

# Campus Times

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## An Interview with New Title IX Coordinator Kate Nearpass

By Melanie Earle  
FEATURES EDITOR

Kate Nearpass, senior counsel member for labor and employment at UR and key investigator during the [Jaeger trials](#), has been named the new Title IX Coordinator and assistant vice president for Civil Rights in the Office of Equity and Inclusion.

The Campus Times recently talked to Nearpass about her new position and goals for Title IX and the Office of Equity and Inclusion at UR.

The merger of the Title IX Coordinator and OEI is a new but necessary step according to Nearpass. Back in August, federal regulations and rights were revised with two major changes affecting schools around the country: employees are now covered under the Title IX grievance process, and the threshold for a Title IX complaint has been changed.

Previously, Title IX investigated complaints filed by students against students. Complaints by or against employees, such as those filed against Florian T. Jaeger in 2016, were dealt with under policies outside the Title IX office. Now, charges filed by and/or against employees are also under Title IX, subject to both UR and federal policy.

However, the requirements a complaint must meet to fall under Title IX have become slightly stricter. Barring single events that create a “hostile environment,” in which a student is denied access to equal education, all other complaints must now [be both severe and pervasive](#) to fall under the scope of Title IX, Nearpass said. Previously, a miscellaneous complaint had to be either severe or pervasive for Title IX to investigate.

“What that means is not every complaint of sexual misconduct is going to rise up to the level of going through the Title IX process,” Nearpass said,



HENRY LITSKY / PHOTO EDITOR

emphasizing this decision did not come from UR. “But of course, the University wants to resolve all complaints of sexual misconduct, not only the ones that rise up to this very high level.” She explained that there are several other policies and processes in place to take complaints.

“For those complaints that fall short of that threshold, we now are going to use other mechanisms we have available to us, like [our policy against discrimination and harassment](#), which was previously really thought of as an [exclusively] employee policy,”

Nearpass said. “That’s another way the employee and the student worlds are merging, and there is so much overlap that it did not make sense to be looking at them separately, because when you look at them separately you leave an opportunity for employees or students to get sort of lost in the mix.”

Nearpass’s role in OEI will include oversight of these new policies and compliance areas such as Title VII (discrimination), affirmative action, and sexual misconduct resolution and investigation.

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## Kazmi/Haque win SA Election: Student Community Reactions

By Melanie Earle  
FEATURES EDITOR

Rising juniors Sabeet Kazmi and Rusama Haque will be the Students’ Association (SA) president and vice president next year, garnering twice as many votes as their competition. The President/Vice President ticket against first-years William Bothe and Zach Sussman. The Kazmi-Haque

ticket won 507 votes, against rising sophomores William Bothe and Zach Sussman’s 238.

Notably, only 803 undergraduates voted this year, a low turnout for the 5,512 undergraduates enrolled at River Campus. This semester’s elections were especially unusual, between the all-virtual campaigns and the election coming on the heels of a [mass resignation of senators from SA](#).

Students had mixed feelings about this year’s election. However, a common denominator among students interviewed for this article was their confusion over what SA does, their roles, and what they have accomplished.

“It’s hard to see concrete results for what people are working on,” first-year Noor Akhter said.

Some students had trouble voting due to confusion over how to do so, and for a period of time, the link to vote was down on CCC. Students also expressed that they were unable to find a platform they were passionate enough about to vote for.

“To be honest, we didn’t have a platform that provided us with more information about the people, we just heard a lot of very generic statements about their promises,” junior Mahmud Jumaev commented.

“Due to COVID[-19], I don’t think people were able to advertise as much,” first-year Bonnie Dong said. “When you go onto social media and see all these different posts about the same thing and the same picture saying, ‘Vote for Me,’ it’s not like we’re going to take the time to read everyone’s platform.”

It was mentioned during the interviews that some students received direct messages on Instagram from the Bothe-Sussman campaign imploring them to vote for them. While some of the students who received the message were unnerved by it, others simply felt unsatisfied.

“For me, it was honestly a turn-off,” first-year Sabrina Terando commented.

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Rising juniors Sabeet Kazmi and Rusama Haque will be the Students’ Association (SA) president and vice president next year.

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