

Introduction and Rationale

Throughout spring term 2020, the Student and Presidential Committee on Sexual Assault (SPCSA) provided students with an opportunity to engage with our termly “Round Table on Sexual Assault,” an event SPCSA hosts each term in order to formally serve as a liaison between students and administrators. This is typically an in-person 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. However, due to the nature of this remote term, we decided that a Google Form would be the most effective way for Dartmouth students to share their comments and thoughts. 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 feedback from the Google Form.

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.

Key Themes

Theme 1: *Students expressed concerns about and asked for more transparency regarding the new Title IX regulations.*

- While students recognized that the Title IX Office needs time to process these regulations, they call for transparency in any decision making processes for new policies and procedures.
- Students sought clarity as to how the new regulations will affect Dartmouth policies and procedures as well as Dartmouth’s ability as an institution to go above and beyond these new regulations.
 - More specifically, students requested details as to which policy changes are mandated by the new regulations versus where the College has the ability to make decisions for our community.
- Furthermore, students feel that it is currently difficult to report incidents of sexual harassment that are not “severe” and are concerned that the new Title IX regulations will further limit accountability for more “minor” incidents.
- Lastly, students recognize that the changes in new Title IX regulations may lead to a decline in reporting and hope that the College does not attribute this decrease to effectiveness of prevention programs such as SVPP.

Recommendation 1: *The Title IX Office and any other offices or departments that are processing the new regulations should continue to update students on their progress. Specifically,*

Title IX should consider informing the community about all options they are considering before draft policies are released to give students the opportunity to weigh in. Further, all policies and procedures released in the future should indicate where the College has made decisions not mandated by the new regulations. Other resources should issue statements that indicate their continued support for survivors and to explain any changes to other resources (or lack thereof) given the new regulations.

Relevant to: Title IX, Office of Community Standards and Accountability, Dick's House Counseling, The Student Wellness Center

Theme 2: *Students expressed confusion around several of Title IX's policies including those that cover retaliation and accommodations as well as differentiating the role of other resources for survivors.*

- Students expressed concern about the ambiguity of a complainant's rights, particularly when seeking support after an incident. They had questions about whether a complainant has the ability to ask that the responding party be barred from spaces without violating any retaliation policies.
 - Further, students sought clarification as to how communities or organizations can hold members accountable and possibly remove members for violations of community standards. Specifically, students asked whether organizations can have their own formal or informal processes for removing a member.
 - Students also feel that a complainant's ability to speak about their own experience to friends or within communities is restricted by retaliation policies which limit the ability of a survivor to create safe spaces after an incident of harm.
- Students seek clarification about the limitations of Title IX staff beyond the legal obligations of the Office itself. Specifically, students want transparency regarding how a person's role as Title IX staff may limit their ability to support survivors on a more personal and emotional level.

Recommendation 2a: *There is a disconnect between the College's retaliation policy and its practical effect especially as to how students experience social and personal interactions after an incident of harm. The College should consider any possible revisions to our retaliation policy that could make it more community specific; further the policy should be explained in terms that translate to student experience. Offices and departments that govern student organizations should ensure that members of these organizations know who to turn to to ask questions about community accountability and safety, and should create spaces to talk about internal policies such as blacklists.*

Relevant to: Title IX, the Office of Community Standards and Accountability, the Office of Greek Life, the Office of Athletics, Collis Center for Community Involvement

Recommendation 2b: *Title IX staff should make it immediately clear to survivors where they can turn to for emotional support, as well as emphasize that Title IX's main responsibility as a resource is legal accommodations, not to provide emotional support in the same way that a confidential resource might. This is necessary due to the fact that many students are most aware of Title IX as a resource and therefore may go there before accessing other resources, expecting a response more characteristic of a confidential resource. Given possible confusion and fear created by the new Title IX regulations, staff should take extra steps to ensure that their response is trauma-informed. In any conversations regarding resources, those that focus on emotional support and processing should be highlighted.*

Relevant to: Title IX

Theme 3: *Students had feedback about sexual violence prevention facilitations on campus and identified holes in prevention efforts as a whole.*

- Students pointed out the fact that there are few direct initiatives in prevention or response work on campus that explicitly address homophobia and transphobia.
 - The students noted that conversations that do include mention of LGBT+ folks often feel performative and do not address the lived experiences of discrimination and violence that that community faces on our campus.
- Students also gave feedback that some training put pressure on survivors and allies to intervene in instances instead of focusing on those causing harm.

Recommendation 3: *Those delivering prevention facilitations on campus (e.g. SVPP facilitators) should be required to engage in more specific conversations about homophobia and transphobia on campus; this could perhaps look like a booster training. Further, the College should consider ways that homophobia and transphobia as well as other identity specific experiences can be addressed more explicitly by resources and by considering creating more identity-specific support networks with regards to violence. Bystander training should emphasize that although intervention plays an important role in community safety, ultimately the people causing harm are responsible for any incident.*

Relevant to: The Student Wellness Center & the Sexual Violence Prevention Project, Counseling, the Office of Pluralism and Leadership