

Year 1 Public Description of Work for
Action Collaborative on Preventing Sexual Harassment in Higher Education

Santa Barbara City College

Centralized “Report a Concern” Form and Process

This Action Applies to Rubric Item(s):

Rubric Items 12 (Trauma-Informed Response and Education Programs) and 13 (Providing Anonymous and Non-mandatory Reporting Resources and Tools)

Description of Work:

The focus of this effort was to improve reporting and initial investigation structures and methods for sexual harassment complaints, as well as other complaints and concerns related and unrelated to Title IX.

Prior to the implementation of these improvement efforts in Spring 2019, many different reporting mechanisms existed that were often viewed as confusing to navigate, hard to find on the institution’s web pages, and overall difficult to understand and follow, for students, as well as faculty and staff. This was true for Title IX concerns, as well as all other complaints and issues, such as disruptive or threatening behavior, academic grievances, and discrimination. For example, where to report a concern was not only dependent on what type of potential issue was reported, but also who was potentially involved in it. Complaints involving only students were supposed to be reported to the Dean of Student Services, while complaints involving only faculty were supposed to be reported to Human Resources, or possibly Educational Programs, depending on the nature of the concern. Handling of Title IX specific concerns was initially combined under a Vice President’s Office, and then separated under the Dean of Student Services for student concerns and Human Resources for faculty and staff concerns; the idea at the time being that both Human Resources and the Dean of Student Services would work together on concerns between faculty and students. In addition to the previously mentioned confusion on where to report particular concerns, the latter also illustrates the complexities around which entity would investigate concerns, particularly when they involved both students and employees of the institution.

Efforts were then made to improve and streamline both the reporting of concerns, as well as addressing and investigating submitted reports. A single “Report a Concern” online form was created that is now used to report all types of complaints and concerns, including Title IX, as well as discrimination, hate crimes, disruptive behavior, academic grievances, personal wellness, threatening/violent behavior, etc. This form is directly accessible through a link at the bottom of every single webpage at the institution, i.e. it is part of the standard webpage framework at the institution. The same form is used by students, faculty, and staff,

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and the wording used on the different types of potential concerns has gone through several iterations to lead to less confusion and reduce the need for any prior knowledge on the part of the reporting party of what categories certain complaints or concerns might fall into. This form allows for entirely anonymous submission of complaints. One does not need to be logged into their campus student/faculty/staff account to submit the form, although one can choose to do so; it is a one-page form and it allows for attaching supporting documentation. The same form can also be used by members of the community or contractors to submit concerns.

Depending on the nature of the concern expressed by submitting the form, the report is automatically routed to various parties who get notified by e-mail and/or text message, as appropriate. Potentially Title IX and/or gender equity related concerns get routed directly to the Title IX and Gender Equity Coordinator who then initiates the follow-up and possible investigation.

Many of the other potential concerns get routed to members of the Behavioral Intervention Team (BIT) who meet at least on a weekly basis to discuss the submitted concerns and identify ways to following up and addressing them. This Behavioral Intervention Team is committed to ensuring community wellness and safety through a proactive, coordinated, collaborative, objective, and thoughtful approach to the prevention, identification, assessment, intervention, and management of situations that may pose a threat to the safety and well-being of the individual as well as the community. Members of BIT include the Dean and the Associate Dean of Student Services, the Director of Health and Wellness, Personal Counselors, Academic Counselors, the Director of Disability Services and Programs for Students (DSPS), DSPS Service Providers/Counselors, the Director of International Programs, Addictive Disorders Counselors, the Director of Security, and others. While this team existed on campus prior to centralizing the reporting mechanism, it was then integrated in a much more streamlined way with this new tool in Spring 2019.

Both the “Report a Concern” web form and the routing of submitted complaints or concerns have gone through several iterations of improvements over the past three semesters to further simplify the process and to better be able to assist targets throughout the process. In addition to having distributed information about the web form across campus via e-mail, a visual poster is currently in development that will soon be displayed next to all Title IX informational posters that are on display across campus.

These improvement efforts on centralizing the reporting structures and mechanisms by which concerns are followed up on have been implemented and revised at the institution over the last 18 months and address two items in the 2018 NASEM report, specifically in the response category (item 12 “centralizing organizational responses for all types of harmful behavior so the target does not have to determine what behavior they experienced to report the behavior and can be assisted to access the support services they need”, and

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item 13 “anonymous reporting mechanisms or tools”, and “channels outside the faculty or usual workplace hierarchy”, although there is currently no official ombudsperson at the institution).

Website for further information (if applicable):

<http://sbcc.edu/student-services/report-a-concern.php>

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