

**Year 2 Public Description of Work for
Action Collaborative on Preventing Sexual Harassment in Higher Education**

The University of Chicago

**Creation of the UChicago Center for Awareness Response Education
and Support (UChicago CARES)**

This Action Applies to Rubric Item(s):

Response: Trauma-Informed Response and Education Programs

Evaluation: Using Climate Assessments to Inform Action

Description of Work: The creation and development of the UChicago Center for Awareness, Response, Education and Support (UChicago CARES)

Background:

In autumn quarter 2021, the University of Chicago's Equal Opportunity Programs (EOP) launched the UChicago Center for Awareness, Resolution, Education, and Support (UChicago CARES), which works to prevent and respond to all forms of harassment, discrimination, and sexual misconduct, and to provide holistic support to members of the campus community. UChicago CARES and the broader EOP organization aims to increase the visibility, capacity, and awareness of the distinct resources offered by EOP while enhancing our efforts to meet the University's compliance obligations and the needs of the campus community.

Purpose and Goals:

The multidisciplinary UChicago CARES team intends to take a holistic approach to supporting all members of the University community through outreach initiatives and prevention education, the coordination and provision of support services that focus on the care and empowerment of individuals, and the expansion of available resolution options. UChicago CARES embodies the University's commitment to an environment where everyone feels that they belong and are invited to learn and contribute within a safe and respectful university community.

Actions Taken:

- **Needs assessment.** The reorganization and creation of UChicago CARES resulted from analyzing the findings of a needs assessment conducted during the 2020–2021 academic

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year that included input from faculty, students, and staff, along with the 2019 Association of American Universities Climate Survey results and the report and recommendations from the AUN coalition.

- **Reorganization and renaming.** The purpose of the reorganization was to create a holistic and streamlined experience for people reporting, seeking services and support and potential resolution options. The reorganization also included a re-naming of the EOP area that focuses on prevention, support and response, to a name that would communicate care for the campus community. UChicago CARES is comprised of three primary areas, each of which have director-level support: Prevention Education & Outreach, Support and Services (currently the Office of Sexual Misconduct Prevention and Support), and Resolution Services. Within these areas, additional staff provide support and services. The reorganization also included the addition of one new FTE, a Director of Resolution Services, to EOP/ the UChicago CARES team.
- **Values discussions & strategic mapping (in progress).** UChicago CARES is currently undergoing a process of strategic mapping and identifying its key principles and values that underlie and will continue to inform the work. Much of this information will be made public on UChicago CARES new website as a means of communicating our work and of accountability and clarity in who we are and what we do for the campus community. It is also a means of informing goals in the future, such as considering how our core values align with the experience of someone who makes a report.
- **Case Flow Evaluation (forthcoming).** One project UChicago CARES will begin this year is to evaluate the experience of members of the campus community in the process from reporting, to receiving support and services, to exploring resolution options. In this project, the UChicago CARES team will convene to talk through the current experience, to identify potential challenges and issues, and to discuss potential resolution. The analysis, including potential changes to case flow, will include an evaluation of how the case flow aligns with UChicago CARES core values. It will also include conversations with campus partners who work closely on these matters to increase congruity between processes and people's experiences in reporting, receiving support and services, and resolution options.

Next Steps:

- Complete strategic mapping and values/ key principles identification and discuss as a UChicago CARES team; communicate out who we are and what we do, including how our work is informed by key principles and values, to campus community.
- Develop goals for UChicago CARES team as consider alignment of work with key principles and values, including the prioritization of case flow evaluation and any recommended changes.

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- Communicate information regarding UChicago CARES to the campus community, including through development of website and resources.
- Revisit needs identified in needs assessment to determine how UChicago CARES is meeting identified needs of campus community.

Website for further information (if applicable):

<https://equalopportunityprograms.uchicago.edu/cares-home/>

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