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Castagnera, J. O. (2014). *Handbook for student law for higher education administrators*. Revised edition.
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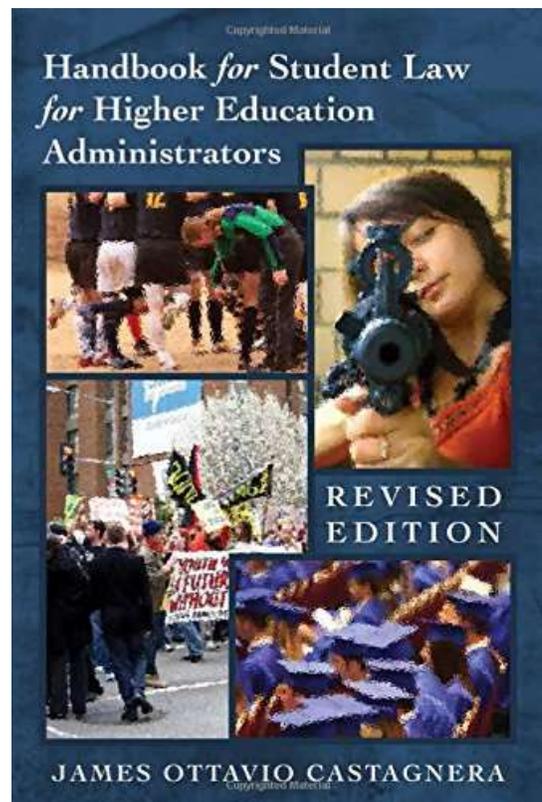
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In the *Handbook for Student Law for Higher Education Administrators*, author James Ottavio Castagnera endeavors to provide a quick reference guide for academic administrators to assist in addressing the myriad of legal issues that can arise on campus. The author's professional background covers thirty years of legal practice including several in the private sector prior to his current position in academe, as legal counsel for Rider University. Castagnera organizes his handbook thematically, with each chapter providing relevant and appropriate legal cases depending on the topic. The focus is clearly on the student experience and the required legal knowledge to get started when addressing challenging problems on campus. Essential cases and analysis are offered across admissions, financial aid, academic policies, student activities and campus life, student privacy, and the intellectual property created within the university.

Despite its slim stature, there is good breadth in the material presented by Castagnera. In the discussion of pertinent cases, the author provides a



brief description of the case followed by an analysis of key issues to consider and then closes with a summary of advice to the reader on the best course of action if facing a similar situation. This format is followed throughout most of the book, though not consistently for all of the cases discussed.

In each chapter Castagnera also provides additional information to the reader from various outside sources. These sections are differentiated in the text and are derived from a wide array of other publications some of which include the author's previous works, institutional policies, US Department of Education communication, and newspaper articles. While this provides some background and context for the reader, this material is not always sufficiently connected to the legal questions posed in the chapter. For example, in the chapter on student activities, a lengthy and seemingly out of place description of the student activities available on campus at Rider University was presented. One would assume the audience for this work would be university administrators familiar with the scope and type of student activities available for students. So this space, it would seem, could have been better utilized to report on other pressing legal questions of student activities on campus, especially given the new guidelines for colleges to address issues of compliance with Title IX regulations.

In some instances, Castagnera included examples of cases found in the K-12 education case law with some applicability to a postsecondary setting and that could function as precedent in some situations, specifically a case that centered on student-to-student harassment. This case, and the others mentioned, provided some additional depth and precedent to understanding student relationships and the institutional responsibility to maintain a safe campus environment. However, additional supporting cases originating from university or college actions would strengthen the book and provide better understanding of higher education situations administrators might encounter.

In the presentation of certain topics, such as harassment and substance abuse, Castagnera provides example policy statements from his home institution of Rider University. . These statements might be helpful for those institutions struggling to create a strong policy library, but there is no evaluation of the

policy. The reader is left with questions about the appropriateness of these examples and their potential implementation at their institutions. Policies and procedures that might work for community colleges or smaller institutions are not addressed or represented throughout the book. That's a missed opportunity that would expand the book's appeal to a wider range of higher education administrators.

At times, Castagnera's writing style can be informal and conversational, which makes for easier reading but is unexpected in a traditional legal work. Occasionally I found this approach distracting, but it does provide for some added spark to what many may consider to be challenging legal discussions. While not credited at the beginning of the book, one chapter was written by another writer, the author's daughter, on the subject of privacy rights and intellectual property. This discussion fits with the tone of the book and is worthy of inclusion.

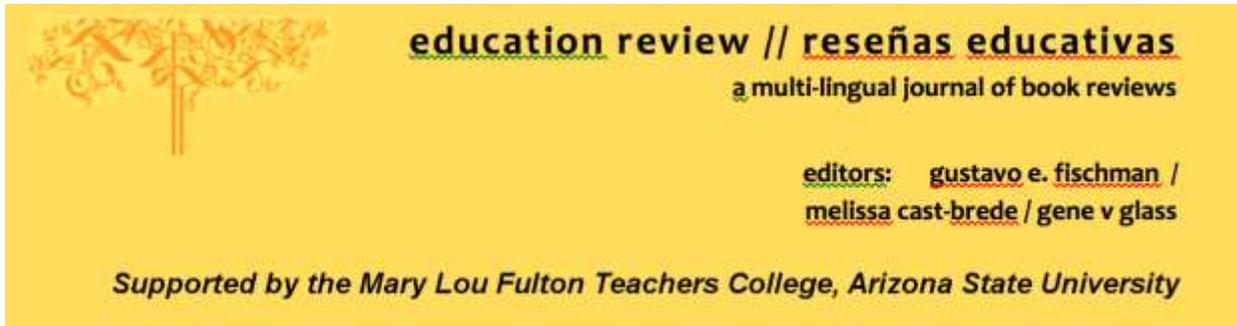
In sum, Castagnera's handbook works best as a secondary resource or as a supplemental volume to an interested administrator's current library of legal resources. The contribution to the field is limited, and other more comprehensive works are available that will provide the core legal guidance and advice an administrator needs to navigate issues prior to collaboration with the college or university's general counsel. By itself, it lacks the depth and application of legal issues to be the only handbook and administrator will need nor does it make a significant contribution to the field. But Castagnera accomplished his goal of producing a handbook that can be referred to quickly to find your administrative mooring before seeking additional counsel. This works as a sound companion piece for the curious and in-need administrator.

About the Reviewer

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Jay Parrent is a native of western Kentucky and has been at Madisonville Community College since 2002.

Prior to his appointment as Chief Student Affairs Officer, he served as registrar both with MCC and at Kentucky Wesleyan College. In 2010 Jay was appointed to the Kentucky Board of Education by Governor Steve Beshear. He has degrees from Kentucky Wesleyan College (B.A. in History), Murray State University (M.A. in History), University of Louisville (M.A. Higher Education Administration) and the University of Kentucky (Ed.D. Educational Leadership Studies).



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