



# 2024 REPORT



---

TITLE IX



# CONTENTS

---

<b>Introduction</b>	
Our Mission . . . . .	6
Our History . . . . .	6
Our Model . . . . .	8
<b>Our Work</b>	
Compliance and Evaluation . . . . .	9
Policies and Procedures . . . . .	11
Mandatory Reporter Training . . . . .	14
<b>Prevention and Education</b>	
Impact . . . . .	16
<b>Title IX Team . . . . .</b>	<b>17</b>

An electronic version of this report  
can be accessed online:

[titleix.tennessee.edu](http://titleix.tennessee.edu)

---

## INTRODUCTION

---

*“No person in the United States shall, on the basis of sex, be excluded from participation in, be denied the benefits of, or be subjected to discrimination under any education program or activity receiving federal financial assistance.”*

Title IX of the Education Amendments of 1972

The University of Tennessee System’s Office of Title IX is committed to supporting and enhancing Title IX compliance on all UT campuses and institutes. The Office of Title IX works in partnership with the Title IX Coordinators and Title IX-affiliated staff across the system to promote campus Title IX processes that are comprehensive, fair-minded, and well-informed.

The Office of Title IX publishes this annual report each year to provide a transparent summary of our work, increase awareness of education, prevention, and support initiatives, highlight the dedicated work of our campus staff members and their community partners, and ensure ongoing accountability to those we serve. This year, the practice continues, with the added goal of sharing an anticipated federal update that will impact our work.

On June 23, 2022, the U.S. Department of Education’s Office for Civil Rights (OCR) issued new proposed Title IX regulations. A three-month public comment period followed the release of the draft regulations. On April 19, [the Department of Education’s Office for Civil Rights](#) issued new regulations mandating how the University of Tennessee, Knoxville, and all other colleges

and universities address cases under Title IX, a federal statute that prohibits discrimination on the basis of sex in any federally funded education program and activity.

The regulations received more than 240,000 comments during the notice and comment period. The final rule including the preamble is over 1500 pages long and will become effective on August 1. We have closely followed the development of the proposed regulation, but there are significant and meaningful changes to the final rule. Our UT System is working collaboratively to review the regulation and draft updated policy and procedure, while monitoring the legal landscape.



While any new regulations will likely require revisions to current Title IX policies and practices across the UT System, the Office of Title IX previously oversaw the timely implementation of the current Title IX regulations after OCR released them in May of 2020 (with an August 2020 implementation deadline). We will once again utilize the benefits of a state-wide system and work closely with our campus Title IX Coordinators to identify and update all relevant policies, practices, communications, and websites. We are hosting a UT Systemwide Roundtable this summer to ensure the system’s compliance.

As the regulatory landscape evolves, the ongoing work of cultivating a safe and nondiscriminatory learning, living, and working environment belongs to us all.

Respectfully,  
**Ashley Blamey, Title IX Coordinator**

### Our Mission

Our mission is to serve the University of Tennessee community through our comprehensive Title IX Commitment by ensuring access to education programs and activities free of sex-based discrimination.

### Our History

Since Title IX's enactment in 1972, the University of Tennessee has worked to ensure institutional compliance with its federal requirements. Each campus and institute has established systems, policies, and processes that have evolved over time, in accordance with revised federal guidance and court rulings. Additionally, as expectations for how institutions of higher education address, respond to, and remedy instances of sex-based harassment have grown, the University has worked both proactively and responsively to meet those expectations.

- In September 2016, then UT President Joe DiPietro appointed an independent commission to review and address Title IX compliance across the UT System. The commission released observations and recommendations in June of 2017 for university review.
- In November of 2018, the Department of Education published proposed Title IX regulations.
- The final Title IX regulations went into effect on August 14, 2020. In preparation for complying with the new regulations, the UT Office of Title IX worked collaboratively with campuses to incorporate the regulatory requirements into existing campus policy while responding to both campus needs and community expectations for compliance.

- The System developed a templated Policy on Sexual Harassment, Sexual Assault, Dating and Domestic Violence, and Stalking for use by all campuses, which produced shared definitions and a common framework while also allowing for customization and localization by each campus and institute as required by its own resources and jurisdiction.
- The 2020 regulation, in addition to the independent commission's report, served to guide the Office of Title IX's strategic plan to enhance Title IX compliance across the UT System. Enhancements include:
  - *Creation of a UT System Office of Title IX in 2017 to provide a system-wide Title IX coordinating presence and support cross-system Title IX compliance*
  - *Campus Title IX staffing and resource enhancements*
  - *Policy, grievance procedure, and Student Code of Conduct updates and modifications*
  - *Case management and care and support enhancements*
  - *Enhanced education, prevention, and training*
  - *System-wide Title IX employee training*
  - *System-wide guidance and support for conducting federally compliant Title IX Hearings*

## Our Model



Utilizing the commission’s report, national benchmarking, and current research, the University of Tennessee has identified our Title IX commitment. Grounded in the Social-Ecological Model, the University’s Title IX commitment emphasizes five key areas:



**Policy:** Our foundation is in the policy and procedures we follow.

**Prevention and Education:** Our goal is to prevent sexual misconduct, relationship violence, stalking and retaliation before they happen.

**Support and Interim Measures:** Our promise is to provide support and appropriate supportive measures to individuals involved in the Title IX process.

**Investigation and Resolution:** Our commitments to due process, campus safety and encouraging reporting guide how we investigate and resolve reports.

**Patterns and Trends:** Our responsibility is to use the best available research, evidence-based practice and our own campus and institute trends in our prevention and response efforts.

## Compliance and Evaluation

The University is engaged in an ongoing effort to improve its Title IX compliance activities. The Title IX coordinator uses a collaborative approach and supports the utilization of best practices throughout the UT system. This past year, the Office of Title IX primarily focused on continued support for compliance under the 2020 Title IX regulation.

The Office of Title IX supported systemwide compliance through the following ongoing and completed objectives:

- i. Developed and facilitated the Campus Title IX Compliance Self-Assessment Tool completed by each campus and institute.

The self-assessment tool was designed to empower and guide campuses in:

- (1)** Navigating complex federal Title IX regulatory requirements;
- (2)** Conducting routine and active inspections of campus compliance with federal Title IX requirements for campus grievance procedures;
- (3)** Conducting routine and active inspections of campus compliance with federal Title IX requirements for campus athletics programs;
- (4)** Performing routine and active reviews of campus Title IX compliance efforts to identify a variety of miscellaneous risks of noncompliance, including areas of regulatory overlap or any organizational, legislative, or other changes. Campus coordinators reported increased awareness of their own policies, clarification on procedures, and opportunities for future consideration regarding policy.

- ii. Continued support for campus and institute structures through routine meetings, case consultation, ongoing legal updates, and up-to-date guidance documents.

- 
- iii. Supported campus level investigations and adjudications with coordination of Hearing Officers.
  - iv. Hosted the annual system-wide training required by the Title IX regulations with to ensure system wide compliance without cost to campuses. Recorded and made available through K@TE for ongoing use and resource to campus and institute coordinators, investigators, hearing officers, and decision makers.

*In the spring of 2019, UT developed a standard format for reporting and tracking Title IX-related data across the System. The University updated its recordkeeping systems to comply with the terms and definitions under revised Title IX policies. The information collected by each campus is published in a campus Annual Title IX Report. Campus Title IX annual reports can be accessed online via the following campus links:*

[UT KNOXVILLE](#)

[UT CHATTANOOGA](#)

[UT MARTIN](#)

[UT SOUTHERN](#)

[UT HEALTH SCIENCE CENTER](#)

## OUR WORK

---

### Policies and Procedures

The University's Title IX-related policies provide guidance for specific activities and communications so that the institution acts in accordance with applicable laws and in a way that supports the mission and core values of the University. Each campus implemented new Title IX-related policies in response to 2020's new federal Title IX regulation.

Campus policies outline the rights and responsibilities of faculty, staff, and students as they pertain to Title IX.

*Key provisions of the University's response to the 2020 regulations include:*

#### Definition of Sexual Harassment

Campuses have adopted the Title IX regulation definition of sexual harassment.

#### Jurisdiction

Campuses incorporated the regulation's jurisdictional requirements into their Policy on Sexual Harassment, Sexual Assault, Dating and Domestic Violence, and Stalking. Campuses address both Title IX and Non-Title IX Prohibited Conduct in the same Policy.

#### Training Requirements

System-wide training for Title IX officials is provided each year. The training materials are [posted](#) online and uploaded in **K@TE**.

## OUR WORK

---

### Standard of Evidence

Campuses continue to use the preponderance of the evidence standard.

### Informal Resolution

Campuses offer and facilitate informal resolution options as allowed by the regulation.

### Supportive Measures

Campuses continue to provide support resources to individuals who report Title IX and Non-Title IX Prohibited Conduct and to those who receive formal notice of investigation of alleged Title IX and Non-Title IX Prohibited Conduct.

### Investigation and Grievance Process

Title IX Prohibited Conduct is addressed through the Title IX hearing process. All other Prohibited Conduct (Non-Title IX) is addressed using the resolution options in place prior to the 2020 regulatory transition.

Complaints regarding discrimination based on sex are addressed by campus policies and procedures.

*Campus policies and procedures can be accessed via the following links:*

[University of Tennessee, Knoxville / Institute of Agriculture / Institute for Public Service / UT System](#)

[University of Tennessee at Chattanooga](#)

[University of Tennessee at Martin](#)

[University of Tennessee Southern](#)

[University of Tennessee Health Science Center](#)

[University of Tennessee Space Institute](#)

*In addition to the policies referenced above, the University's Chattanooga and Knoxville campuses have dedicated Student Pregnancy Accommodations policies. The policies can be found online:*

[UTK - Student Pregnancy Accommodations](#)

[UTC - Student Pregnancy Accommodations](#)



## Mandatory Reporter Training

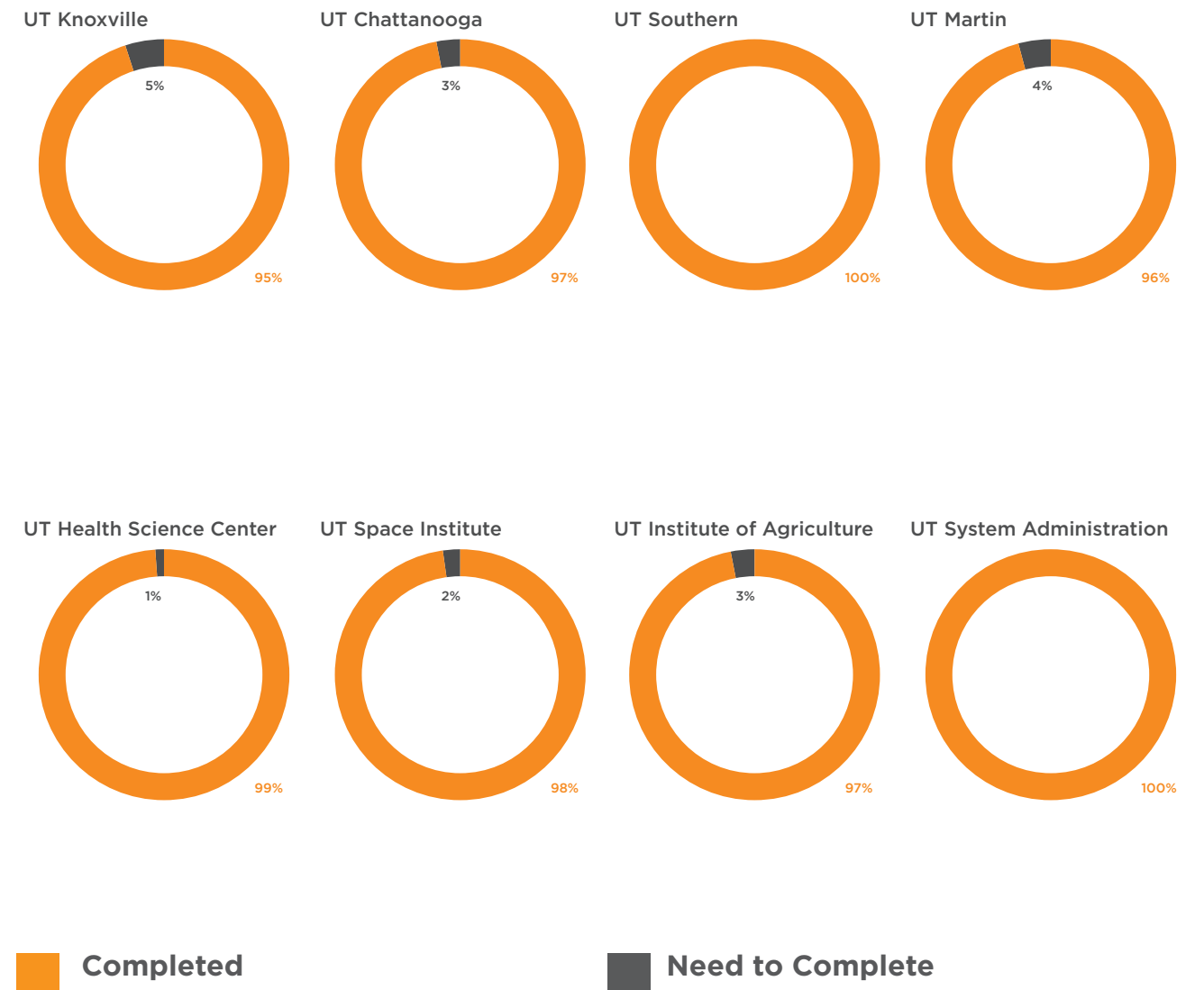
Federal law requires UT System campuses to designate at least some employees as officials with the authority to respond to known reports of sexual harassment. UT policy refers to such officials as "Mandatory Reporters," and nearly all campus employees (generally only excluding employees deemed confidential by licensure) serve as Mandatory Reporters when reports concern students. The policy requires Mandatory Reporters to forward reports or information about alleged sexual harassment or sexual violence under the policy to the campus' Title IX Coordinator for review. Such referrals provide the Title IX Coordinators the ability to contact alleged complainants with care and support resources, safety information, and options for reporting to police or a university investigator, and ensure our ability to monitor patterns and trends. Providing annual training to Mandatory Reporters is critical, as referrals from Mandatory Reporters to campus Title IX Coordinators account for a large number of campus reports. It also provides a foundation of the campus and community expectations.



UTK Mandatory Resource Card

## OUR WORK

UT campuses clearly communicated training requirements for the 2023 - 2024 academic year and routinely encouraged employees to complete the training. Such efforts resulted in the following strong training completion rates for fulltime staff and faculty as well as members of the UT System:





## PREVENTION & EDUCATION

---

### Impact

UT Knoxville aligns with the System Title IX model with an emphasis on cross-campus collaborations and teamwork to improve prevention and increase reporting. UT Knoxville has identified four teams that work cooperatively to drive decision making, evaluate progress, track research, provide prevention and oversight and support initiatives that ensure a comprehensive University commitment.

## TITLE IX TEAM

---



### Ashley Blamey

*TITLE IX COORDINATOR  
UNIVERSITY OF TENNESSEE SYSTEM ADMINISTRATION AND  
UNIVERSITY OF TENNESSEE, KNOXVILLE  
[ashleyblamey@utk.edu](mailto:ashleyblamey@utk.edu)*

Ashley Blamey serves in a dual role as Title IX coordinator for the UT System and UT Knoxville. Serving in both capacities, Blamey facilitates critical communication between officials with UT System and all UT campuses. Enhanced communication and interaction across the University system enables more informed decision making and evaluation of practices by all UT campuses.

As system-level coordinator, Blamey is responsible for tracking best practices and legal developments; collaborating with other UT Title IX officials in policy evaluation and development; measuring program effectiveness; identifying optimal training, prevention and awareness building efforts and resources for implementation; and overseeing annual reporting on the frequency and nature of incidents and complaints.

As UT Knoxville coordinator, Blamey is responsible for coordinating campus efforts to comply with and carry out Title IX responsibilities including promptly, thoroughly and equitably investigating and resolving reports of prohibited conduct to eliminate prohibited conduct, prevent its recurrence and remedy its effects.

Blamey has a bachelor's degree in special education from East Tennessee State University and both master's and doctoral degrees in social work from UT Knoxville. She joined UT Knoxville in 2008 as its inaugural student case management specialist. She has served the campus as the director for the Center for Health Education and Wellness and assistant vice chancellor for student life. Blamey is currently the University's representative on the National Academies of Sciences, Engineering, and Medicine Action Collaborative to prevent sexual harassment in higher education. Under her leadership, UT Knoxville was awarded a grant from the U.S. Department of Justice to develop best practices related to education about and prevention of sexual assault, domestic violence, dating violence and stalking.



## Michelle Buck

*DEPUTY TITLE IX COMPLIANCE COORDINATOR  
UNIVERSITY OF TENNESSEE SYSTEM ADMINISTRATION  
[michellebuck@tennessee.edu](mailto:michellebuck@tennessee.edu)*

Michelle Buck joined the University of Tennessee System in November of 2021 as the deputy Title IX compliance coordinator. Buck's role serves the system campuses by tracking legal developments, collaborating with other UT Title IX officials in policy evaluation and development, providing investigative and case adjudication support, and serving as a general resource for UT System Title IX compliance.

Before joining the UT System, Buck spent five years serving the UT Knoxville campus, first as a Title IX investigator, and later as an associate director in the Office of Equity in Diversity. Before moving to Tennessee, Buck served as the assistant director of academic success and student affairs at the Mercer University Walter F. George School of Law in Macon, Georgia. Buck is licensed to practice law in Illinois and Georgia. She earned her Bachelor of Arts degrees in English literature and political science from Miami University in Oxford, OH, and her Juris Doctor at Temple University's Beasley School of Law in Philadelphia, PA.



## Dominique Crockett

*DIRECTOR OF EQUITY AND DIVERSITY  
TITLE IX COORDINATOR  
UNIVERSITY OF TENNESSEE MARTIN  
[dcrock12@utm.edu](mailto:dcrock12@utm.edu)*

Dominique Crockett began her service as UTM's Director of Equity and Diversity, and Title IX Coordinator, in February of 2022. Prior to joining UTM, Crockett spent more than three years at UTHSC as an Assurance Officer, and more than four years working for the Louisiana Department of Health. Crockett earned a Bachelor of Science in biology at Southern University and A&M College and a Master's of health administration at Louisiana State University.

## TITLE IX TEAM



## Sarah Catherine Richardson

*DIRECTOR OF STUDENT LIFE AND TITLE IX COORDINATOR  
UNIVERSITY OF TENNESSEE SOUTHERN  
[scrich@utsouthern.edu](mailto:scrich@utsouthern.edu)*

Sarah Catherine Richardson became Title IX Coordinator at the former Martin Methodist College in October 2019, and, upon the creation of UT Southern, continued in that role beginning in July 2022. Richardson also serves UT Southern as Director of Student Life and Chief Diversity Officer, and in all these roles works to provide students with the most supported, personalized education possible. Her approach to Title IX at UT Southern hinges on her accessibility to all members of the community to encourage prompt reports and thoughtful dialogues across campus. Richardson works closely with Athletics, HR, and Academic Affairs to ensure compliance, in addition to student-facing efforts to provide education focused on prevention, healthy relationships, and consent. Prior to joining UT Southern, Richardson worked at Saint Anselm College in Manchester, New Hampshire and Boston College in Chestnut Hill, Massachusetts. Originally from Mississippi, she obtained both her bachelor's and master's degrees from Boston College before relocating back down south.



## Michael Alston

*ASSOCIATE VICE CHANCELLOR, CHIEF DIVERSITY OFFICER, AND TITLE IX COORDINATOR  
UNIVERSITY OF TENNESSEE HEALTH SCIENCE CENTER  
[malston1@uthsc.edu](mailto:malston1@uthsc.edu)*

Michael Alston is the associate vice chancellor, chief diversity officer, and Title IX coordinator at UTHSC. His career at UTHSC spans 20 plus years in various roles within the Office of Inclusion, Equity, and Diversity (OIED). Previously, he served as employee relations specialist, student conduct officer, and Title IX coordinator.

In leading the Office of Inclusion, Equity, and Diversity at UTHSC, Alston also chairs the Diversity and Inclusion Advisory Council (DIAC) and serves as the Title VI coordinator and Americans with Disabilities Act coordinator for the campus. His OIED team has implemented several popular programs around diversity and inclusion and social justice including the Diversity Certificate Program (DCP), Inclusive Engagement Program (IEP) the IMPACT Awards and the Diversity and Inclusion Book Club. Alston came to UTHSC from UT Knoxville where he served as associate director for admissions in the Memphis office. In that role, Alston led UT Knoxville's student recruitment efforts in Memphis and West Tennessee. Prior to UT Knoxville, Alston worked at UT Martin in the areas of admissions and residence life, respectively. Alston earned a Master of Science in educational psychology from UT Martin, a Doctor of Education from Peabody College at Vanderbilt University, and a Bachelor of Science in psychology from UT Martin.

---

## TITLE IX TEAM

---



### Patricia Burks-Jelks

*DIRECTOR OF HUMAN RESOURCES, EQUITY AND DIVERSITY OFFICER, AND TITLE IX COORDINATOR  
UNIVERSITY OF TENNESSEE SPACE INSTITUTE  
[pjelks@utsi.edu](mailto:pjelks@utsi.edu)*

Patricia Burks-Jelks has been employed with the University of Tennessee Space Institute (UTSI) in Tullahoma for more than 30 years where she serves as Title IX coordinator, director for human resources and equity and diversity officer. She is a graduate of Middle Tennessee State University where she earned a Bachelor's Degree in Social Work and a Master's Degree in Professional Studies, with an emphasis in strategic leadership. She is also a graduate of the UT Leadership Institute.

For a second stint, Burks-Jelks has recently been elected as president of Women in Higher Education in Tennessee (WHET). In conjunction with this appointment, the organization awarded her the "June Anderson Award" recognizing her "outstanding contributions in promoting equality for women in higher education." She received this same award from the organization in 2012. Patricia is the past president of the Highland Rim Chapter of the Society for Human Resource Management (SHRM) and continues to serve on this board in an advisory capacity. She is also a past president of the Tennessee Chapter of the College and University Professional Association for HR (CUPA-HR). During her CUPA-HR leadership, she was awarded the "Meritorious Service Award" from Southern Region CUPAHR recognizing her leadership and recognizing her as a pioneer for being the Tennessee chapter's first African American President.

In her community, Burks-Jelks serves as executive director for the Franklin County Faith Based Recovery Coalition, a non-profit that supports individuals and families in recovery.



### Anitra Barrett

*DIRECTOR OF TITLE IX COMPLIANCE AND TITLE IX COORDINATOR  
UNIVERSITY OF TENNESSEE CHATTANOOGA  
[anitra-barrett@utc.edu](mailto:anitra-barrett@utc.edu)*

Anitra Barrett is the Director of Title IX Compliance and the Title IX Coordinator for the University of Tennessee at Chattanooga's (UTC) Office of Title IX Compliance. Originally from North Carolina, she received her Juris Doctorate from North Carolina Central School of Law and Bachelor of Arts in English from North Carolina Central University in Durham, NC.

Barrett holds a Title IX Coordinator certification from National Association of Student Personnel Administrators and a Certified Affirmative Action Professional certification from the American Association for Access, Equity & Diversity. She serves on the Executive Committee of the Commission on the Status of Women, an organization created by the Chancellor as part of a strategic focus on increased diversity, inclusion, and engagement in all facets of UTC. She is also the Co-Chair of the University's Exempt Staff Council and served as the Advocacy & Outreach Chair of the Black Faculty & Staff Association from 2020 to 2022. Barrett completed the 2022 Rising Leaders Institute cohort of the American Association of Blacks in Higher Education Leadership & Mentoring Institute.

Barrett began working at UTC in 2016, as the Manager of Communications and Clery Compliance at the UTC Police Department and later joined UTC's Office of Equity & Inclusion as a Compliance Investigator and Equity Consultant in December 2020.

Before joining UTC, Barrett served as the Civil Rights Investigator at the County of Riverside Department of Public Social Services (DPSS) in Riverside, California where she investigated discrimination allegations under Title VI and assisted in the development and implementation of ongoing Civil Rights training for staff, in the preparation of the Annual Civil Rights Report and ensured that access to DPSS facilities was ADA compliant.



To learn more or become involved with our work visit:  
[titleix.tennessee.edu](https://titleix.tennessee.edu) or contact Title IX Coordinator  
Ashley Blamey at [ashleyblamey@utk.edu](mailto:ashleyblamey@utk.edu).

Campus Title IX annual reports can be accessed  
online via the following campus links:

[University of Tennessee, Knoxville](#)

[University of Tennessee at Chattanooga](#)

[University of Tennessee at Martin](#)

[University of Tennessee Southern](#)

[University of Tennessee Health Science Center](#)

[University of Tennessee Space Institute](#)



<https://titleix.tennessee.edu>