

Responses to Written Questions Submitted by Honorable Jerry Moran to Lou Anna Simon

*Question.* In several media reports and in your testimony on June 5, 2018, you stated, “I was informed that a sports medicine doctor was under investigation,” regarding the Title IX investigation of Larry Nassar in 2014. You have also provided statements that you were made aware of Dean William Strampel’s inappropriate behavior while you were MSU Provost and University President. To what extent should a University President be held accountable for the acts committed by those who report to them, even if they did not know about those acts?

*Response.* As I testified, I deeply regret that Nassar’s crimes happened during my tenure as President of MSU, and there is not a day that goes by that I do not wish that Nassar had been caught and punished sooner. Likewise, there is not a day that goes by that I do not feel sadness as a result of the abuse that the survivors of Nassar suffered, the pain it caused, and the pain it continues to cause today. However, I did not know of Nassar’s horrific abuses until August 2016. Had I known that Nassar was sexually abusing young women earlier, I would have taken immediate action to prevent him from preying on additional survivors by terminating his employment and reporting him to the police—just as was done in 2016 when his criminal conduct was discovered.

I would also point out that shortly after the allegations about Nassar surfaced in 2016, we retained two of the country’s most respected law firms – Skadden Arps and Miller Canfield – to facilitate MSU’s cooperation with law enforcement and to provide advice and assistance in connection with anticipated litigation. MSU directed these firms that, if in the course of their representation, they found any evidence that anyone at MSU, other than Nassar, knew of his criminal behavior and did anything to conceal or facilitate it, then that evidence of criminal conduct should be reported immediately to the MSU administration, the Board of Trustees, and the appropriate law enforcement agencies. It is my understanding that no such conduct has been identified, and Skadden Arps wrote to the Michigan Attorney General last December, concluding that “we believe the evidence will show that no MSU official believed that Nassar committed sexual abuse prior to newspaper reports in late summer 2016.”

Although I did not know of Nassar’s abuse until 2016, and neither Nassar nor Strampel directly reported to me, I do feel I was held accountable. Even though I devoted my entire professional life to MSU, I resigned as President due to my deep regret of what happened during my tenure and to facilitate healing by the survivors and the University community.