

# 2024 Public Description of Work for Action Collaborative on Preventing Sexual Harassment in Higher Education

## University of Tennessee

### Office of Title IX Comprehensive Transparency and Communication Efforts

#### Relevant Rubric Area:

1. Improved communication and increased transparency

#### Description of Work:

The Office of Title IX at the University of Tennessee, Knoxville (UTK) takes a systematic approach to transparency and increased awareness throughout the academic year. These efforts are highlighted in the publication of the Office of Title IX's Annual Report and are a part of our "Title IX Commitment." Our Title IX Commitment is grounded in the [Center for Disease Control's Social-Ecological Model](#) (SEM). This description of work illustrates the work conducted at every level of the SEM as well as how our work is highlighted in our Annual Report process.

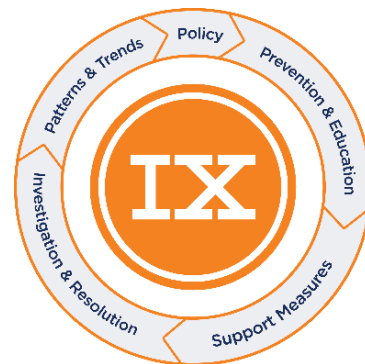
## Social Ecological Model



Figure 1: UTK Social Ecological Model (see Appendix for the full list of the model's categories and outputs that are listed in this figure)

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Below is a synopsis of the Office of Title IX's model – in which each area of our Title IX commitment is described in more detail.



1. **Policy.** Our foundation is in the policy and the procedures we follow.
2. **Prevention and Education.** Our goal is to prevent Sexual Harassment (including Sexual Assault, Dating Violence, Domestic Violence, and Stalking), Sexual Exploitation, and Retaliation before they happen.
3. **Supportive Measures.** Our promise is to provide support and appropriate supportive measures to individuals involved in the Title IX process.
4. **Investigation and Resolution.** Our commitments to due process, campus safety, and encouraging reporting guide how we investigate and resolve reports.
5. **Patterns and Trends.** Our responsibility is to utilize the best available research, evidence-based practice, and our own campus trends in our prevention and response efforts.

## Policy Communication and Transparency

Annually, the Office of Title IX conducts comprehensive reviews and updates to policies and related materials for release in August. All Title IX materials for the given year are color-coded to ensure that when new materials are created, it is easy to instruct campus partners to recycle historical versions to increase the accuracy of information.

## Communication on Prevention and Education

Throughout the year, monthly in-person training and tabling is provided for faculty, staff, graduate, and undergraduate students regarding an overview of Title IX, Mandatory Reporting, VOLS ACT Bystander Intervention Training, and VOLS CARE. Additional in-person trainings are offered at specific times of the semester: Athletics staff and student-athletes by team (NCAA requirement) (August); Student Government Association Safety Panel (September), Office of Sorority and Fraternity Life – Safety Summit (September); Support for Survivors Panel (October); and Ready, Set Connect! Campus Partner Fair (November).

Additionally, during the year at relevant times, the following events are held: Tea Time with Title IX; Welcome Home! Build Your Own Care Kit; RecFest; Frieson Black Cultural Center Welcome Back Event; Post Doc resource fair, VOLS ACT (Active Bystander Intervention Training) Day; Let Love Bloom; Safety Isn't Spooky; Consent, Convos, and Cookies; Meet Your Title IX Coordinator; Office of Sorority and Fraternity Life Health and Safety Summit – VOLS CARE; and VOLentine's Day.

On an ongoing basis, updates on the work of Title IX, regulation shifts, and resource information are provided as needed via formal networks such as "TN Today" for faculty and staff, "Vol Update" for students, and via campus listservs.

Specific communication efforts were intentionally timed for release during certain periods in the fall and spring semesters.

## **2024 Public Description of Work for Action Collaborative on Preventing Sexual Harassment in Higher Education**

### **August:**

Campus Communication: The Title IX Coordinator sends a welcome letter to the campus community that highlights educational opportunities for the semester, includes a link to policy (which is updated annually), invites the campus community to the fall Town Hall, and provides a reinforcement of the university's bystander commitment (Vols ACT). All letters from the Title IX Coordinator are housed on the website under Letters from Title IX and are available for reference.

Title IX Materials: All Title IX-related materials are updated annually. Mandatory Reporter resource cards are mailed to all faculty and staff who are not designated as confidential employees. You Are Not Alone resource posters, 3x5 cards, digital displays, wallet cards, and Complainant and Respondent Guides are distributed to University Housing, UT Police, and over 100 confidential employees in Student Health, the Office of Ombuds Services, and Counseling Centers.

### **September:**

Online Training: Annual Title IX training is assigned and released to all employees as a part of the university's annual compliance training package. All employees are required to complete the annual training by December 31.

Event: Title IX Town Hall, held in-person with a virtual option, provides policy updates and addresses current issues and trends in Title IX. Following the presentation by the Title IX coordinator, there is a Q&A opportunity with the Title IX coordinator and a panel of on- and off-campus partners. Additionally, in-person attendees can eat lunch with the Title IX coordinator, staff, and campus attendees.

### **April (Sexual Assault Awareness Month):**

Communication: The Title IX Coordinator sends an email to the campus to share about Sexual Assault Awareness Month (SAAM) and the programming that occurs throughout the month. All letters from the Title IX Coordinator are housed on the website under [Letters from Title IX](#) and are available for reference.

Communication: The Office of Title IX published the 2023 Title IX Annual Report to provide transparency, increase awareness, recognize the work of our campus and community partners, and ensure ongoing accountability of our work.

Events: SAAM Kickoff Event: Paint the Rock, Wear Teal Day/SAAM Day of Action, Meet Your Title IX Coordinator, Vols Walk for SAAM, Title IX Town Hall to discuss 2023 Annual Report and provide an opportunity for question and answer with campus and community partners, Break the Stigma Day, Denim Day

Lunch & Learns: Providing LGBTQ+ Inclusive Support, Vols ACT for Graduate Students, Safe with UT Police (Rape Aggression Defense Programming), Are You Safe Behind Your Screen? Sextortion and Safety, Trauma Informed Care, Hazing EDU, Vols ACT for Post Docs, Vols ACT for Employees, Vols ACT for Grad Students

### **End of Each Semester (December and May):**

Assessment: 360 Degree Evaluation of Supports is sent to individuals who worked with the Office of Title IX during the fall and spring semester. Surveys are sent to student and employee complainants, respondents, pregnant/parenting students, as well as those who received supportive measures only.

# **2024 Public Description of Work for Action Collaborative on Preventing Sexual Harassment in Higher Education**

## ***End of the Academic Year (June and July):***

Policy and procedure review and updates, training revisions, summer orientation tabling, communication updates, material updates, and dissemination of updated materials across campus.

## **2023 Annual Report Overview**

Annually, the work of the Office of Title IX and campus and community partners is highlighted in our annual reporting process. The 2023 Title IX Annual Report begins with a letter to the campus community from the Title IX Coordinator which shared that while compliance is the foundation of our work, our goal is to push beyond compliance and to cultivate a safe and nondiscriminatory learning, living, and working environment. The Report is structured by our five-pronged approach to our Title IX commitment: ensuring access to education through our policy; prevention and education; supportive measures; investigation and resolution; and patterns and trends.

The goal of the Annual Report is to increase understanding of how the university is working to both prevent and respond to sexual harassment. The Annual Report is developed on a calendar year basis, January 1 – December 31, and the data reflected in the Annual Report is specific to UTK. The data in the report is utilized to inform the way we work to meet the needs of our campus community. Information in the Report is obtained by the Deputy Title IX Coordinator for Prevention, Training, and Evaluation, the Title IX Coordinator from the Office of Title IX, and campus partner records. Although UT has published an Annual Report since 2014, the 2023 Annual Report provided the most comprehensive overview of both prevention and response to date. Title IX Annual Reports are available for reference under the [Documents Archive](#). Annual Reports are color-coded along with other Office materials to ensure proper use and accurate, up-to-date information.

## ***Ensuring access to education through our policy***

Understanding policy is vital for students, faculty, and staff. This section of the Report begins with information about our policy and provides a brief overview of policy updates from the prior year. This section also addresses the history of the Office of Title IX and how the Office came to be.

## ***Prevention & education***

Next, the Report highlights the various teams in which the Office of Title IX staff lead including the Relationship & Sexual Violence Prevention (RSVP) Team, Athletics Prevention Team, and Title IX Response Teams (employee and student). Education, training, and communication facilitated by the Office of Title IX (graduate students and employees) and the Center for Health Education & Wellness (undergraduate students) are highlighted. Additionally, the Report provides “Prevention Spotlights” in which major events, training initiatives, and assessment results are outlined by campus partners including the Center for Health Education & Wellness, Tennessee Athletics, the Office of Sorority & Fraternity Life, and the Office of Title IX. The Office of Title IX also takes the opportunity to highlight work completed via the Action Collaborative, and awards one employee and one community agency staff member as Partners of the Year. Other awards, accolades, and national presentations are highlighted in the publication to bring ongoing awareness and education to readers about the depth and breadth of the work. We believe that in opening the Report with an overview of how campus and community partners come together to prevent sexual harassment via a multi-pronged approach allows the reader to temper themselves into the contents of the Report.

## ***Supportive measures***

In this section, the Report shifts from an overview of prevention to response. This section begins with an introduction to supportive measures as well as the data on the number of supportive

# **2024 Public Description of Work for Action Collaborative on Preventing Sexual Harassment in Higher Education**

measures provided to those who made a report of prohibited conduct to the university of Tennessee between January 1 and December 31, 2023. The data does not include reports of prohibited conduct made to confidential resources such as the Student Counseling Center, the Student Health Center, or the Office of Ombuds Services.

## **Communicating Data About Reports to the Office of Title IX**

The Office of Title IX publishes the data in this Report to enhance transparency and inform the campus community about the number of reports to the Office during the 2023 calendar year. To provide the most accurate portrayal of reporting, the data includes all cases in which at least one of the following applies:

- The university knows the identity of the respondent, and the respondent is affiliated with the university.
- The identity of the respondent is known to the complainant but is not provided to the university.
- The identity of the respondent is unknown to the complainant.
- If an incident involves more than one type of prohibited conduct (for example, sexual harassment and domestic violence), they are all reflected in the data.

Reports in which the respondent was identified and not affiliated with the university were not included in the Report.

## ***Student concerns***

The following data is highlighted through charts and graphics of reports made to the Office of Title IX during 2023. When appropriate, 2023 data was compared with data from previous Reports to increase transparency and monitor trends.

- 2023 total concerns reported to the Office of Title IX by month
- Total number of prohibited conduct reports to the Office of Title IX (2021-23)
  - Prohibited conduct by category: Sexual misconduct, dating/domestic violence, and stalking (2021-23)
- Sexual misconduct reports (2015-23)
  - Sexual misconduct reported by type: Rape, fondling, and sexual exploitation (2023)
  - Sexual misconduct reported by type: Rape, fondling, and sexual exploitation (2021-23)
- Respondent identification
  - Complainant identified respondent
  - Complainant declined to identify the respondent
  - Respondent unknown to the complainant
- Reports of sexual misconduct with respondent unknown to the complainant
- Location
  - Reports of prohibited conduct by type and location
  - Sexual misconduct reports by type and location
  - Campus residence reports of sexual assault – rape
- Total reports of Stalking (2021-23)
  - Stalking by Type (2021-23)

Next, the Report discusses Student Report Resolutions; for data regarding the outcomes of the 21 formal complaints under the policy, the Report Resolution is provided by the investigating office, Student Conduct & Community Standards (SCCS). Report resolutions were provided for the categories of sexual misconduct, dating/domestic violence, and stalking. Additionally, data was

## 2024 Public Description of Work for Action Collaborative on Preventing Sexual Harassment in Higher Education

provided of known reports made to law enforcement on campus, in the city, and the county regarding sexual misconduct, dating/domestic violence, and stalking.

### ***Reports of prohibited conduct against faculty & staff***

To provide transparency on faculty and staff investigation matters, information is provided by UTK's investigating office, the Office of Investigation and Resolution (OIR), and included in the Report. In 2023, 32 reports of sex-based discrimination were made against university faculty and staff, and the Report provides information about the complainant status and the outcomes of the reports to OIR.

Both the data provided by SCCS and OIR are aggregated in a way so that the confidentiality of both the complainant and respondent is maintained.

### ***Patterns & trends***

As the final component of the University of Tennessee's model for the Office of Title IX, the Annual Report highlights patterns and trends from the year 2023. Monitoring and sharing patterns and trends allows the Office of Title IX to provide transparency to campus and community partners so that we can work collectively to prevent future incidents of prohibited conduct.

### **Marketing and Communication**

Following Report compilation, the Office of Title IX partners with the university's Office of Communications and Marketing to produce and distribute physical and electronic copies of the Annual Report. Reports were distributed throughout April at events and were mailed to over one hundred employees who are engaged in the prevention and response of prohibited conduct. The University of Tennessee's Office of Title IX will continue to publish the Title IX Annual Report every April with an announcement to the campus community. We will continue to let the community know through town halls and other prevention initiatives that we are working to build an informed and engaged community by building awareness and understanding of the challenges and opportunities in our community. The Office of Title IX remains committed to this work, and our door is open year-round to ideas, questions, suggestions, and concerns.

**Website for further information (if applicable):** [https://titleix.utk.edu/wp-](https://titleix.utk.edu/wp-content/uploads/sites/96/2024/03/77960398-Title-IX-Annual-Report-2023-accessible.pdf)

[content/uploads/sites/96/2024/03/77960398-Title-IX-Annual-Report-2023-accessible.pdf](https://titleix.utk.edu/wp-content/uploads/sites/96/2024/03/77960398-Title-IX-Annual-Report-2023-accessible.pdf)

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## Appendix: UTK Social-Ecological Model Categories and Outputs

Individual	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Annual training for all undergraduate students, graduate students, faculty, and staff</li> <li>• Individual Supportive Measures</li> <li>• Investigations</li> <li>• Complaint Resolution</li> <li>• Respondent training and follow-up</li> </ul>
Relational	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Resident Assistant and Office Assistant Training</li> <li>• Greek Organization Bystander Training</li> <li>• Greek Organization House Director Training</li> <li>• Hall Director/Assistant Hall Director Training</li> <li>• Vols ACT bystander training for faculty, graduate, and undergraduate students</li> <li>• Student Organization Leader Training</li> <li>• Student Athlete Training</li> <li>• Pride of the Southland Training</li> <li>• New Graduate Student and new GTA/GRA Training</li> <li>• New Student Veteran Training</li> <li>• UTK Haslam Peer Mentor Training</li> <li>• Other RSVP Presentations (e.g., Consent, Healthy Relationships)</li> <li>• Family: Start the Conversation Guides</li> <li>• Six Weeks of Welcome</li> </ul>
Community	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• National Academies Membership in the Action Collaborative on Preventing Sexual Harassment in Higher Education</li> <li>• NASPA Culture of Respect Cohort 4</li> <li>• UTK Relationship &amp; Sexual Violence Prevention Team</li> <li>• Greek [Office of Sorority and Fraternity Life] Prevention Team</li> <li>• Student Athlete Prevention Team</li> <li>• Employee Application Sexual Misconduct Attestation</li> <li>• Student Application Safety Questions</li> <li>• 2022 Vol Voices Climate Survey</li> <li>• Annual Employee Training Requirement</li> <li>• Vols ACT Campaign</li> <li>• Consent Is Campaign</li> <li>• Social Media and Marketing Campaigns</li> <li>• Events and outreach</li> <li>• Sexual Assault Awareness Month</li> <li>• Domestic Violence Awareness Month</li> <li>• Tennessee Coalition to End Sexual and Domestic Violence Leadership Team and Safer Workplaces and Bystander Intervention Subcommittee Representation</li> <li>• Knox County Sexual Assault Response Team</li> <li>• Family Justice Center Coordinated Community Response Team</li> <li>• Domestic Violence Death Review Team</li> <li>• Safe Bar</li> </ul>
Societal	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Compliance with Title IX Regulations</li> <li>• Compliance with the Violence Against Women Act</li> <li>• Compliance with the Clery Act</li> <li>• Incorporation of national statistics and research</li> </ul>