

Take Force on Campus Sexual Harm
July 10th, 2019 12:30-3p,
State House Room 11, Montpelier, VT

Present: Chani Waterhouse (she/her), Representative Selene Colburn (she/her), Michele Whitmore (she/her), Senator Phillip Baruth (he/him), Susan Ide (she/her), Nick Stanton (he/him), Kerri Duquette-Hoffman (she/her/they/them), Barbara McCall (she/her), Emily Pijanowski (she/her), Dawn Matthews (she/her), Jeffery Nolan (he/him), Bor Yang, Sydney Ovitt, Michelle Whitmore (she/her), July Cruz (they/them/she/her), Indira Romero-Marciano, Margaret Bass

Regrets: Judy Rickstad, Lucy Basa

Call to Order

Introductions- Names, Pronouns and why this is important to each person present

There were no guests or public comments. Chani noted that several people had asked to be included in emails containing information about meetings and activities of the Task Force.

Agenda Revisions: Chani proposed taking up election of a chair as part of discussion of organizational issues

Discussion Agenda

Elect a chair

- Chani nominated Catherine Welch. Barbara McCall seconded.
- Catherine Welch was elected as Chair- none opposed

Meetings

- Notice of meeting is required
 - Senator Phillip Baruth volunteered to explore whether the senate education committee website could be designated at the Task Force's "official website" and used for posting notice of meetings and meeting minutes.
- A survey was passed out that polled availability
- All appointed seats have been filled
- Discussion of meeting locations
 - 4 people are located in Montpelier
 - The remaining members are as close to Chittenden County as Montpelier or in Chittenden County
 - It seems to make sense for future meetings to be in Chittenden County
- The meetings will be completed by March 15th, 2020. The statute allows for eligible members to be reimbursed for attending up to six meetings.

Review Charge

Representative Selene Colburn reviewed the Task Force charge, highlighting the following.

1. Gather perspective on transcript accountability
 2. Have a nimble group in place to respond to Title IX changes
 3. Examine Restorative Justice avenues
 4. Improve Survivor Safety throughout these processes
 5. Enhance connections with post-secondary institutions and community resources
- Please see Act 77 section (c) Powers and Duties

Federal Administration changes to Title IX (after comments) should be out by September.

Goal Setting

Exercise- Hopes for this process from each member:

- 1 Stretch goal / hope
- 1 Baseline priority

Stretch goals / hopes:

- To enable victims and survivors to be more informed at every stage of a process – whether it be criminal justice or campus – and to facilitate protection and healing regardless of the outcome
- That survivors and respondents have new tools for dealing with experiences of sexual harm in campus settings, that are focused on opportunities for healing, and can approach adjudication processes with a sense of hope.
- Protection from federal changes; and Establishment of a centralized, well-funded advocacy resource for colleges and students
 - Advocacy with expertise
 - Expert opinion and consultation for higher ed
- Increase communication around expectations between students to head off situations; and ensure any adjudication process is fair and respects the rights of the accused
- To greatly curb, if not eliminate, sexual assault on campuses in Vermont
- That the work accomplished by this Task Force has a positive influence on current and future laws and regulations for our students
- Survivor voices and needs play a central role in campus planning in a variety of venues (ongoing)
- Uniform (or relatively uniform) “best practice” for statewide use in terms of preventing perpetrators from transferring and re-offending
- Create a model policy or process that validates ALL
- That any recommendations regarding policy changes enhance the ability of VT institutions of higher ed to respond well and fairly to reports of sexual assault, intimate partner violence and stalking
- Suggested or implemented structures for collaboration and partnership between institutions of higher ed and community-based agencies for restorative justice practices; capacity building; and effective implementation / evaluation
- Increased options for informal resolution that centers the needs and wants of people most impacted by sexual harm – including people of color, LGBTQ students and especially transgender student, first generation college students, people with disabilities, people living in poverty.
- Give people the confidence and resources to report, focus on prevention education
- Provide tools to prevent assaulters from harming someone else.

Baseline Priorities:

- Assaulters have a better understanding of their wrongdoings and the consequences.
- Voices of survivors are not only heard but they are listened to, if/when proposals are made/enacted people are aware of changes and know what they mean.
- Clear understanding of needs and priorities of people most impacted by campus sexual harm
- To develop an effective workplan / action plan which is shared with campuses who are charged to follow through on our recommendations
- Collaborative success in making significant improvements to
 - Prevention & education
 - A fair and supportive adjudication process

- At least one concrete large-scale change
- State-level support for ongoing professional development, practice sharing, peer review for SV/DV within institutions of higher ed – akin to AOD work with DOH
- Collaborative work to improve campus cultures around responding to survivors is continued past March, 2020
- Increase communication around expectations between students to head off situations; and ensure that any adjudicative process is fair and respects the rights of the accused as well as those who may have experienced sexual harm
- Specific findings and recommendations at the end
- To develop a stronger network / voice for our students and for those who do this difficult work and create a best practice guideline for us all to use that has a fair and equitable process
- Address all iterations of asterisk / transcript solutions
- A strong legislative proposal that identifies opportunities for improvements to adjudications processes statewide and more consistent experiences for VT higher ed students.
- That any recommendations regarding changes not make it more difficult for VT institutions of higher ed to respond well and fairly to reports of sexual assault, intimate partner violence and stalking
- To develop a better understanding of the campus adjudication process with regard to the burden of the reporting party, the rights of both parties, how long the process typically takes / works procedurally

Work Planning

Generated a list of Questions to explore

- Transcript accountability
 - How effective are state laws in VA and NY?
 - Best practices / baseline practices
- Who is most impacted?
 - What do they want and need?
 - What's the gap between this and what is available?
- Should we move restorative practices forward on VT campuses?
 - Evidentiary issues around admitting to wrongdoing
 - How would this need to happen?
 - How could survivors' needs be centered?
- What is the range of practices and experiences in VT?
 - Commonalities and differences?
 - Recommendation?
 - Promising practices?
 - What kind of communication happens with survivors about a menu of options? How is that working?
- What should exist across all?

Potential Sources:

- Experts in NY & VA (Jeff Nolan)
- TX just passed a law requiring transcript notation, not yet in effect
- Campus Prism & Rutgers & David Karp
- Restorative Justice Study Committee Report- Karen Vastine
- Intercollegiate Council on SV
- Dr. Penny Schtull-Norwich
- VDH Health surveys/data sources
- Student organizers
- People who are most impacted
- 2014 White House task force Report

The Basics – what are the things people will need to learn about in order to fully participate?

- Transcript notation
- Federal Title IX (and Clery?) rules- current and new
- Different types of institutions (public v. private)- different parameters?

Future Agenda Items

- Establish regular meeting time?
- Establish Ed Committee website as official website of the Task Force?
- Workplan

Tasks assigned:

Proposed workplan drafters- **Margaret Bass** and **Representative Selene Colburn** with **Catherine Welch**

Meeting & minutes posting- **Senator Phillip Baruth**

Clarity on compensation for the work- **Chani Waterhouse** and **Senator Phillip Baruth**

Minutes- **Chani Waterhouse** and **Kerri Duquette-Hoffman**

Scheduling meetings- **Chani Waterhouse** with **Catherine Welch**