

Statement on the Title IX Office's Commitment to Support and Serve the GW Community

On Wednesday, October 13, 2021, members of the Office for Diversity, Equity and Community Engagement (ODECE) listened to student experiences related to GW's response to sexual harassment, sexual assault, dating and domestic violence, and stalking reports and to the Title IX Office.

First and foremost, we regret any circumstance where students did not feel valued or did not feel that our response met their needs. We were deeply impacted by the statements made by members of our community and feel responsible to take action. We acknowledge the hurt and harm that was conveyed and we emerged from that discussion resolute in our commitment to improving student experiences with the Title IX Office.

The Title IX Office is making several changes to our operations, outlined below:

- The Title IX Office filled three vacant positions over the summer of 2021 including a new Title IX Investigator, an Assistant Director for Sexual Assault Prevention and Response, and a Case Manager and Hearing Administrator.
- The Title IX Office recently posted a position for a Response Coordinator, who will work closely with our Assistant Director for Sexual Assault Prevention and Response. This new role will be dedicated to providing support for individuals who have been impacted by sexual harassment, sexual assault, domestic and dating violence, and stalking. The responsibilities for this position will include conducting prompt outreach to an individual following a report and offering an array of supportive measures, regardless of whether a formal complaint is filed.
- In July 2021, the Title IX Office transitioned to a new case management system which facilitates more seamless and consistent communication with parties.
- The Title IX Office typically responds to reports of sexual harassment and to communications received from witnesses and parties with pending reports within 24-48 business hours. If community members wish to follow up on reports to the office, they may do so by emailing titleix@gwu.edu.
- In September of 2021, the Title IX Office publicized virtual office hours on its website to proactively collect feedback, to provide increased access to the Title IX Coordinator and Deputy Title IX Coordinator, and to increase transparency with the GW community. These office hours are regularly attended by students.

- The Title IX Office staff is required to complete annual training and this training includes trauma informed best practices. In October of 2021, the Title IX Office staff attended training sessions hosted by DC Forensic Nurse Examiners (DCFNE) and the Network for Victim Recovery of DC (NVRDC).
- The Title IX Office will continue to work closely with Disability Support Services (DSS) on cases where a disability is related to a Title IX related issue. DSS is committed to supporting all students, including those whose disability is related to a Title IX related matter. DSS is committed to annual trauma informed practice training, to commence in spring of 2022. DSS is also in the process of hiring additional staff to improve the disability registration process.
- Training efforts throughout the year for student, faculty, and staff audiences will also be enhanced. The Title IX Office will proactively make plans for this outreach and will release a calendar of prevention events during the early spring 2022 semester. The Title IX Office will seek partnerships with student organizations and other campus partners in our spring prevention education efforts.
- The Title IX Office will conduct research on training programs offered after incoming/new student orientation, at market basket schools to inform our approach to offering tiered education and prevention starting in the 2022-2023 academic year. Currently, the university provides incoming students with two mandatory live training sessions on Title IX and Healthy Relationships and an additional mandatory online program on Sexual Assault Prevention for Undergraduates. In addition, the Title IX Office hosts programs throughout the year, such as mandatory training for student organization leaders, training sessions for GW Athletics, including athletes and coaches and a wide variety of additional customized training for various university audiences. We will root our programs in the best available research on the efficacy of multi-year training programs.

Finally, the Department of Education (ED) indicated that it will put forth proposed amendments to the 2020 Title IX regulations in May 2022. While we do not currently know the extent of these proposed changes, if amended regulations are adopted, the Title IX Office is committed to meeting with students, faculty, staff, and other campus partners to gather additional feedback on how to improve our policies and processes consistent with federal law and regulations.

In addition to changes made to the Title IX Office's operations, the following updates are provided by other campus partners:

- GWPD has appointed a training supervisor to be a direct point of contact for SASA and OAS in an effort to ensure officers are properly trained when in contact with survivors of sexual assault. First interactions are often the most important and GWPD strives to get this right. GWPD will continue to promote the use of safety apps such as GW Guardian and SafeRide for anyone that feels unsafe while navigating campus, particularly during evenings. GWPD has also met with SASA and supports the recommendation to clarify

the University's barring policy and provide information on barring procedures, along with an explanation of the consequences of violating the notice and its legal limitations.

- The Office of Advocacy and Support has posted the Prevention Specialist position and has a number of trauma informed response and prevention training offerings.
- The Code of Student Conduct indicates that all student organizations are prohibited from taking adjudicatory or sanctioning action against students or organizations for violations of university policy. SRR has reviewed all reports that have been made to the office, both formally and informally. These reports have been investigated those reports and responded to as fully as possible in each instance. Students should know that SRR does not monitor social media or use social media as a mechanism to gather reports. Reports of all policy violations, including student organizations taking prohibited adjudicatory action, can be made at studentconduct.gwu.edu. Questions can be directed to rights@gwu.edu. All reports from identified reporting parties will receive some outreach to invite more information gathering.
- SRR and the Office of Student Life have and will continue to conduct outreach on this point to student organizations and their leadership at multiple points throughout the year.
- SRR has made trauma-informed practices a part of annual training for student, faculty, and staff panelists as well as professional staff. SRR has worked with OAS to fulfill this, in addition to using resources from the National Institute of Justice. SRR is committed to continuing this education on a regular basis.
- In response to student concerns that the University's Alcohol/Other Drug Medical Amnesty and Good Samaritan policies did not adequately incorporate the experiences of students transported after having been unwillingly drugged, SRR has modified our communications. Minimally, those letters will indicate that students who wish to discuss or dispute the report may do so. We are exploring other potential modifications with colleagues.
- When SRR receives a report from an identified source and additional information is needed to determine our course of action, the office will reach out to that reporting party. Anyone who would like additional follow-up to their report can request that at rights@gwu.edu and they will typically receive an initial response within three business days.