

## **Statement on Ted Mueller Arrest**

November 4, 2019

Dear Members of the Bethel College Community,

In a press release dated Friday, November 1, the Harvey County Attorney's Office reported that 84-year old Ted Mueller was arrested on suspicion of three counts of criminal conduct for an incident that occurred on August 1, 2018. The press release has been posted on the KWCH website:

<https://www.kwch.com/content/news/84-year-old-North-Newton-man-charged-with-sexual-battery-lascivious-conduct-564169141.html>.

The event for which Ted was arrested did not occur on Bethel College property and did not involve a Bethel College student or member of the Bethel College faculty or staff. Ted has never been an employee of Bethel College.

Ted volunteered as a data analyst for several years at the Kansas Institute of Peace and Conflict Resolution (KIPCOR), an affiliate organization of Bethel College. His wife and daughter both served on the Bethel College Board of Directors in the 2010s.

As an institution rooted in Christian theology, Bethel College does not tolerate sexual violence in any form. We support survivors. We extend our prayers and support to those who may have been affected by Ted's alleged actions. We pray for any victim who may have been harmed by the incidents set forth in the press release from the Harvey County Attorney's Office. We pray for strength for community members who may have felt burdened by Ted's behavior. We also pray for Ted's immediate family who must carry on in the face of serious criminal charges.

Ted entered into the Bethel College Title IX reporting system in 2016 and 2017. In 2016, Bethel College received an informal complaint from a student who did not request any adjudication on our part and did not want their name shared with Ted. We continue to support their wishes today. The substance of the complaint involved a verbal comment in a public setting. The Title IX Committee gave Ted a warning and denied him access to areas with sensitive information. In 2017, Bethel College received a formal report of unwanted touching (on the back) and suggestive comments about hair color, both of which occurred in a public setting. Following the formal complaint, the Title IX Committee required Ted to undergo mediation. The meditation concluded at the request of the student.

Both Title IX cases were resolved per federal guidelines. Both cases used a proportional response in the context of the complainant's wishes and Ted's actions. Ted's behaviors were not criminal. Nevertheless, we followed standard practice by encouraging the complainants to report the incidents to local law enforcement. Bethel College has always supported victims and always acted with their best interest in mind.

Bethel College is in compliance with both Title IX and Clery act guidelines, as determined by a recent visit from the Higher Learning Commission (our accrediting agency). We meet or exceed what is required by federal law. I want to thank the significant work of our Title IX coordinators and the faculty and staff members who volunteer to carry out the difficult duties of the Title IX committee. Their performance has been exemplary. We also make regular improvements aimed at increasing awareness and prevention of sexual harassment. For example, our Office of Student Life initiated bystander training in Fall 2019.

Ted's alleged actions on August 1, 2018 were shared on December 16, 2018 during a congregational meeting at Bethel College Mennonite Church. After learning of the allegations, we removed Ted from his volunteer position at KIPCOR and restricted his access to campus, effective on January 4th, 2019. We also demanded that Ted refrain from communicating with international exchange students, and reminded our partners that they should communicate only with employees of Bethel College. When asked to do so, we have cooperated with local law enforcement agencies in the ongoing criminal investigation. We took these actions to ensure the physical and emotional safety for all students, faculty, and staff.

Today, we want to reiterate our commitment to a safe campus and a reporting system that prioritizes the needs of the victims. If you are an employee or a student at Bethel College and want to report an incident, please make use of the following resources:

Bethany Charlsen, Title IX Coordinator: 316-284-5325, [bcharlsen@bethelks.edu](mailto:bcharlsen@bethelks.edu)  
North Newton Police Department: 316-283-3191

If you are in need of support or advocacy, please use these resources that are confidential and separate from Bethel's Title IX process:

Jill Hoopes, Director of Student Wellness: 316-284-5326, [jhoopes@bethelks.edu](mailto:jhoopes@bethelks.edu) (for students)

Peter Goerzen, Campus Pastor: 316-284-5356, [pgoerzen@bethelks.edu](mailto:pgoerzen@bethelks.edu) (for students)

Safehope 24-hour hotline: 316-283-0350 (for community members and students)  
Prairie View Mental Health 24-hour hotline: 1-800-362-0180 (for community members  
and students)

Any further questions about this matter should be directed to my office. Per college  
policy, the President is the spokesperson for the college.

Sincerely,

Jon

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