

# Acceptance of the Task Force Report on Sexual Assault and Sexual Harassment

February 17, 2015

Dear Members of the Task Force:

The Task Force Report on Sexual Assault and Sexual Harassment provides an excellent analysis of current practices at Penn State University and is a well-thought out roadmap for moving Penn State into a national leadership position in the struggle to address student sexual misconduct.

With considerable thanks, the University accepts all 18 recommendations of the Task Force and plans to implement them in the following manner:

1. Penn State will immediately begin the process of searching for a full time Title IX coordinator for the University to be housed within Student Affairs.
2. The coordinator will have the funding necessary to institute searches for a trained investigator, a prevention and education coordinator, and for staff support.
3. The coordinator will have the funding necessary, in consultation with the Vice President for Commonwealth Campuses, to ensure coordination across the Commonwealth Campuses.
4. The coordinator will be tasked to fulfill the following objectives in a manner that best serves the University:
  - a. Implement an investigative model for resolving sexual misconduct cases.
  - b. Establish a Title IX review panel and written guidelines to assist University authorities in determining the proper course of action when balancing the interests of the victim, the University community and University legal obligations, if they are in conflict.
  - c. Work with the review panel and other stakeholders to analyze and improve the sanctions for sexual misconduct, and consider appropriate guidelines for the use of a restorative justice approach when warranted.
  - d. Assess the victim support services across the Commonwealth Campuses and formulate a proposal to address any weaknesses.
  - e. Develop an initiative designed to encourage members of the University community to effectively intervene whenever they witness actions that undermine the community of care and concern required in response to sexual and other misconduct.
  - f. Create an annual summary of aggregate data on sexual misconduct that includes information about student conduct sanctions so that all are informed of University actions in the interest of student safety.
  - g. Undertake a comprehensive survey of all policies and procedures that are relevant to the issues of sexual assault and sexual harassment with the purpose making sure that our policies are effective, comply with all laws and regulations, relevant and efficient, and address the recommendations of the task force report. This may require the establishment of new policies or more effective communication and integration.
  - h. Develop and implement a campaign, which may include a day, or a series of events or activities that serves as a call to action for our community in preventing sexual misconduct, and that recognizes our national leadership in this important area.
  - i. Create an expert advisory committee to support and enhance the office of the Title IX coordinator.

- j. Work with the Coalition to Address Relationship and Sexual Violence (CARSV) to develop a more vigorous partnership between University Park and local providers in the State College area, as well as similar relationships with Commonwealth Campus communities.
  - k. Work with Human Resources and other interested parties in developing an annual climate survey to better understand the scope and nature of the issues at Penn State as required to create and sustain effective programs, services and policies.
- 5. The Administrative Response Team, initially with the participation of the Vice President of Student Affairs, and then the Title IX coordinator upon hiring, will be tasked with the following objectives in a manner that best serves the University:
  - a. Develop and implement the designation of employees as “confidential” or “responsible” in relation to their obligations to respond to disclosures of sexual misconduct. Program development and implementation should be viewed in the context of similar designations across the University as required by law or policy. The objective should be to minimize or remove confusion and streamline designations and procedures about reporting misconduct.
  - b. Develop and implement the required employee training required in cases involving sexual misconduct in close connection with the Vice President for Human Resources. Program development and implementation should be viewed in the context of similar designations across the University as required by law or policy. The objective should be to minimize or remove confusion and streamline training associated with potential misconduct.
  - c. Develop and implement training for all advocates, clinicians, and other University employees working with victims of sexual assault or other misconduct that reflects the full spectrum of victims (male, female, international students, same-sex interactions, students of color, etc.). Further develop educational and prevention programs aimed at particular populations (e.g. fraternity and sorority members and athletes).
  - d. Develop and implement a new universal hotline for all misconduct, which is more effective and efficient, and removes confusion associated with multiple hotlines with different purposes.
- 6. The Vice President and Dean for Undergraduate Education, the Vice President for Student Affairs, and the Chair of the Faculty Senate will be tasked with developing a plan or path forward with respect to educational programming for first-year students that explores the issues of student wellbeing and safety. This task should be viewed in the context of other calls for first-year student educational programming on topics ranging from financial literacy to diversity and inclusion to the business of life.
- 7. The Assistant Vice President for Police and Public Safety and the Director of Campus Police and Security Programs, in conjunction with the Title IX coordinator and the Director of Student Conduct, will review memorandums of understanding with police departments serving all Penn State campuses, and ensure that they include appropriate references to the management of sexual misconduct cases. They will be tasked to recommend and implement similar MOUs at locations where such agreements are lacking.

Further, I will ask the Coordinator for Title IX to invite the members of the Task Force on Sexual Assault and Sexual Harassment to meet at the anniversary of the report to discuss our progress in implementing the recommendations of the report and to gain additional advice based on their expertise.

I want to close by giving my sincere thanks, on behalf of the entire University community, for the diligence and the commitment of the members of the Task Force for a job very well done. Thank you.

Sincerely,

Eric J. Barron