

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

Washington University in St. Louis

Educational Program for Student Respondents

This Action Applies to Rubric Item(s): 20

Description of Work:

The 2018 NASEM report states that “institutions need to consider the kind of support individual targets might need immediately after the incident(s) and how to help them continue to manage their education and work over the long term.” In an effort to meet the needs of students found responsible who remain members of our community or reintegrate within our community after a period of suspension, the Education Specialist for the Gender Equity and Title IX Compliance Office created and implemented an in-house educational program in the spring of 2020. Designed to foster reflection on past behaviors and to build skills for future interactions, the program includes modules about consent, alcohol use, healthy boundaries, and conflict resolution.

The program was created with the understanding that a respondent may be struggling with a history of trauma – known or unknown to the university – in addition to the stress of an investigation, hearing and finding of responsibility. Our Education Specialist is a former sexual violence and domestic violence advocate with a deep understanding of the effects of trauma and implementing trauma-informed practices. Since she is not a clinician, the program is educational rather than therapeutic; all students are given the option of completing educational work with a therapist outside the university, if they prefer. While students are welcome to discuss the investigation or any trauma history they would like to share, it is not required to complete the program, and referrals to on-campus counselors are offered at the beginning and end of the program.

The goal of the educational program is to build skills designed to reduce recurrence of sexual misconduct, sexual harassment, stalking, and domestic/dating violence on campus. It consists of several modules that can be reordered, chosen based on the specific behaviors at issue and the facts of each case. Examples of modules include consent education, healthy boundaries, healthy relationships, and impact on survivors.

Several stakeholders on campus reviewed the educational program outline before it was implemented with students, including members of the Gender Equity and Title IX Compliance Office, General Counsel’s Office, and the Relationship and Sexual Violence Prevention Center. Members of this group provided feedback and suggestions. Since implementation, participants have also been invited to provide feedback, which they did. Two students have completed the

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educational program so far, and another student is in the process of completing it. Because of the small number of participants, their feedback could not be anonymous, but it was mostly positive and included a suggestion to add more information about toxic masculinity. We are currently preparing a module to explore traditional masculinity.

Prior to the pandemic, the Gender Equity and Title IX Compliance Office was in the process of coordinating with the Evaluation Center at the Washington University Brown School of Social Work to create an evaluation system for sanctions. The current plan is to resume those conversations when business returns to campus as usual. Particularly helpful data would include measuring changes in knowledge as well as attitude. Eventually, evaluations could be implemented on a longer-term basis to determine if there were changes in behavior or attitude that remained a year later, for example.

As more students complete educational sanctions and the Office gathers more information and feedback, the Education Specialist will continue to adapt and expand modules as necessary to improve the program. The long-term goal is to prevent recurrence of violence on campus and to provide a safe environment for survivors when respondents remain on campus.

Website for further information (if applicable): [N/A](#)

Point of Contact Name: Jordan Crean, Education Specialist, Gender Equity and Title IX Compliance Office

Email Address for Point of Contact: jcrean@wustl.edu