

Introduction and Rationale

On *Thursday, October 18th, 2018* the Student and Presidential Committee on Sexual Assault hosted a “Round Table on Sexual Violence,” a forum for all students to express their questions, comments, and concerns regarding policy, prevention efforts, response processes and protocols, or anything relating to sexual violence at Dartmouth. Kristi Clemens (Title IX Coordinator) and Elizabeth Agosto (Senior Associate Dean for Student Affairs) were present at the event to answer questions. In addition, we created a google form for any students who could not attend the event to share their comments and thoughts. SPCSA will be hosting this event each term in order to formally serve as a liaison between students and administrators. We believe that with access to this direct student feedback, administrative leaders can better understand how to tailor policies and initiatives to students and continue to cultivate the student-administration relationship. Below is a summary of the feedback from the event and the google form. We have also added a section called “miscellaneous feedback” for other themes and student concerns that came to SPCSA’s attention throughout the term outside of the Round Table.

Please direct any questions about this feedback or the event in general to SPCSA leadership via our email: student.and.presidential.committee.on.sexual.assault@dartmouth.edu.

Theme 1:

Some students had questions about various aspects of the investigation process; there were some indications that students are still confused about the reporting and investigation processes at the College.

- Students were concerned about the information given to other schools on the transcripts of responding parties who transfer from Dartmouth while they have a Judicial Affairs case pending.
 - College staff present were able to clarify the current policy and indicate that the Registrar, not the Title IX Office, dictates this policy
- Students expressed concerns about the circumstances in which the college is unable to take action regarding certain student experiences (i.e. cases in which there is no clear violation of the conduct code)
 - There were concerns raised regarding the willingness of College staff to meet student needs, which potentially stems from miscommunication
 - There were concerns of general community bias (against both reporting and responding parties)

Recommendation:

We recommend increasing efforts to bolster communication across parties in various college processes and devote resources to continued educational outreach about the reporting and investigation processes. This could involve increased promotion of the SVPP informational videos.

Theme 2:

Students are trying to understand the current state of engagement with sexual violence prevention and response initiatives on campus.

- Students discussed low attendance at the IFC panel, Bonfire Forum, and other events that seemed like they might resonate with a large portion of the student body.
- Students have also seen individual-level increases in engagement in certain parts of the student body. However, some are unsure if this is representative of broader trends or if the motives for engagement are genuine.

Recommendation:

SPCSA does not currently have a recommendation about this theme and seeks to understand this better ourselves before acting.

Theme 3:

Students were curious about the progress the college has made regarding sexual violence prevention.

- After attendees asked about how far the college has come in its violence prevention efforts, staff and SPCSA leaders discussed changes to the orientation curriculum and other new programs and initiatives to prevent violence, including the SVPP.
- While no one mentioned specific thoughts on educational programs, awareness raising initiatives, or other prevention mechanisms of that nature, some proposed environmental changes that the college could invest in to increase safety such as increasing lighting on Webster Ave. or Hanover side-streets where many off-campus residents live.

Recommendation:

Particularly regarding SVPP projects, programs, and initiatives, the general student body seems very unaware of the college's relatively robust institutional response to sexual violence. While we understand the rationale behind using a soft-launch approach to new changes, we think students will continue to have misperceptions about the current state of programs and resources available to prevent violence if they aren't publicized enough. In order to help students understand how their school prevents and responds to violence, we recommend more publicity and awareness-raising efforts about the school's efforts, compared to what is the status quo at other institutions. This will help students provide more accurate feedback.

Theme 4:

Students discussed the various tensions regarding men's engagement with sexual violence prevention.

- Some students feel men are not welcomed enough in violence prevention and response discourses and spaces. An attendee expressed that it is easy for men to feel attacked or as if they are all assumed to commit harm, and therefore do not feel comfortable engaging in prevention or action regarding sexual violence. It was expressed that many men do not know what to do to help and ask others to give them advice on what to do; others in the room felt as if they spend a great deal of time and energy educating and advising men who ask for guidance, and felt frustrated that men don't put more energy into self-education before asking others to do that work for them.
- Other students have had negative experiences when men enter violence prevention and response spaces, such as men committing harm, failing to follow-through with responsibilities, and taking credit for work that is not their own. Many feel it is the job of more aware men to help other men self-educate or access educational resources before they enter these spaces and engage in harmful ways.
- Other individuals of different identities, including those in historically marginalized communities, note the prevalence of white women in prevention groups and also feel that the groups can be inaccessible.

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Recommendation:

Men should continue to receive robust education and invitation to engage in the issue as they currently receive from programs like DBI. Efforts to mobilize relatively involved and educated men should be expanded so that these men can be ambassadors for less educated and involved men. However, these groups of male ambassadors should not work in isolation but should collaborate with the other student groups, predominantly consisting of women, who have been doing this work as well. These groups, again which consist mostly of women, should be given support to respond to criticism that they need to be more palatable to men. This criticism can feel draining and invalidating, especially given the violence that they have experienced from men who are involved.

Miscellaneous Feedback

- DOSS
 - Students have repeatedly brought up concerns about the level of transparency between students and the Department of Safety and Security. Questions regarding different channels for reporting various incidents, protocols for providing DOSS phone operators with ID numbers, and concerns about how variable student experiences are with DOSS based on the individuals they interact with have come up throughout the term. SPCSA recognizes that other institutions often have more outreach and collaboration between their

equivalent to DOSS and students, and we believe it would be very helpful to adopt similar initiatives at Dartmouth. SPCSA also advocates for more funding for the DOSS to improve DOSS training, efficiency, and communication

- Hopkins Center Performances
 - Students would like to see trigger and content warnings provided before all Hopkins Center performances, especially those affiliated with the Theater Department. Students want to see their safety and wellbeings prioritized above the integrity of the art.
- Emails from Dartmouth leadership
 - Some students were concerned about the most recent email from President Hanlon announcing the lawsuit regarding the investigation of the Psychological and Brain Sciences professors. Students believe it is important that college leadership fosters a culture in which survivors are comfortable coming forward with complaints and criticisms of the college and the way it handled their cases. This will allow students and the college to communicate constructively to understand all perspectives and can also lead to institutional growth. Some language in the email discouraged this kind of openness and instead promoted feelings of fear and wariness for students and survivors who might want to raise and address concerns they have in the future with the ways in which the college handled their cases.