

Presidential Task Force on Sexual Violence

Training and Accountability

In order to foster an environment permeated by a sense of support and care for survivors of sexual violence, the task force recommends training for various College faculty and staff. It also recommends holding those same faculty and staff accountable for both their interactions with survivors and their handling of incidents involving sexual violence. The Saint Mary's community must honor and support the dignity and worth of each individual.

1. The task force recommends that specialized training related to sexual violence should be provided for:
 - Campus Ministry staff;
 - Health and Counseling staff;
 - Hall Directors, Residence Life staff, Resident Assistants, Peer Mentors, Ministry Assistants, student leaders;
 - Security dispatchers and Security officers;
 - Critical Incident Board members;
 - Title IX Coordinator and Deputy Title IX Coordinators; and
 - All third shift employees, because they may be the point of first contact for a student and the employees need to know where to direct a student for assistance.
2. The task force recommends a review of Student Orientation and Student/Staff Training programs. This review should be done by the Vice President for Student Affairs and the Student Affairs staff. They will:
 - Annually review orientation materials and Resident Assistant/Peer Mentor training to ensure that we meet or exceed standards set by the Violence Against Women Act (VAWA) or any other mandates from the federal government relating to sexual violence; and
 - Review current best practices and materials to ensure that we are offering the best possible programming concerning sexual violence for our new students at orientation.
3. The task force recommends that Saint Mary's personnel work to achieve transparency with all parties involved in Title IX cases.
4. The task force recommends that Saint Mary's personnel, starting with first response through completion of a Title IX case, will be held accountable for their actions.

Information and Resources

The task force recommends that Saint Mary's College publish a clear statement that the College community does not tolerate sexual violence and recognizes the importance of fostering a survivor's agency following any incident of sexual violence. We also recommend that information regarding resources and support available to survivors be made easily and readily accessible to students.

1. We recommend the development of a variety of informational materials concerning the support and resources available to a survivor of sexual assault. The materials should be created using media that a student is more likely to retain such as magnets or computer decals and that pertinent phone numbers are included.
2. We recommend development of an information plan that includes:
 - Identification of the information that is needed by various campus groups including students, faculty, staff, and parents;
 - Awareness that different groups may need different information. For example: faculty/staff who are not “confidential” resource persons may need help explaining their role before a student conveys information that the faculty or staff member must mandatorily report;
 - Identification of the best place to house fliers or handouts with helpful information;
 - Identification of better ways to use the internet and our campus portal to house important information and improve understanding of resources and processes that are complex and can be confusing. Info-graphics might be used to increase comprehension of campus disciplinary processes and the criminal justice system. A “one stop shop” in the portal might ensure that a student does not miss pertinent information;
 - Development of a marketing plan that involves periodically refreshing materials; and
 - Annual evaluation of information to ensure that information is up to date and that the messaging is as effective as possible.
3. It is critical that students, faculty, staff, parents, and other members of the community can easily access information, including resources, FAQ's, policies, and programs relating to sexual violence. We recommend the use of the College webpage, internal portal, and mobile app to create specific locations to be maintained as hubs of information regarding sexual violence. We recommend that the information hubs include:
 - Brief definitions and statistics on sexual violence from national sources and our own climate study;

- A brief statement about the community’s strong views on intolerance of sexual violence and support for survivors. The statement of support might be descriptive about what support means in this community including language that comes from Catholic Social Teaching on the essential dignity of the human person and on the community as the Body of Christ, about creating survivor-centered responses in the hope of ending sexual violence, and about the importance of healing to keep the survivor attached to the caring community; and
- A list of available resources, offices, and staff with contact information, hours, services, roles, and descriptions of the type of supports offered. Listing the type of support offered is important. For example: the Counseling Center offers psychological and emotional support; and Campus Ministry offers pastoral/spiritual support. This information may assist persons in identifying what they currently need.

A current list would include:

ON CAMPUS

- Security
- BAVO
- Campus Ministry/Pastoral Care
- Counseling Center
- Title IX Deputy Coordinators

OFF CAMPUS

- SOS (24/7 Hotline, Advocates, Support Group)
 - Memorial Epworth Crisis Hotline 24/7
 - Local Hospitals (Plus SANE Nurses)
- Info-graphics depicting options and a flow chart of available services/processes. An info-graphic can provide a user-friendly way to begin to understand the complex web of options, services, and processes;
 - Concrete suggestions about “What family can do to offer support”, “What faculty/staff can do to offer support”, “What friends can do to offer support”;
 - FAQs; and
 - A section maintained by the Title IX Coordinator that includes links to:
 - Saint Mary’s policies concerning sexual violence, sexual harassment, and sexual discrimination;
 - Saint Mary’s intake form for claims of sexual violence; and

- Saint Mary's procedures for handling claims of sexual violence.

Resource Advocates

Accessing information and services after experiencing sexual violence can be an overwhelming and confusing process. What to do, where to go, who to talk to are questions that may not be easily answered by someone experiencing the after-effects of violence. It is essential that, as a community of care, we offer the personal assistance needed by survivors to locate the resources they want and need and to help them navigate through the services available.

We recommend establishing a small group of Resource Advocates who will be part of the larger support system. They will provide information and advising, and will accompany a student through the process at the student's request. The College will develop a definition of "resource advocate" that is practical and consistent with Title IX. The College will determine who can serve as a resource advocate; develop an application and selection process; provide orientation and training; and introduce advocates to the community. Ideally, the persons in this role will be well known faculty or staff members. Advocates will serve as requested by students.

Ongoing Support

In order to truly support the "whole person" the Saint Mary's community must support a student survivor of sexual violence not only in the hours or days immediately following an incident but at any time.

The task force recommends the following:

1. That Campus Ministry consider development of a ritual as a healing tool for survivors of sexual violence;
2. Creation of support groups for student survivors of sexual assault. The support groups would be facilitated by the Counseling Center or Campus Ministry staff;
3. An on-call protocol for providing 24 hour on-campus support for students; and
4. That Student Affairs identify and train faculty and staff who can offer support in particular ways to students from underrepresented groups. In addition, the proposed sexual violence information hubs should have specific resources and suggestions for underrepresented students who experience sexual violence.

Administrative Structures

All processes concerned with sexual and gender-based violence, including prevention, education, support, and enforcement should be centralized under the Title IX Coordinator, and the Deputy Title IX Coordinators. In order to aid the Title IX Coordinators and to provide a mechanism for on-going communication with members of the broader Saint Mary's community, we recommend the formation of a Standing Committee on Sexual Violence.

1. The United States Department of Education's Office of Civil Rights has stated that having College Counsel serve as the Title IX Coordinator can create a conflict of interest. A polling of the member schools of the Council of Independent Colleges reveals that among small colleges, the Director of Human Resources is the person most commonly appointed to serve as the Title IX Coordinator. We recommend that beginning no later than next academic year, that the Director of Human Resources be appointed as Saint Mary's Title IX Coordinator and that with regard to Title IX the director will report directly to the president of the college. We also recommend that the Title IX Coordinator post "office hours" for discussion of Title IX issues, to promote accessibility. However, it is understood that appointments with the Title IX Coordinator may occur at any time.

2. It is common for the Title IX Coordinator to be assisted with day to day issues by deputy coordinators. Saint Mary's has three deputy coordinators and we recommend continuation of that practice. The three deputy coordinators will function in the following manner:
 - A Title IX complaint by a student against another student is handled by the Assistant Vice President for Residence Life;
 - A complaint by a student against a faculty member is handled by the Dean of Faculty;
 - Currently, a complaint by a student against a staff member or administrator is handled by the Director of Human Resources. Because we recommend that the Director of Human Resources should become the Title IX coordinator, a Deputy Title IX Coordinator for complaints against staff members and administrators should be named by August 1.
 - Title IX Coordinator or Deputy Coordinators will:
 - Provide contact information for and assistance in accessing and using campus, local advocacy, counseling, health, and mental health services
 - Conduct ongoing educational campaigns (beyond training) and climate monitoring of sexual misconduct allegations.

It should be made clear, however, that if a complaining student is uncomfortable working with the deputy coordinator normally assigned to handle complaints against the type of respondent involved, the student may work with one of the other two coordinators.

The Standing Committee on Sexual Violence

1. The task force recommends the formation of the Committee on Sexual Violence. This new committee will continue the work of the Presidential Task Force. We recommend that the membership of the committee shall consist of:
 - The Title IX Coordinator (who will convene the committee for its first meeting every fall)
 - The three Deputy Title IX Coordinators
 - The Assistant Vice President for Student Affairs
 - The Director of the Belles Against Violence Office
 - The Director of Student Involvement
 - The Director of Multicultural Student Services
 - Two faculty members appointed by the President
 - Two faculty members elected by the Faculty Assembly and
 - At least four students (one sophomore, one junior, and two seniors)

2. The committee will meet regularly and will:
 - Make recommendations to the President for programming, education, and training related to sexual violence, for improving support systems for survivors, and for refining procedures for reporting, investigating, and hearing Title IX cases;
 - Coordinate and implement training for faculty and staff that includes specific training dealing with LGBTQ harassment and discrimination prevention; and
 - Institute policies and procedures to coordinate with local law enforcement and rape crisis services/victim advocacy programs in the community.

Memorandum of Understanding

A Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) is a formal agreement between two or more parties that is not intended to be legally binding but carries a degree of seriousness and mutual respect, stronger than a “gentlemen’s agreement”. We recommend working to develop and implement a MOU among Saint Mary’s College, the University of Notre Dame, and Holy Cross College.

We recommend the development of an MOU among Saint Mary's College, the University of Notre Dame, and Holy Cross College that addresses issues of adjudication when sexual violence involves students from two or more of the campuses and that clearly identifies procedures and potential sanctions. It is not anticipated that processes be identical on the three campuses but that students understand the processes. The MOU should be made available to students on all three campuses.

Surveys/Continued Assessment

Starting spring semester 2016 Saint Mary's will administer a Sexual Violence Climate Survey to students. The survey conforms to the federal guideline that campuses administer such a survey and should provide Saint Mary's with information related to the climate surrounding sexual violence and our students' experiences. We recommend that there be periodic efforts to survey and assess our community and that we develop a process to formally review the results.

The taskforce recommends the following:

1. The Standing Committee on Sexual Violence (see recommendation above) works with the Office of Institutional Research to interpret the results from the surveys in order to better understand our students' need for programming, education, and support;
2. The results of the survey, together with comparative data from other schools completing the same survey, be shared with the Saint Mary's community;
3. The Standing Committee works with the Office of Institutional Research to consider development of another survey instrument to be administered to faculty, staff, and administrators to gauge their need for education and programming related to dealing with students who have experienced sexual violence; and
4. In addition to the climate survey administered to all students, we suggest that Saint Mary's students who have gone through Saint Mary's Title IX process should be voluntarily and confidentially surveyed to assist the College in more thoroughly assessing its processes.

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Membership of the task force:

Heather Abbott, Counselor, Health and Counseling Services

Ula Gaha, Librarian

Karen Johnson, Vice President for Student Affairs

Shay Jolly, Assistant Director Alumnae Relations

Caylin McCallick, student

Carol Ann Mooney, President and Chair of the Task Force

Richard Nugent, College Counsel

Julianne Olivieri, student

Bettina Spencer, Associate Professor, Psychology

Jamie Wagman, Assistant Professor, History/Gender and Women's Studies

Regina Wilson, Director of Campus Ministry

During the beginning stages of its work, the task force also had the assistance of:

Bri O'Brien, student

Bridget Venard, student

Lydia Lorenc, student

Michaela Gaughan, student