: Hello everyone and welcome to today’s podcast. My name is Omar Andujar and you are listening to Compliance Chats, a podcast series intended to keep Faculty and Staff up-to-date on various compliance matters.

I’m joined by Elizabeth Conklin, AVP for the Office of Institutional Equity, as well as the University’s Title IX coordinator and ADA Coordinator. During today’s discussion, Elizabeth will help us learn more about the Office of Institutional Equity, its focus areas, and other related information. Elizabeth, thanks again for joining us.

INTERVIEW QUESTIONS:

Question 1 – We’re excited to get better acquainted with some of the ins and outs of your area and perhaps a good place to start is by having you take a moment to describe the overall role of the Office of Institutional Equity (OIE) at the University?

GUEST – ELIZABETH: Sure. The Office of Institutional Equity, which is also known as, OIE insures UConn's commitment and responsibility to foster equitable and inclusive working and learning environments. Our work really focuses on administering the university's nondiscrimination policies and also ensuring compliance with state and federal laws and regulations related to equal opportunity and affirmative action.

Question 2 – What are OIE’s priorities and main areas of focus?

GUEST – ELIZABETH: OIE really focuses on five major areas.

1. The first is Americans with Disabilities Act and section 504 compliance, which is really all about ensuring that all of UConn’s programs and activities offer equal access and full participation for individuals with disabilities. We monitor the university’s compliance with the various state and federal laws related to disabilities and work to prevent discrimination or harassment on the basis of disability in any program or activity at UConn.
2. The second major area of focus for us is Equal Employment Opportunity and Affirmative Action compliance. A lot of faculty and staff have seen us in this area with respect to search and hiring at UConn. This includes making sure that all of our search and hiring activities comply with various affirmative action and equal

employment opportunity rules and regulations we're very involved in the search process and one of the offices that approves searches for interview and hiring.

3. Our third major area of focus is discrimination and harassment investigations. So, our office is responsible for objectively investigating complaints of discrimination or discriminatory harassment where employees are alleged to have violated UConn's nondiscrimination policies. We receive inquiries and help resolve concerns in that role and also conduct full internal investigations to determine whether any conduct has violated UConn policies. Our staff in this area also assist with implementing various policies and providing training on this area of focus.
4. Another important area or fourth of five is Title IX compliance. I serve as UConn's Title IX coordinator in addition to being the ADA coordinator. Title IX is a federal law that prohibits discrimination based on sex. It protects both employees and students and it ensures that the university prohibits sexual harassment and all forms of sex discrimination and sexual violence. We're committed here at UConn to creating and maintaining a campus that is free from all forms of sex discrimination and harassment, including sexual violence or office, is very involved in fielding any reports about sexual misconduct and ensuring that individuals who are impacted by these serious acts receive the resources and support they need, including information about investigations.
5. Our fifth major area of focus is training and education. On all of these areas of responsibility. We have a variety of trainings. Some are state mandated, university mandated diversity awareness training and sexual harassment prevention training. Any employees listening today have probably already gone or are registered to attend our state mandated diversity and sexual harassment prevention trainings. These are really important part of ensuring the university's commitment to nondiscrimination and anti-harassment principles. In addition to these, anyone serving on a search committee at UConn is required to attend in person two hour search committee training. This can be a really good opportunity to learn more about how to ensure a comprehensive and equitable search and hiring process. In addition, we offer a large variety of customer tailored trainings on all of our areas of focus. We do a lot of training activity around Title IX for students and employees and also the ADA search and hiring and any other topic. We encourage anyone interested in scheduling a training to contact us and more information about our trainings can also be found on our website; which is equity.uconn.edu.

Question 3 - How can employees and students assist OIE in their work to maintain inclusive, safe, and non-discriminatory working and learning environments?

GUEST – ELIZABETH: - The university community has a shared responsibility to promote inclusion and equity. Every single person on campus has a role to play. A few specific things that folks can do is to actively participate in trainings and seek out training opportunities. I think it's particularly important for any managers listening, or student leaders to think about how can you promote this type of environment within your organization. One of those ways is to bring in training and educational opportunities. Another is to ensure that we are taking a closer review in our own day to day behaviors in the work and learning environments. I know UConn has a lot of policies, but the policy against discrimination, harassment and related interpersonal violence, which is UConn's main diversity discrimination policy, this is one that's worth reading every year. I recommend that every employee reread this every year at the start of the year, to remind themselves of the conduct expectations as well as the reporting and resources. Knowing reporting obligations and knowing what resources are for anyone who is impacted is really important as well. We know that anyone can end up being someone that fields a disclosure, or just a concern from someone and one of the best ways you can be an active community member is to make sure that you know about the resources, so that you could help a colleague or a friend that is going through something and need some support.

Question 4 – Where can our listeners get more information about, OIE and other helpful university resources?

GUEST – ELIZABETH: So, there's a lot more information on all of these areas of focus. As I mentioned, our main website is equity (the word) equity.uconn.edu. We also maintained two additional specifically tailored websites for Title IX and ADA for Title IX. That url is title IX (the letters I X) titleIX.uconn.edu as well as accessibility.uconn.edu. These have a lot of information and resources, including policies and forms and procedures. You certainly can always call us at OIE. That number at Storrs is 860-486-2943, at UConn Health where we also maintain offices. That phone number is 860-679-2097. We encourage you to reach out anytime anyone who's listening, if you have any questions or want to talk through any situation, we are open 8:00AM to 5:00PM, Monday through Friday throughout the year.

RESOURCES MENTIONED BY SPEAKERS:

<https://equity.uconn.edu/>

<https://titleix.uconn.edu/>

<https://accessibility.uconn.edu/>

860-486-2943 (UConn) or 860-679-2097 (UConn Health)

MUSIC CREDITS:

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Rollin at 5. Kevin MacLeod. Royalty Free 2014. Retrieved from: <http://incompetech.com/music/royalty-free/index.html?genre=Jazz>