

THE BLUE BANNER

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The Blue Banner is UNC Asheville's student newspaper. We publish each Tuesday except during summer sessions, finals week and holiday breaks. Our office is located in Karpen Hall 019.

The Blue Banner is a designated forum for free speech and welcomes letters to the editor, considering them on basis of interest, space and timeliness. Letters and articles should be emailed to the editor-in-chief or the appropriate section editor. Letters should include the writer's name, year in school, and major or other relationship to UNCA. Include a phone number to aid in verification. All articles are subject to editing.

EDITORIAL

THE BLUE BANNER STANDS AGAINST EDUCATION DEPARTMENT'S WITHDRAWAL OF TITLE IX PROTECTIONS

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The Blue Banner stands against Education Department's withdrawal of Title IX protections

Betsy DeVos' appointment as the Secretary of Education has been controversial from the start. On Friday, the Education Department announced the formal rescind of Obama-era guidelines on campus sexual assault. Under these new guidelines, colleges and universities would require more "clear and convincing" evidence than the already established standards recommended under Obama administration's Dear Colleague Letter. These new guidelines will further protect students accused of sexual assault, as DeVos has criticized the current standard of proof and university involvement regarding reports of sexual assault. While we believe all students deserve a fair due process, these actions can possibly deter victims from obtaining appropriate legal action.

In addition, schools would no longer be forced to complete investigations in a set amount of days as they were in the Obama administration, opening the door for sexual assault cases to slip through the cracks or quietly go away, leaving vic-

tims with no closure or justice. With this knowledge, victims of sexual assault may be even less likely to report the horrible crimes committed against them. One can not expect a person already traumatized to put the spotlight on themselves yet again, only to end up essentially neglected in order to maintain a university's reputation.

While this issue remains complicated and nuanced, *The Blue Banner* does not stand behind DeVos on this issue and her idea that the accused deserve more protection than victims of sexual assault. Here at *The Blue Banner*, we prioritize the importance of protecting victims of discrimination and allowing them to live safely, especially in places that are meant to be institutions of learning and personal growth. The ability to learn in a safe environment is a right — not a privilege — and no one should live in fear they will be sexually assaulted or they may be forced to take a class with their assailant because said assailant was allowed to walk free. In a society where the Brock Turners of the world are allowed to walk free, we will continue to work towards protecting victims, not assailants.