

'Godmother of Title IX' comes to BGSU

Written by Sentinel Staff

Saturday, 01 May 2010 08:01 -

Women attempting to pursue careers in science, engineering and math have historically experienced a "chilly climate" that discouraged them from persevering, in addition to real employment barriers. Now, Bowling Green State University is part of a \$1 million National Science Foundation-funded IDEAL (Institutions Developing Excellence in Academic Leadership) partnership grant aimed at fostering a better environment for recruiting, retaining and advancing women and underrepresented minority faculty in those disciplines.

BGSU will get some expert guidance from Dr. Bernice Sandler, known as the "godmother of Title IX," the part of the 1972 Education Amendments that prohibits gender-based discrimination at all educational institutions receiving federal funds. She is spending Tuesday on campus talking about gender equity in science, engineering, math and technology.

Sandler will participate in a public panel discussion of "The Role of Title IX in Expanding Faculty Opportunities in STEM Disciplines," from 10:30 a.m. to noon in 201 Bowen-Thompson Student Union.

She will also address Faculty Senate at 2:30 p.m. in the McFall Center Assembly Room. The BGSU Women's Center will host a "brown bag" lunch from noon to 1 p.m. Wednesday in 107 Hanna Hall.

"She will give us some ideas on how to go about helping women to envision themselves as scientists," said Dr. Janet Parks, Distinguished Teaching Professor Emeritus in human movement, sport and leisure studies. Parks interviewed Sandler for a documentary on Title IX produced by WBGU-PBS. "She can help people recognize instances of the 'chilly climate' and recognize inequities we aren't yet aware of, and offer concrete steps to discover and eliminate inequities. She inspires you to do what you need to do to make it happen."

She is the Senior Scholar in Residence at the Women's Research and Education Institute and an adjunct associate faculty member at the Drexel School of Medicine.

"She's changed our culture-not just for women but for everybody," Parks said.

The world Sandler faced when she completed her Ph.D. at the University of Maryland in 1969 was not welcoming to female academics. She fought to enforce an executive order from President Lyndon Johnson that prohibited sex discrimination in organizations that received federal contracts.

Sandler filed complaints against 250 institutions. With Rep. Edith Green, she went on to spearhead hearings that documented discrimination in employment and educational opportunities. These hearings led to the passage of Title IX.