

**Year 3 Public Description of Work for
Action Collaborative on Preventing Sexual Harassment in Higher Education**

Santa Barbara City College

**Restructuring of “Report a Concern” Processes and Responses to
Gender Harassment**

Relevant Rubric Area(s):

Providing Anonymous and Non-mandatory Reporting Resources and Tools, Addressing Gender Harassment and Other Harmful Behavior, Improved Communication and Increased Transparency, Coordinated Community Response

Description of Work:

The goal of this effort was to re-evaluate, improve, and strengthen our established centralized “Report a Concern” tool, specifically with respect to the processes following the submission of the corresponding form, and in an effort to strengthen the response to gender harassment and other harmful behavior.

A central “Report a Concern” online form was developed and implemented three years ago 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 allows for entirely anonymous submission of complaints. Depending on the nature of the concern, incoming reports are routed to various parties, as appropriate, including the Behavioral Intervention Team (BIT).

During this past year, however, it was noticed that responses to certain types of reports were not as thorough and as clearly communicated as they should be. While Title IX concerns and corresponding investigations were part of the initial driving force behind setting up this initial reporting system and were always routed adequately, some concerns that did not necessarily rise to the level of Title IX investigations were not necessarily addressed in as much detail and with as much support as they should have been. While concerns going through the Behavioral Intervention Team were addressed by the team and specific resources were made available in these cases, concerns around gender harassment, for example, were routed much more narrowly with limited specific resources being available for follow-up.

With the significant increase in online courses during the pandemic, we have also seen an increase in online gender harassment and other related disruptive behavior. Reported concerns of this nature were initially followed up by BIT members from Campus Security, assuming the concerns did not rise to the level of a Title IX investigation or a police response. While this approach provided an initial response to the victim, it did not include any longer-term follow-up. In addition, the number of responding parties in these cases was very limited

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and information was not shared readily, or in some cases not at all, with other relevant parties who might be able to provide support to the victim.

These types of concerns are now handled by a broader group of individuals, still including Title IX Office staff and Campus Security, if appropriate, but also the Department Chair and the Dean and/or Director over the area. This not only assures that all relevant parties and stakeholders are involved and continuously looped into the response from the very beginning, but it also allows for regular follow-up with the victim. This has proven to be particularly valuable during incidents where gender harassment occurred online and originated from an anonymous source. In cases involving gender harassment from students against faculty, one part of this response now is an education component for classes to address and call out harmful behavior and provide ways to report it; a second part of this response includes a clear articulation that such behavior violates the policies and values of the institution and what the potential consequences could be. In addition, for cases involving online harassment, this approach allows for pro-active monitoring of any relevant sites, along with attempts to have inappropriate content removed from these sites. How this process can be further improved and how long such monitoring can be continued and be effective will need to be evaluated based on feedback from all involved parties and stakeholders.

These efforts to improve and strengthen individualized responses began with a focus on strengthening responses to online gender harassment, but may ultimately lead to preventing other forms of sexual harassment, as the 2018 NASEM report found. Strengthening the education component of this work will be a next step by expanding the effort to address and call out this harmful behavior beyond students and classes to department chairs and faculty, staff, and administrators overall.

Website for further information (if applicable):

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

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