Prior Cam Girl Photos Distributed Among Classmates

A student reported to me (the Title IX coordinator) that she worked as a camgirl work before she started school in one of our professional programs. She stated that she removed her name and past videos, but there may be some videos that remain on the internet because of hacking or pirating. The student said no one at the school knows the stage name she used to produce the content. The student reported that a male student has shared photos and/or videos he found of her online with at least three classmates. We are a small private university. I am curious how to handle this report, what would other TIX coordinators out there do?

Furthermore, I received additional information about this report. The female student confronted the male student and the male student told her there is a Snapchat group of approximately 20 students and they send photos and/or videos of her past work to the Snapchat group. Because it is a Snapchat group of 20 or more students, does that change how you would handle the report?

I would call him in for a meeting, and ask him to cease and desist from this behavior. If he agrees and upholds his agreement, your problem is solved. If he does not agree, I would go over your policy on hostile environment with him, and explain that this may rise to the level of pervasive conduct if you have to look into it formally. That should be enough to get his compliance.

As a private college, you can likely direct them desist in this behavior. If they are not compliant, then you have to decide if you are going to try to enforce this as a hostile environment allegation. I think that’s a tough analysis. Nothing is being done or communicated to the reporting party, that I am aware of. So, is it really causing her a hostile environment? A lot might depend on how the students in the Snap group are treating her, but then it might be their treatment that is hostile, not the exchange or viewing of the video(s). Making a case for a hostile environment based on content the reporting party put into the “public” sphere is complex, and perhaps not viable. Belle Knox was a porn actress who enrolled at Duke. If she enrolled and started to complain that students were watching her videos on Pornhub and that was causing her a hostile environment, I’d say the students who were watching were doing something legal that was not affecting her. Of course, there may be a lesson in taking the students through the process even if it does not hold them accountable, or it may embolden them if they “get away with it.” This would be a great case study to attempt restorative justice or some other facilitated resolution.