

Next Steps to Address Sexual Assault Prevention and Response and to Effect Change in the University's Climate

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The 2014-15 academic year was difficult for the University community. The *Rolling Stone* story and the death of Hannah Graham focused intense public attention on the problems of sexual assault on college campuses everywhere and at Virginia in particular. We had been working on these issues long before the storm of publicity, and we have continued to work on them long after the *Rolling Stone* story was wholly discredited. The administration and the University community will do all in our power to ensure the safety and well-being of our students.

In December I commissioned an Ad Hoc Group on University Climate and Culture. This group was composed of students, faculty, staff, a dean, parents, alumni, and members of the Board of Visitors. Within this group there has been open, honest dialogue, including respectful but articulate disagreements in the best traditions of the academy. I would like to publicly thank the members of the Ad Hoc Group for their willingness to learn, discuss, and advise on difficult issues.

Three working groups were formed to provide recommendations to the Ad Hoc Group. Collectively, the Working Groups on Prevention, Response, and Culture submitted over 80 recommendations.

The reports of each working group reflect the work of more than 70 students, faculty, staff, parents, alumni, and Board members. The three working groups spent hundreds of hours throughout the spring semester examining the University's practices related to sexual assault and related forms of sexual misconduct. They addressed methods of prevention, the ways in which we respond to incidents when they do occur, and the University's culture with respect to these issues and how it might be improved. The working groups consulted with experts, held town halls, and invited input from the University community in other ways as well. The reports from the working groups are an important part of the University's comprehensive approach to addressing legal issues under Title IX and the more fundamental issues of protecting our students from sexual assault.

All of us are deeply grateful to the working group chairs, Bill Brady, Frank Dukes, and Sharon Hostler, to their groups, and to the staff who worked to deliver each group's recommendations within a tight time limit. We are also grateful to everyone within and outside the University who shared their perspective and expertise with the working groups, enriching their understanding of sensitive topics and educating them about the University's practices and resources.

I promised the working groups that their reports would be released as written in mid-June, following review and discussion by the Ad Hoc Group. I believe it is important for the entire community to have the opportunity to read what the working groups have proposed, and yet it is also important to note that not all members of the Ad Hoc Group agreed with every

recommendation. Many of the recommendations overlap, and many will take time to accomplish.

I am listing here actions already undertaken by the administration and how these actions respond to the working groups. Some recommendations reinforced a robust and extensive set of initiatives that were already underway. The Ad Hoc Group will meet again at the end of the Fall Semester to evaluate the progress we have made and consider responses to additional recommendations.

- Education, outreach, and training for students are being evaluated and revised. Among these efforts, new student orientation, resident assistant training, and the “Not on Our Grounds” initiative are being reviewed to ensure maximum impact. (Aligns with recommendations from the Culture, Prevention, and Response Working Groups)
- *EverFi*, a nationally recognized leader in the development of online training modules, has partnered with the University to develop a U.Va.-specific training module that will focus on sexual assault and sexual misconduct. Completion of the *EverFi* program will be mandatory for all undergraduate and graduate students in the coming academic year. (Aligns with recommendations from the Culture & Prevention Working Groups)
- The University’s partnership with Harvard Law School and the *Futures Without Violence* organization continues to move forward. In late May, the University hosted a summer meeting of experts who specialize in sexual assault prevention and response. Together, this team is designing a comprehensive curriculum that will address prevention and response on college and university campuses. (Aligns with recommendations from the Culture, Prevention, & Response Working Groups)
- The Office of the Dean of Students continues to lead the three-year implementation of the *GreenDot* program, a national bystander awareness and empowerment program. A doctoral student has been hired to support bystander education efforts. Data from the Campus Climate survey will inform additional strategies for training, education, and outreach around student safety, sexual assault, and bystander intervention. (Aligns with recommendations from the Culture, Prevention, & Response Working Groups)
- Alcohol-free programming is being developed in partnership with the University Programs Council and other student leaders. These programs will be implemented on the weekends during the first six weeks of the Fall Semester. (Aligns with recommendations from the Culture Working Group)
- The University’s alcohol education programming model is currently being evaluated to determine opportunities to enhance existing programs, resources, and services. In addition to this review, new initiatives around alcohol education will be implemented during the 2015 – 2016 academic year. (Aligns with recommendations from the Culture, Prevention, and Response Working Groups)

- The fraternity and sorority community continues to engage with University leaders to discuss the role Greek-letter organizations can play in improving the University’s culture. (Aligns with recommendations from the Culture Working Group)
- A new Title IX Coordinator position has been created and advertised, and the Coordinator will be hired prior to the start of the academic year. This position will play a central leadership role in coordinating the University’s ongoing efforts, including institutional training and appropriate integration and connection among all our efforts across the University. (Aligns with recommendations from the Prevention & Response Working Groups)
- A Title IX website will be launched this summer. It will provide a central resource for Title IX educational materials (policies, procedures, and resources). (Aligns with recommendations from the Prevention & Response Working Groups)
- A Clery Coordinator has been hired and will begin work this summer. This newly created position will play a central leadership role and will ensure the University’s ongoing compliance with federal regulations and reporting. (Aligns with recommendations from the Prevention & Response Working Groups)
- The existing Memorandum of Understanding between the University and Charlottesville’s Sexual Assault Response Agency (SARA) is being examined to identify additional opportunities for partnership and collaboration. (Aligns with recommendations from the Prevention & Response Working Groups)
- The Sexual Violence Prevention Committee (SVPC), a student organization, will be designated as a “special status organization” at the University. (Note: SVPC was previously known as SALC: Sexual Assault Leadership Council.) (Aligns with recommendations from the Prevention Working Group)
- Funding has been secured for fiscal year 2016 to hire the equivalent of 3.7 additional counselors in Counseling and Psychological Services (CAPS). Funding for two additional staff members in the Women’s Center has also been approved, and these staff members are currently being recruited. (Aligns with recommendations from the Culture & Response Working Groups)
- The College of Arts & Sciences has commissioned a Curriculum Planning Committee to revise U.Va.’s general education curriculum. This committee is also positioned to evaluate many of the curricular additions proposed by the working groups. (Aligns with recommendations from the Culture & Response Working Groups)
- The College of Arts & Sciences has also commissioned a committee to study residential colleges at the University and implementation of recommendations on residential colleges. (Aligns with recommendation from the Culture Working Group)

- The University continues to advance “Total Advising,” a multidimensional process that combines high-quality academic advising, career advising, and alumni mentorship. (Aligns with recommendations from the Culture Working Group)
- Additional student programming space will become available in Fall 2015, with additional space to be added in the Rotunda when the Rotunda restoration is complete.

Other recommendations require additional consideration and review. As part of this evaluation, my administrative team and I will continue to assess the resources required to implement the recommendations and their likely impact. These recommendations concern admissions, administrative reorganization, and further expansion or extension of initiatives such as those already underway.