

Wherever you are...

**we're here for you**

TITLE IX | ADA | DIVERSITY, EQUITY & INCLUSION

*the  
mission  
continues*

STEPHENS  
COLLEGE

## Myths, Facts, Questions and Answers from the Stephens College Equity Offices

### ✦ Diversity, Equity and Inclusion – Director Shaashawn Dial '98

The Office of Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion is here for YOU – an email, phone call, Zoom away. Myths have grown out of stereotypes, prejudice, discrimination, and oppression in our society. These false beliefs not only shame underrepresented and marginalized individuals and groups; they also hurt our collective ability to acknowledge, discuss, and take action to create diverse, equitable, inclusive, and just environments. Today is an opportunity to increase your knowledge and share it with someone else.

**MYTH:** Diversity is a problem or deficit and investing in DEI is a sign of weakness, cannot be measured, and should just 'be' with no effort.

**FACT:** Diversity is an opportunity – a gift. Demonstrating a robust commitment to ongoing DEI planning, coordination, implementation, and assessment is a positive sign that Stephens takes these ideals/ principles seriously. Potential students, colleagues, and work force development partners who value DEI look for visible manifestations of DEI efforts in selecting what college to attend, where to work, and where to hire graduates from.

**MYTH:** Diversity is the sole responsibility of the Director of DEI and senior leadership team.

**FACT:** Like recruitment and retention, DEI is everyone's responsibility; and all students, staff, faculty, alumnae play a significant role in successfully achieving the goals of the Stephens DEI plan that assists Stephens in creating an institution-wide equitable, inclusive, and just learning, living, and working environment. Equitable and inclusive environments require consistent work on relationships, structures, symbols, research/ evaluation via statistics, and politics by advantaged and disadvantaged individuals and groups.

**MYTH:** Title VI or Title VII are sufficient to address discrimination.

**FACT:** Title VI and Title VII address discrimination but do so only after an instance of discrimination has been claimed and reported. Positive, proactive, and preemptive steps like trainings, Human Resources promising practices, data collection via self-identifying surveys, policy and procedure reviews and more assist in eliminating discrimination, rather than waiting for an after-the-fact investigation and/ or litigation.

**MYTH:** Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964 doesn't apply to me or Stephens.

**FACT:** Title VI is a federal law that prohibits any entity that receives federal financial assistance (such as grants or student loans) from discriminating on the basis of race, color, or national origin. The Office for Civil Rights (OCR) in Education is responsible for enforcing Title VI as it applies to programs and activities funded by Education. OCR's responsibility to ensure that institutions that receive education funds comply with Title VI is carried out through compliance enforcement. The principal enforcement activity is the investigation and resolution of complaints filed by people alleging discrimination on the basis of race, color, or national origin.

**MYTH:** Title VI only applies to direct recipients of Federal Funding.

**FACT:** Any entity that receives federal financial assistance either directly or as a pass-thru recipient is subject to the provisions of Title VI. This includes subcontractors and sub-recipients. Pass-thru sub-recipients not only receive funding; they also take on the requirement to comply with the provisions of Title VI.

### [Title IX – Coordinator Shannon Walls '93](#)

Sexual Assault/Rape myths are false beliefs people have about sexual assault that shift blame from the person committing the assault to the survivor. Myths have grown out of long-standing gender roles, acceptance of violence, and incorrect information concerning sexual violence that exist in our society. These false statements not only shame survivors into silence; they also hurt our community's general knowledge of sexual assault, relationship violence, and stalking. The most effective way to confront and tackle these myths is to educate yourself on the facts.

**MYTH:** Rape is usually violent and involves a stranger.

**FACT:** Over 80% of sexual assaults on college campuses are committed by someone the victim knows. Many assaults involve force or the threat of force, but many are also committed while the victim is under the influence of alcohol or other drugs, or when asleep. Most often, a dating partner, or former partner, classmate, friend, acquaintance, or co-worker is the offender of sexual assault and rape. It is important to remember that sexual violence can occur in heterosexual, same-sex, same-gender, non-gender-specific relationships.

**MYTH:** Sexual Assault and rape happens only to "certain" types of women.

**FACT:** Any person of any gender, age, race, class, religion, occupation, physical ability, sexual identity, expression, or appearance can be sexually assaulted. The perpetrator does not choose the victim because they are young, pretty, or provocatively dressed; the perpetrator chooses the victim who is vulnerable. The perpetrator may select a victim who is smaller or perceived to be weaker than they are, who is alone or isolated, who is incapacitated, or who does not suspect what is about to happen.

**MYTH:** A victim must have "asked for it" by being seductive, drunk, careless, high, etc.

**FACT:** No one asks to be violated, abused, injured, or humiliated. Perpetrators who are intoxicated or under the influence of drugs are still responsible for their actions and regardless of behavior, no one deserves to be sexually assaulted or raped.

**MYTH:** If a person does not fight back, they were not really raped.

**FACT:** Whatever a person does to survive is the appropriate action. Rape can be life threatening, especially when a perpetrator uses a weapon or force. Submission is not the same as cooperation and does not imply consent. There are many reasons why a victim may not physically fight, or resist, their attacker including shock, fear, threats, or the size and strength of the perpetrator. In California, lack of protest or resistance, or silence, does not mean consent.

**MYTH:** If someone doesn't report a sexual assault to the police, then they must have changed their mind after it happened, want revenge, or want to protect their own reputation.

**FACT:** There are many reasons why a survivor of sexual violence may not report the assault to the police or the College. It is not easy to talk about being sexually assaulted and it can feel shameful. The experience of retelling what happened may cause the person to relive the trauma. Another reason for delaying a report, or not making a report, is the fear of retaliation by the offender. There is also the fear of being blamed, not being believed, and being required to go through judicial proceedings. Just because a person does not report an assault does not mean it did not happen.

**FACT:** At Stephens, the Title IX Office is available to support victims and survivors of sexual assault. We can connect victims and survivors to important resources, provide support accommodations, and ensure the Title IX rights of students and employees. If we can ever help you, please let us know.

*FACT AND MYTH SOURCE: Center for Sexual Assault Prevention and Response at the University of Richmond*

 [ADA/Section 504 – Coordinator Sady Mayer Strand](#)

The ADA Accessibility Office oftentimes receives questions from instructors regarding ADA Accessibility accommodations for students in the classroom. The following are a few frequently asked questions. Have a question about a student's accommodations? Please reach out to ADA Coordinator Sady Mayer Strand at [smayer@stephens.edu](mailto:smayer@stephens.edu) or [adacoordinator@stephens.edu](mailto:adacoordinator@stephens.edu).

**QUESTION:** How does an instructor know if a student has registered with Sady Mayer Strand, the ADA Coordinator at the Student Success Center, and has activated ADA accommodations?

**ANSWER:** If a student has chosen to register a disability with the ADA Coordinator, the instructor will receive an accommodations letter via e-mail. If a student discloses that they have a disability and need accommodation, but the instructor has not received an accommodations letter, the instructor should refer the student to the ADA Coordinator. An accommodations letter outlines approved academic accommodations through the ADA Accessibility Office at the Student Success Center. Once the instructor receives an accommodations letter via e-mail, it is recommended that the student and instructor privately discuss specific academic accommodations and their implementation in the course. It is best for the student to initiate this discussion, but if a student has not initiated the conversation, the instructor can confidentially reach out to the student regarding the accommodations outlined in the letter.

**QUESTION:** Why does a student have several accommodations outlined in the accommodations letter but chooses not to use all of them?

**ANSWER:** A student may choose which accommodations are utilized. The accommodations letter lists all approved accommodations, but the student may choose to not use an accommodation (e.g., extended time on test), and for some classes, certain accommodations may not be applicable (e.g., use of calculator on a test).

**QUESTION:** How will an instructor know that a student wants to use the accommodations listed in the accommodations letter?

**ANSWER:** A brief, private conversation with a student should clarify questions regarding specific accommodations. For example, if a student wishes to use an accommodation of extra time on tests, the student must notify the instructor in advance of the testing date.

**QUESTION:** Why might an instructor receive an accommodations letter late in the semester or session?

**ANSWER:** Due to confidentiality, the ADA Coordinator cannot provide notification to instructors without a student's written authorization. Students are encouraged to request to have letters sent early each semester. However, a student may choose to attempt a class without accommodations and then activate accommodations later in the semester (However, no accommodations are retroactive). Additionally, registration with the ADA Coordinator may take place at any point during the semester. Once a student has provided approved documentation, accommodations can be activated.

**QUESTION:** Is the information regarding a student’s disability and their academic accommodations confidential?

**ANSWER:** Yes. Instructors must maintain strict confidentiality regarding the identity of a student with a disability, the nature of the disability, and the student’s accommodations.

**QUESTION:** Can the instructor ask a student to disclose his or her disability?

**ANSWER:** No. Accommodations letters will reveal only the approved accommodations supported by disability documentation. They will not disclose the actual disability unless the student has given the ADA Coordinator written consent to do so. It is never appropriate for an instructor to ask a student to disclose a disability.

**QUESTION:** Is it acceptable to ask a student who is doing poorly in a class if the student has a disability?

**ANSWER:** Under the Americans with Disabilities Act, College employees may not make unnecessary inquiries into the existence of a disability.

**QUESTION:** Are students obligated to inform the College that they have a disability?

**ANSWER:** No. A student has no obligation to inform an institution of postsecondary education about a disability; however, if the student wants an institution to provide an academic adjustment or assign the student to accessible housing or other facilities, or if a student wants other disability-related services, the student must identify as having a disability. The disclosure of a disability is always voluntary. For example, a student who has a disability who does not require services may choose not to disclose (Department of Education).

**We are Stephens. Let’s continue to LEARN. GROW. LEAD.**

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