

Sexual Misconduct Prevention Task Force – Progress Report April 2014

Background

In the spring of 2013, a group of undergraduate students wrote an Open Letter in the *Tufts Daily* asking Tufts University to work with them on improving a number of issues related to sexual misconduct training, information and response. The Open Letter identified three areas of concern:

- Current shortcomings in Policy, Implementation and Relevant Institution;
- Necessary Reform – Immediate Changes to Current Policy and Process;
- Necessary Reform – Widespread Cultural and Institutional Change, including more education and extended, streamlined support services.

In September of 2013, President Monaco announced the creation of the Sexual Misconduct Prevention Task Force, which he chairs, comprised of undergraduate, graduate and professional students, faculty and staff from all three campuses. Three working groups were established to address several areas: Policy & Procedures, Prevention & Education and Support for Victim/Accused.

The creation of the working groups allowed dialogue on the issues raised in the Open Letter, which all members found extremely helpful in our efforts to focus and move forward toward a shared goal. President Monaco convened the full Task Force on three occasions in September, January and April. The working groups met frequently (sometimes weekly) to make progress on developing a set of recommendations.

Working Groups: Description and Progress Reports

On April 7, 2014, each of the working groups provided a briefing to the Task Force on the progress that has been made since the fall of 2013. The following is a summary of the recommendations. A number of the recommendations are already underway with existing programs or trainings.

Note: The working groups recognize that some of the recommendations described below are already underway. However, it was decided to list these recommendations in order to highlight a summary of their efforts and identify best practices in sexual assault prevention and education as a guide for current and future initiatives.

Policy & Procedures Working Group

The Policy & Procedures Working Group was charged with reviewing both the OEO Sexual Misconduct Policy and the Adjudication Policy to make continuous improvement in accordance with the law and best practices. The members reviewed other university sexual assault policies – especially ones that have been recommended as being innovative – to provide appropriate clarification of terms, enhance examples, and offer improvements to the policy.

Summary: The policy group met either weekly or bimonthly with the task of reviewing the Tufts Sexual Misconduct Policy in detail, offering changes, suggesting illustrative examples, and editing sections and definitions that needed clarification. The approach to the process was methodical, including reading the policy line by line, discussing points where readers might feel confused, and inserting examples to clarify and illustrate, where needed.

Progress: The working group made recommendations focused on, among others, clarifying the language of the policy to include an introductory statement and trigger warning, provide a glossary of terms, offer fuller representation of the LGBTQ experience, incorporate terms such as victim/survivor and create more gender -neutral language.

The working group created a working draft of the policy that will be finalized over the summer, so that it can be implemented during the fall semester 2014. The next task is to thoroughly review the Adjudication Process with a completion date by the end of the first semester in 2014.

Prevention & Education Working Group

The Prevention & Education Working Group was charged with reviewing and making recommendations in the following areas:

- Institutionalizing awareness, education and support programs
- Training all relevant staff and administrators
- Creating more education and training opportunities for students
- Improving access to policy, process and resources
- Making information on sexual assault issues easily available to all students.

Summary: The Prevention & Education Working Group began in October and met bimonthly to gather materials and understand the current state of prevention efforts. The working group also reviewed various sexual assault prevention efforts at other colleges. The working group used the Campus SaVE Act training, education and prevention mandates as guides for the recommendations to focus prevention efforts on all campuses.

Progress: The working group made recommendations focused on training all members of our community on Title IX policies, bystander intervention, social norms, sensitivity and other issues related to the prevention of sexual misconduct. The “Haven”, a new online training tool for students has been adopted to increase awareness of sexual misconduct. In addition, sexual assault prevention information will be offered at orientations on all three campuses.

The working group also recommended creation of a centralized website that would include policies and procedures, Q&A’s and information to improve understanding and awareness of issues of sexual misconduct. This site has been created and is live on the OEO website at <http://oeo.tufts.edu/sexualmisconduct>

The working group also recommended that Sexual Assault Awareness Month (SAAM) should cover various topics and reach out to multiple constituencies on campus. This has been done through the Tufts Daily and social media. Other recommendations included: reform of Study Abroad education sessions, workshops in all on-campus housing including Greek Life and reform of orientation to include sexual assault resources and policies.

Support for Victim/Accused Resource Working Group

The Support for Victim/Accused Resources Working Group was charged with reviewing and making recommendations in the following areas:

- Establishing a Sexual Assault Prevention and Response Office
- Developing greater institutional support for survivors’ healing
- Developing more extended support infrastructure
- Establishing a 24-hour sexual assault crisis hotline for survivors, friends and allies
- Creating Victim and Accused Witness Advocates

Summary: The Resource Working Group met bi-monthly to examine resources and support for survivors of sexual misconduct and the campus community. The group reviewed past programs at Tufts and explored more viable options to meet these needs. With input from members across all three campuses, the group identified the unique needs and challenges of each setting with the goal of creating a structure that will support all students.

The majority of work focused on extensively researching models from other institutions (both NESAC schools and others across the country). The group looked at approaches used by these institutions, specifically at the roles of employees working exclusively on sexual violence issues. They saw a variety of strong models that framed their recommendations. The group examined what would be best suited to Tufts and have potential for long-term sustainability across our campuses.

Progress: The working group made recommendations focused on increasing the staff resources to support sexual assault prevention efforts. In response, Health & Wellness is

recruiting for a position of Sexual Misconduct Prevention Specialist that would develop and execute a university-wide sexual assault prevention and education program for students on all campuses. The working group also recommended the hiring of a confidential Response & Resource Coordinator, who would provide crisis intervention, case management and help students navigate available resources.

Another recommendation was to promote and potentially expand the current partnership with BARCC (Boston Area Rape Crisis Center) to provide resources and support on the Medford and Boston campuses. BARCC's 24-hour toll free hotline is a trusted and reliable resource to students. To serve the needs of the Grafton campus, developing a formal partnership with Pathways for Change Rape Crisis Hotline in Worcester was recommended. Outreach to both organizations is underway.

The group recognized that there is a need for additional support for victims/survivors in the areas of housing, academic accommodations, stay away orders, transportation, legal advice and clarifying the rights of the victim/survivor and accused to have support persons. OEO, TUPD, Health Education and Residential Life will work to improve its coordination, communication and delivery of the services. The comprehensive web site also has sections on each of these services and should serve as a helpful guide for students and other members of our community.

Next Steps

The working groups will re-convene when school commences in the fall of 2014. Each working group will develop a plan and timeline for implementation of the final recommendations. If the recommendation has already been addressed, that will be noted in the plan. In addition, each group will develop a process for ongoing evaluation and annual review of key areas.

Appendix

The interim progress report summarizes the initial findings and recommendations of the three working groups. Below is the exact text of the interim report and recommendations of each working group. When the working groups convene in the fall, these recommendations will be carefully reviewed to determine which recommendations will be implemented and which are already underway.

Policy and Procedures Working Group – Interim Report

Charge: To review both the OEO Sexual Misconduct Policy as well as the Adjudication Policy. Review other campus sexual assault policies, especially ones that have been recommended as being innovative and provide appropriate clarification of terms, enhance examples, and work together to improve the policy.

Recommendations: The policy group has been meeting either weekly or biweekly since the fall. Our task has been very specific: to review the Tufts Sexual Misconduct Policy in detail, offering changes, suggesting more illustrative examples, and tweaking sections and definitions that were identified as needing work.

Our approach to this process has been methodical – reading the policy line by line, discussing points where readers might feel confused, and inserting examples to clarify and illustrate, where needed.

Substantively, in addition to minor tweaks, we have:

- Included an introductory remark that contains a trigger warning and stresses that this document is not a legal document. Also, we have been clear that this document may not contain the sum of everyone's experiences, so that someone reading the policy who does not see a specific example that names their experience will still understand that they can get the help they need from OEO..
- Written a clear policy statement
- Plan to have a glossary of terms at the end of the document
- Made sure that the LGBTQ experience is represented
- Chosen to use the term: victim/survivor in the policy since we agreed that one of those words alone is not sufficient
- Changed the names in several of the examples to include a range of gender and be ethnically neutral.

By being painstaking in our approach, we feel that we have an excellent working draft of the policy that will go through the redline process and be easily ready for the fall, 2014, if not well before.

We will now begin reviewing the adjudication policy with the same vigor, although our first take is to meet with Jill Zellmer and Sonia Jurado in OEO (April 2) to hear what we can and cannot alter, based on legal requirements.

Prevention and Education Working Group – Interim Report

Charge

- Institutionalize awareness, education and support programs
- Adequately train all relevant staff and administrators
- Create more education and training opportunities for students
- Improve access to policy, process and resources
- Ensure all students know where to find information and support on sexual assault issues

The Prevention and Education Working Group began in October and met biweekly to gather materials to understand the current state of prevention efforts at Tufts University. The Working Group also reviewed various sexual assault prevention efforts used at other colleges. The Working Group used the Campus SaVE Act training, education and prevention mandates as guide for Tufts recommendations. Our recommendations are meant to guide prevention efforts on all three Tufts campuses.

Recommendations

- Trainings must be coordinated such that students and administration are always aware that they are being offered and can take advantage of them.
- We must have trainings that go beyond Title IX and Tufts Policy and include other issues related to the prevention of sexual misconduct (i.e. bystander intervention)
- The Sexual Misconduct Prevention Specialist would consult with BARCC and OEO to help create training for Tufts Police, the Judicial Board and other departments.
- All TUPD sworn officers should be trained in handling sexual misconduct at Tufts. Train all members of campus disciplinary boards; Res. Life/Learning Staff, faculty, student groups, and study abroad program
- Recognize that environmental factors influence sexual misconduct and how students perceive violence against women and impact peer group attitudes. Programs, such as bystander training and social norms marketing should be implemented to impact environmental changes.
- Bystander training should be provided to athletes, fraternities, first-year students and student organizations.
- Sexual Assault Awareness Month (SAAM) should cover various topics and reach out to multiple constituencies on campus. The Month needs to include diversity of students groups and administrators.

- A set of several sexual misconduct programs should be developed for residence halls presentation and requesting groups. The programs, at a minimum, should include policy, Title IX, bystander, prevention and education.
- A centralized website should be developed that would include but not limited to Q&A, resources at bottom of every page, exit window button on every page. List the policy, Title IX resources.
- Create and develop programs and materials to increase students' awareness of the Tufts policy
- By implementing Haven, increase awareness of the Sexual Misconduct Policy prior to First Year students arriving on campus.
- Besides implementing programs, trainings, and improving access to resources, we must change the culture on this campus from a rape culture to a consent culture; this can only be done with continual check-in for designated people and groups, with complete administrative.
- Include sexual assault prevention information at Orientations on all three campuses and develop plans so that this information is not just part of Orientation but is repeated throughout the year.

Support for Victim/Accused Resource Working Group – Interim Report

Charge

- Establish a Sexual Assault Prevention and Response Office
- Develop greater institutional support for survivors' healing
- Develop more extended support infrastructure
- Establish a 24 hour sexual assault crisis hotline for survivors, friends and allies
- Create Victim and Accused Witness Advocates

The Resource Work Group met bi-weekly from October 2013 to present to examine resources and supports for survivors of sexual misconduct and the larger campus community. We have reviewed past programs at Tufts and explored more viable options that can fulfill these needs. Through the input from members across all three campuses, we have been able to identify the unique needs and challenges of each setting and work towards creating a structure that will support all students.

The majority of our work has focused on extensively researching models from other institutions (both NESCAC schools among others across the country). What we have found to date is there is no set precedent for how schools are responding both proactively and retroactively to sexual assaults on their campuses. We have critically examined program components that are best suited to the needs of Tufts and have potential for long term sustainability.

Recommendations

The need for dedicated staff supporting sexual assault prevention efforts has been clearly identified by both this work group and the Prevention and Education work group.

Currently, there is lack of capacity within the Office of Equal Opportunity OEO and Health Education to oversee mandatory educational programs and outreach. A Sexual Misconduct Prevention Specialist position has been proposed to develop and execute a university wide sexual assault prevention and education program. Following the 2014-2015 academic year, the need to additional staff to support prevention, education, and response efforts will be evaluated.

Tufts University currently has a partnership with BARCC (Boston Area Rape Crisis Center) to provide resources and support on the Medford campus. BARRC's 24 hour toll free hotline will continued to be promoted as trusted and reliable resources to students. In addition, Tufts will explore expanding its partnership with BARCC to provide ongoing training and support to BARCC's hotline counselors on specific Tufts resources, policies, and procedures for Medford and Boston campuses. A formal partnership with Pathways for Change Rape Crisis Hotline (based in Worcester, MA) will also be explored and promoted as resource for students on Grafton campus.

A student-run and facilitated survivor support group will be established with logistical and administrative support from the new Sexual Misconduct Prevention Specialist. Local adult survivor support groups will be identified with assistance from BARCC and Pathways for Change to serve students on the Boston and Grafton campus. Additional on and off campus supports for survivors including housing and academic accommodations, stay away orders and transportation for medical and legal needs will be reviewed with OEO and respective campus departments (TUPD, Residential Life, etc.).

Existing resources and policies will be updated to insure that it is clearly stated that both the survivor and accused involved in a sexual misconduct case have the right to a support person of their choice. This support person can attend meetings and other proceedings regarding the case with the student. Title IX Liaisons will be promoted as university personnel specifically trained in Tufts sexual misconduct policies and procedures and who are able to serve as a support person. OEO will explore offering additional training to self-identified Title IX Liaisons interested in being identified as trained support staff.

The aforementioned items will be included in the Resource Work Groups final recommendations including a detailed plan and timeline for implementation. We will also be consulting with the Prevention and Education working to integrate our recommendations for the Sexual Misconduct Prevention Specialist and proposed education programs. In addition, a process for ongoing evaluation and annual review of key areas will be outlined.

