

TITLE IX/CAMPUS CLIMATE UPDATE

March 22, 2018

Dear MassArt Community:

As the Me Too and Time's Up movements continue to reshape our society, I am heartened to see so many brave acts of personal and collective determination. I write today to reaffirm the MassArt community values that I have stated previously. Ensuring a safe and healthy campus climate has been my priority since I became MassArt's president in June 2016. We take reports of any form of sexual harassment or any other discriminatory behavior that violates our Equal Opportunity policies very seriously.

We recently received allegations of inappropriate behavior concerning photography professor Nicholas Nixon and determined that a Title IX investigation was warranted. Nick subsequently announced his decision to retire, effective March 2, 2018, and he is no longer in the classroom or on campus. The Title IX investigation, which is being conducted by an external consultant engaged by the college, will continue to its conclusion.

Looking at the bigger picture, in order to ensure the safety of our entire campus, we are further assessing our campus climate in regard to Title IX and equal employment opportunity policies. To that end, we are reaching out to you – our students, faculty, staff, and alumni – so we can hear every voice, we can work to address concerns, and together we can ensure a culture where each member of our creative community can thrive.

If you have experienced sexually inappropriate behavior at MassArt, or if you know of someone who has, please report it to us. There are several MassArt staff members who are here to help. We will listen, we will take you seriously, we will investigate, and we will take appropriate action to address concerns and to maintain a healthy living and learning environment at MassArt. To report an incident, simply go to massart.edu/help for contact information, report forms, and other helpful resources.

I also want to state again our commitment to helping change the culture of the professions in which our students and alumni work. For too long, we have heard that "it's just the way it is" with respect to sexual harassment and sexual violence. I reject that notion, and I know you do too. We can effect change by empowering students who challenge that idea and by preparing leaders who are committed to a better future for the art and design world.

At the heart of the MassArt mission is our commitment to preparing students to "engage in the well being of their society." Working together, we can address these issues in the right way and make the world more like the place we all want to live.

David

David Nelson
President, Massachusetts College of Art and Design