



# PREGNANCY AND STUDENTS

Supporting pregnant students,  
and the laws that may apply

*SC Technical College System*

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# MEET YOUR FACILITATORS



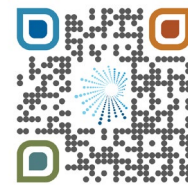
Kateeka Harris

Kateeka J. Harris has nearly two decades of experience in higher education including Title IX compliance, student conduct, multicultural program administration, and undergraduate admissions. Kateeka is a nationally recognized expert in Student Conduct and Title IX.

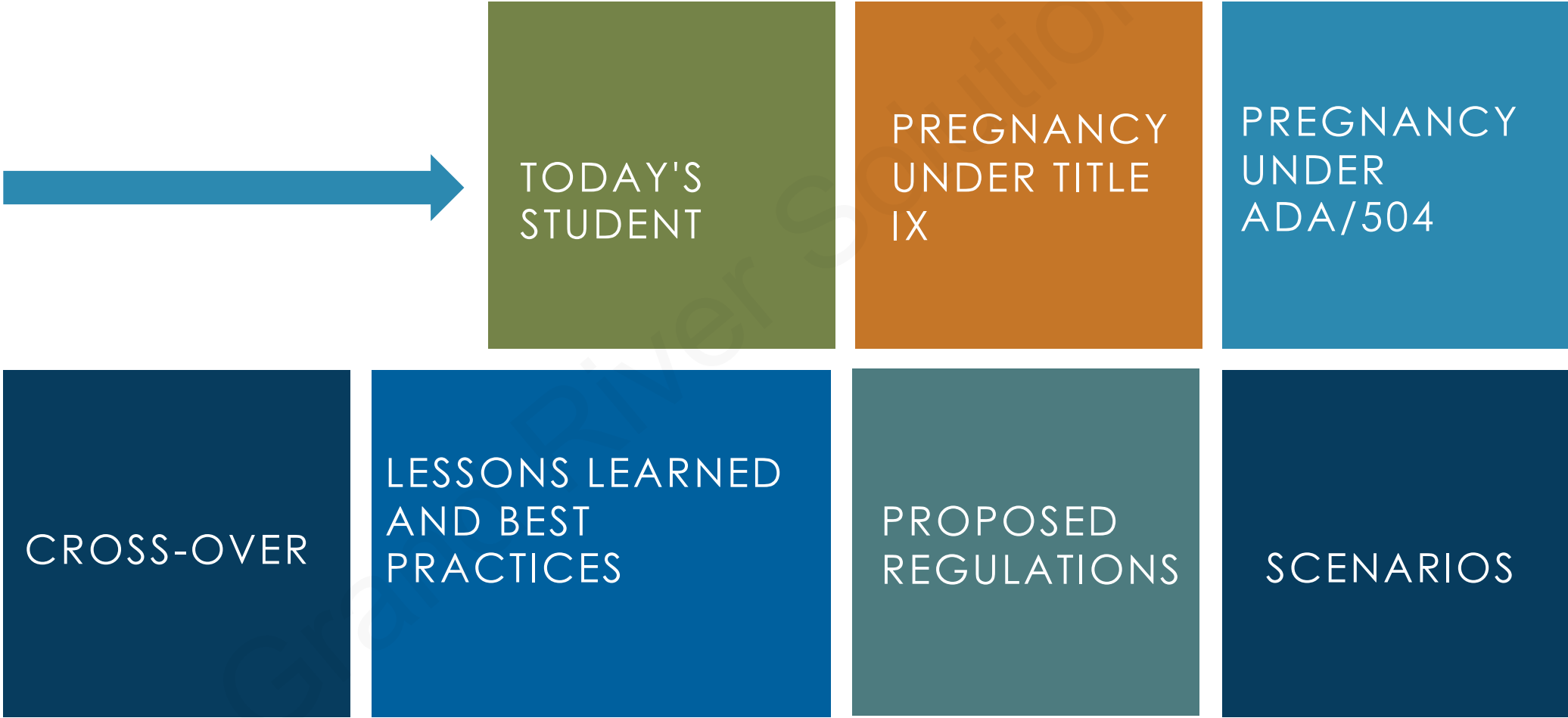


Eugene Smith

Dr. Eugene Smith is a Senior Solutions Specialist with Grand River Solutions. He has nine years of professional experience in student affairs, resource management, organizational strategy, change management, and program development. His experience includes policy and advocacy, diversity and anti-racist initiatives, and academic success programs for low-income and underrepresented populations.



# TODAY'S SESSION





# TODAY'S STUDENT

A greater number of college students weigh class schedules with family and parenting responsibilities



The birth rate for women aged 20–24 was 63.0 births per 1,000 women in 2020, down 5% from 2019 (66.6)



The rate for women aged 25–29 was 90.2 births per 1,000 women, down 4% from 2019 (93.7)



In 2020, the mean age of mothers at first birth was 27.1 years, an increase from 27.0 in 2019


# MORE ABOUT TODAY'S STUDENT...

- Globally and Socially Aware
- Digitally Connected and Plugged In
- Racially and Culturally Diverse
- First Gen (46%)
- Older (38% over age 25)
- Busier (25% raising children/64% working)
- Financially Strained (35% food and 9% home insecure)
- Too Many Stressors and Too Little Support





# HUMANS AND PRACTICES



“Life is never made unbearable by circumstances, but only by lack of meaning and purpose.”

Viktor Frankl, *Man's Search for Meaning*

# TITLE IX



Title IX of the Education Amendments of 1972 (“Title IX”), 20 U.S.C. §1681 et seq., is a Federal civil rights law that prohibits discrimination on the basis of sex – including pregnancy and parental status – in educational programs and activities.



# TITLE IX & Pregnancy



Cannot exclude or treat students (or employees or applicants) differently based on pregnancy or related conditions.

"Related conditions" include "childbirth, false pregnancy, termination of pregnancy, or recovery therefrom"



# TITLE IX OBLIGATIONS

Summary of the obligations relating to pregnant students

- Allow them to make up any missed work without penalty
- Treat them similarly to students with a temporary disability.
- They must be allowed to return to the same academic and extracurricular status as before their medical leave began.
- Must provide reasonable adjustments, like a larger desk, elevator access, or allowing frequent trips to the restroom



DO YOU HAVE A  
STUDENT LEAVE  
POLICY? DOES  
THIS STUDENT  
QUALIFY?

Treat pregnancy like a justification for a leave of absence for so long a period of time as deemed medically necessary by the student's doctor.

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# "TEMPORARY DISABILITY?"

Treat disabilities related to pregnancy and related conditions in the same manner and under the same policies as any other temporary disability or physical condition.



# TITLE IX

Nondiscrimination here is broad.

Extends to those experiencing pregnancy and related conditions, and treating parental/family status differently based on sex.

Equitable access and ability to fully participate in academic program, activities, practicums/field placements, and athletics

May include conditions arising from pregnancy, complicating pregnancy or resultant from pregnancy that might not otherwise be considered a disability/condition



# ADJUSTMENTS UNDER TITLE IX

“Medically necessary” based on assessment and “note” from treatment provider for immediate implementation

- Furniture size, shape, position
- Remote learning/hybrid learning
- Breaks, access to food or hydration
- Ability to reschedule tests
- Excused absences specific to treatment and care
- Late submission of expected work
- Alternative make up work of similar or like nature
- Excused absences for parenting and medical care for infant or child

# RULES ON STATUS

## WHAT IT SAYS

A recipient shall not apply any rule concerning a student's actual or potential parental, family, or marital status which treats students differently on the basis of sex.

*34 CFR 106.40*

## WHAT IT MEANS

You can't require married women or mothers to drop out but allow married men or fathers to stay enrolled. That's different treatment on the basis of sex concerning parental, family, or marital status.



# WHAT ABOUT "PARENTS" AND "PARENTING?"

Cannot apply a rule about the actual or potential parental or marital status of a student, applicant, or employee that treats people differently based on sex.

These are from 1975!



# AMERICANS WITH DISABILITIES ACT AND SECTION 504

## ADA

“...no qualified individual with a disability shall, by reason of such disability, be excluded from participation in or be denied the benefits of the services, programs, or activities of a public entity, or be subjected to discrimination by any such entity.”

*Americans With Disabilities Act of 1990, 42 U.S.C. § 12101 et seq. (1990).*

## SECTION 504

"No otherwise qualified individual with a disability in the United States . . . shall, solely by reason of her or his disability, be excluded from the participation in, be denied the benefits of, or be subjected to discrimination under any program or activity receiving Federal financial assistance . . . ."

*Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 (29 U.S.C.) Code of Federal Regulations, title 28 (2002):516-544*

# QUALIFIED INDIVIDUAL WITH A DISABILITY



The term "qualified [otherwise qualified] individual with a disability" means an individual with a disability who, with or without reasonable modifications to rules, policies, or practices, the removal of architectural, communication, or transportation barriers, or the provision of auxiliary aids and services, meets the essential eligibility requirements for the receipt of services or the participation in programs or activities provided by a public entity.

*Americans With Disabilities Act of 1990, 42 U.S.C. § 12101 et seq. (1990).*



# ADA/504 AND PREGNANCY

Pregnancy, alone, is not a disability...EXCEPT UNDER...



## SECTION 504

It may be considered a temporary disability in certain circumstances.

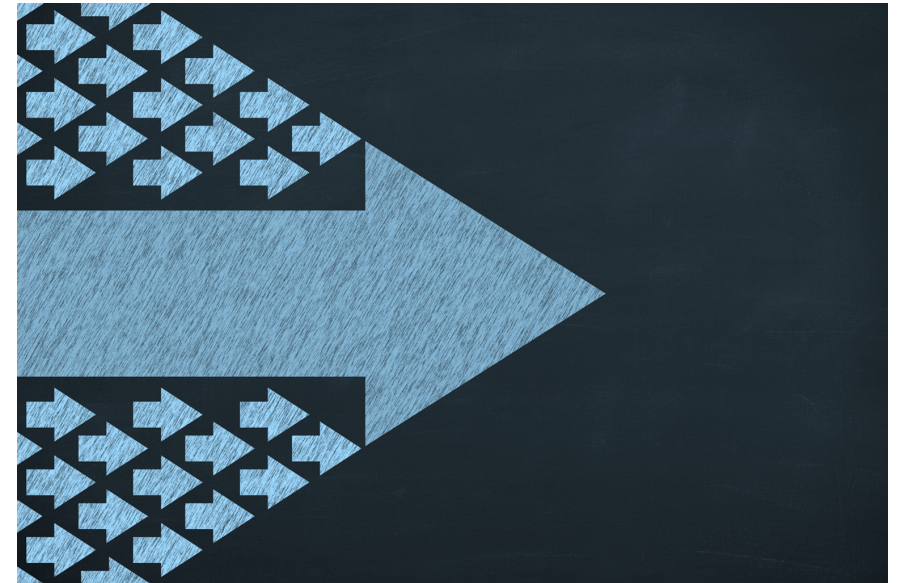
## ADA

It may be considered a disability when one or more impairments related to pregnancy are present OR when a condition arising from pregnancy becomes long-lasting (i.e.: post partum depression or gestational diabetes that becomes Type II)

# ACCOMMODATIONS UNDER ADA/504

Substantiation of a disability or condition that significantly impacts major life function and/or bodily condition based on documentation from a qualified professional and implemented as a part of an ADA interactive process but not retroactively

- Ability to extend test taking time up to 2x allotted
- Notetaker
- Ability to record lectures
- OTHERS-- based on identified disability/condition





# PRIVACY CONSIDERATIONS

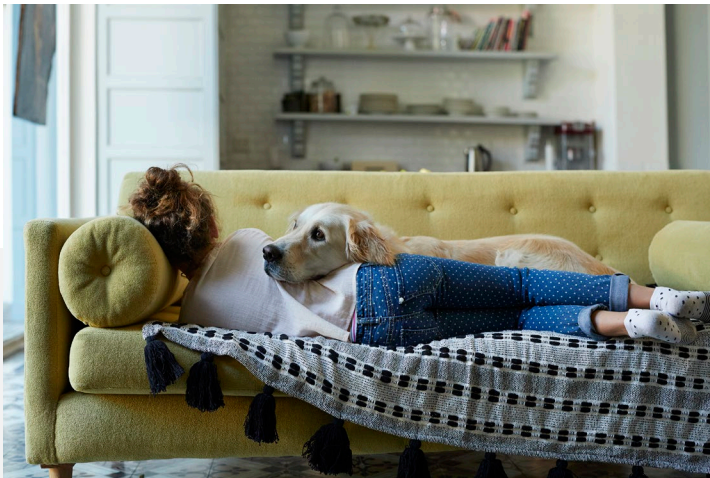
If there is a determination that information is needed that would substantiate the disability/condition, some considerations regarding privacy may include:

- Follow your privacy policies (including FERPA).
- Be mindful of what documents are requested and collected – what's actually necessary?
- How are you storing and securing files?
- Educating faculty members about how (not) to request medical information from the student
- Educating student on their rights to access and privacy.



# WHAT'S THE DIFFERENCE?

Title IX affords adjustments and/or support measures while ADA/504 affords access and accommodation; each ensure equitable access to educational programs or activities.



Adjustments are time-limited for the period of the documented “medical necessity”



Supportive measures have no medical requirements ; they require only a request as related to a Title IX matter



Accommodations require the presence of a “qualified” disability and/or condition



# POLICY TO PRACTICE

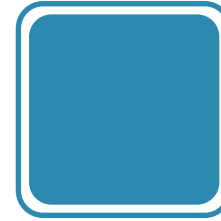
Policies account not only for regulation but provide for a process that is understandable and –

- Identify a single point of first entry (a proactive practice)
- Provide consistent information using the correct terms and definitions
- Support the student into the correct lane or lanes to begin
- Identify appropriate services supports

# PRACTICES THAT ACTUALIZE...

- A one-stop type of service and support consistent information and centralized reporting
- Timely consultation/communication between involved offices
- Effective case management team approach (multiple offices)
- Regular communication between involved offices and the individual student
- Documentation at each stage of service
- Education, education, education to the campus community

# RECENT ED RESOLUTIONS & GUIDANCE



JUNE 2022

Salt Lake Community College  
Resolution Agreement



October 2022

Pregnancy and Parenting  
Resource



January 2023

Troy University Resolution Agreement

# LESSONS LEARNED

Make reasonable responsive adjustments

Provide accessible information for pregnant students

Designate a central contact to centralize response

Respond promptly to pregnancy discrimination complaints

Engage in the interactive process

Consider whether there is a temporary disability

Train employees on your rules and process



# IMPLEMENTATION

Review or create  
leave policy

Update  
community  
trainings to  
include  
pregnancy+

Create resources  
for pregnant  
students for the  
web, handbooks

Remember  
student-  
employees

Review  
policies to  
ensure  
inclusion of  
pregnancy+

Outreach  
and  
collaboration  
with  
stakeholders

Identify  
lactation  
space

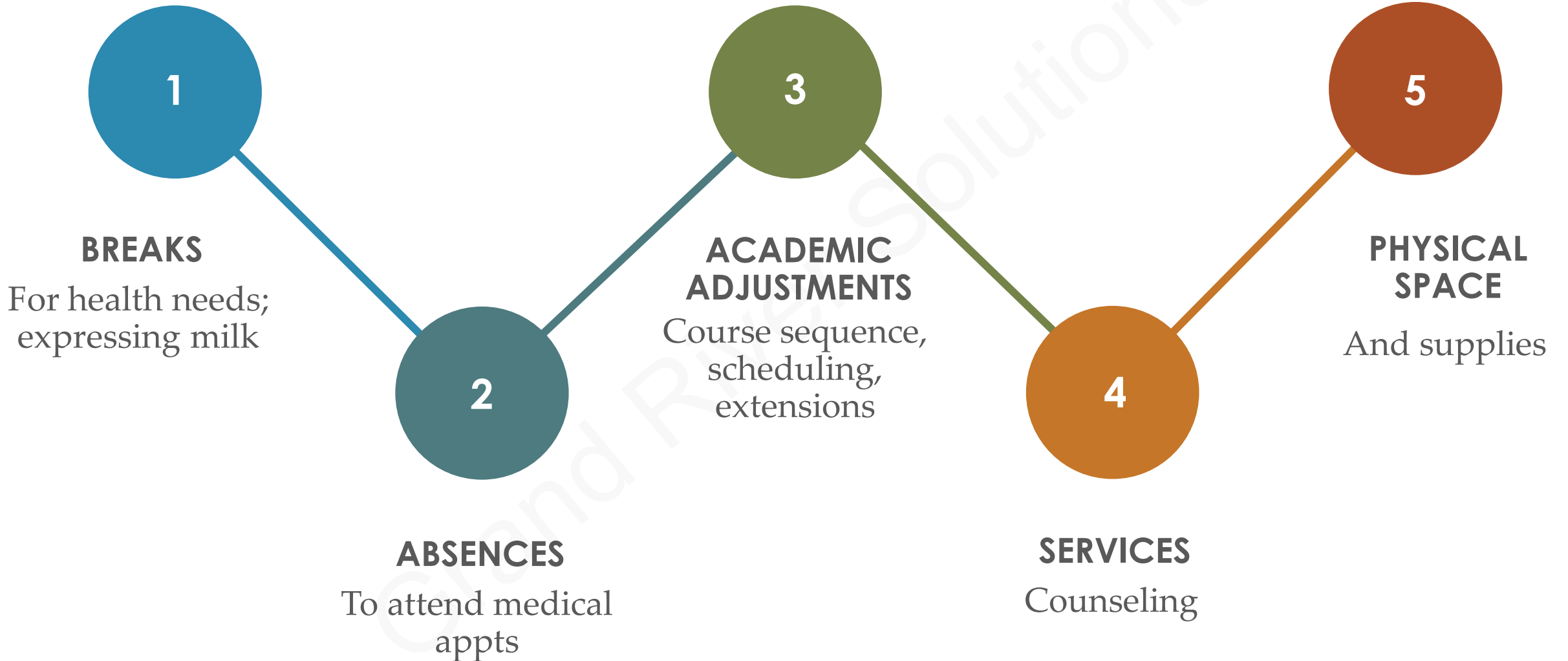
Get  
feedback  
from  
students  
with  
experience

Coordinate with  
accessibility  
office

# TRANSITION

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# PROPOSED REGULATIONS: MODIFY Non-Exhaustive



# PROPOSED REGULATIONS: NOTIFY

## Let pregnant students know about the school's obligations:

- Prohibit sex discrimination, including sex-based harassment;
- Provide the student with the option of reasonable modifications;
- Allow access, on a voluntary basis, to any separate and comparable portion of the education program or activity;
- Allow a voluntary leave of absence;
- Ensure the availability of lactation space;
- Maintain grievance procedures that provide for the prompt and equitable resolution of complaints of sex discrimination.





# PROPOSED REGULATIONS: SPACE (& TIME)

For expressing breastmilk or breastfeeding as needed



# WHAT ABOUT....



What about a space with an outlet?



What if a student misses a lot of class time?



Does this mean we have to let babies go to class or come to work?

# OUTSTANDING QUESTIONS RE PROPOSED RULES

- Department of Education could address the overlap between existing laws
- Records maintenance requirements for these very private records; open records laws
- Do we want schools tracking who is or was pregnant? And if their status changes?

# SLIDE ON PRACTICAL IMPLICATIONS

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# WHAT WOULD YOU DO IF...?

## Scenario 1

Fatima is a senior in a very fast-moving BSN nursing program. She was elated to discover she is pregnant, but complications have developed, and she is undergoing tests. Fatima has completed most of her senior practical placement, only two weeks remain before she is able to graduate. Her medical provider has encouraged a change in diet and bed rest as soon as possible.

Fatima goes to the Clinical Site Coordinator (not an employee of the university but of the hospital, a university partner) to request the ability to complete her practical hours early (several days in a row to equal the remaining 4 days of required practical). Fatima's request is denied and the Site Coordinator shares that when she was in school, she had a miscarriage, took care of in the bathroom and "just soldiered on."

Further, the Site Coordinator contacts the Practical Coordinator at the university citing Fatima's unprofessional conduct in the situation and requests Fatima be removed and required to repeat the entire term.

Fatima, believing she has a right to 504 accommodations comes into the Accessibility Office and discloses her situation to be told that pregnancy is not a qualifying condition. Somehow, Fatima ends up at the Dean of Student Office. What might the Dean do to help?

# WHAT WOULD YOU DO IF...?

## Scenario 2

Jon, an average student in a challenging program, approaches his professor early in the semester and requests to have the ability to make up the next 3 class sessions because, he is happy to announce, he is “having a baby with his male partner.”

The professor laughs, asks Jon if he is pulling a prank on him, and is then alleged to have replied: “Gay men don’t have babies” before he denies Jon’s request.

Jon immediately goes to the Chair of his program in engineering and is told by the Chair that the Chair cannot overrule the professor, who is “captain of his course’s ship.” The Chair also cites the request would be a fundamental alternation of the curriculum and he is concerned this change would be precedent setting.

Upset and disheartened, Jon goes to his academic advisor and requests a retroactive withdrawal from the course. Jon is willing to take the financial hit but is not going to miss the birth of his infant daughter. The advisor is irate and soon after Jon leaves, tells another colleague, who discourages any type of reporting because the professor in question is a “big deal” in the endowment world of the university. You get wind of this issue at a meeting regarding another issue within the same department.

# SOME CASE REFERENCES

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Troy University, AL OCR# 04-21-2060 (2023) Failure to engage and offer adjustments  
<https://www2.ed.gov/about/offices/list/ocr/docs/investigations/more/04212060-a.pdf>

Salt Lake Community College OCR# 08-22-2021 (2022) Policy and practices leading to forced drop  
<https://www2.ed.gov/about/offices/list/ocr/docs/investigations/more/08222021-b.pdf>

University of Maine at Fort Kent OCR# 01-17-2317 (2020) Policy, procedures and qualified personnel  
<https://www2.ed.gov/about/offices/list/ocr/docs/investigations/more/01172317-a.pdf>

Northeastern University OCR# 01-19-2158 (2019) Failure to provide adjustments  
<https://www2.ed.gov/about/offices/list/ocr/docs/investigations/more/01192158-a.pdf>

Rivertown School of Beauty OCR# 04-15-2363 (2019) Dismissal at 7 months based on pregnancy based on policy that violated Title IX  
<https://www2.ed.gov/about/offices/list/ocr/docs/investigations/more/04152363-a.pdf>

California State University East Bay OCR# 09-18-2245 (2017) Pregnancy related hospitalization  
<https://www2.ed.gov/about/offices/list/ocr/docs/investigations/more/09182245-a.pdf>

Questions?

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# THANKS FOR JOINING US!

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