The Advocate Role at a Small College
Tip of the Week authored by Brett A. Sokolow, Esq., Executive Director, ATIXA

A staff member of a small college that has a relatively smaller number of Title IX issues is working to put together a team of confidential advocates. Is there any guidance as to who might serve in the advocate role, specifically at smaller campuses? What type of training might be suggested?

This seems like a pretty common formula for smaller colleges. Because of the changes to VAWA (Section 304), outside advocates who support the victim/survivor initially are much more likely to also function as process advocates now, too. I’m certainly interacting with outside advocates more often, and they seem to occasionally have gaps in their Title IX know-how, and don’t understand the campus process as well as a process advocate should.

I’ve been asking my campus clients to do a short orientation class and produce some materials on Title IX for the advocates from their local agencies, and it seems to make a huge difference in the quality of how the outside advocate is able to advocate for the internal rights of the victim/survivor. It also can help to build trust, which can be lacking in some campus/community agency relations.