Standing together

Johns Hopkins’ commitment to preventing and responding to sexual assault

Fall 2015
In August 2014, Johns Hopkins University President Ronald J. Daniels sent a message to students, faculty, and staff expressing his commitment to strengthening the university’s policies, programs, and training related to sexual misconduct. As he wrote at that time:

“Sexual violence on our campuses, or anywhere, is unacceptable. It tears at the fabric of our university community; threatens the ability of our students, faculty, and staff to pursue scholarship and discovery; and diminishes our capacity to realize our fullest individual and collective potential. The safety and well-being of all members of the Johns Hopkins community is among our most fundamental responsibilities and will always be our shared priority.”
In the year since that message, committed groups and individuals throughout the university have worked to shape a broad new set of policies and educational programs designed to address issues of sexual misconduct and to create a healthier and safer campus environment.

Like many colleges and universities across the country, Johns Hopkins has been evaluating and expanding its response and resources dedicated to sexual violence in earnest since 2011, when the federal government issued new guidance related to Title IX, a federal statute prohibiting discrimination on the basis of gender. The university’s work took on additional meaning in 2014 when the Department of Education’s Office for Civil Rights (OCR) added Johns Hopkins to its list of schools—now numbering more than 100—under investigation for Title IX complaints.

The entire community has been involved with the university’s response to sexual assault. Students have advocated for change. Faculty members have participated on committees and engaged in research activities. Staff from across the administration have come together to plan and implement changes. And, over the past year, the university's senior leadership has focused on policies, practices, and procedures related to sexual misconduct.

“Hopkins is not alone in wrestling with these issues,” says alumna Paula Boggs, who chairs the student life committee of the Johns Hopkins University Board of Trustees. “Our peer institutions—some of the most elite institutions of higher learning in our nation—are struggling with these issues, and no one has come out with a gold standard that everyone else now emulates.”

The university has seen substantial progress, but its efforts to prevent and respond to sexual misconduct are far from complete. The work will continue to evolve as federal and state laws shift, as research demonstrates best practices, and as students continue to promote changes to campus culture. This report details some of the university’s recent and ongoing efforts in these areas, particularly around policies, procedures, training, and campus climate.

I. Policies and Procedures

In September 2014, the university implemented several important updates to its policies related to sexual misconduct to bring them into compliance with changes in the federal Campus Sexual Violence Elimination (SaVE) Act. Shortly thereafter, the university launched a comprehensive review of all Title IX–related policies and procedures, with the involvement of student groups, outside experts, and an internal advisory committee.

What is Title IX?

Every educational institution receiving federal funding must comply with the requirements of Title IX, a federal statute enacted in 1972 to prohibit discrimination on the basis of gender.

In the past, Title IX was usually associated with gender equity in college athletics. But Title IX’s assurances go beyond leveling the playing field in sports. Title IX requires colleges and universities to employ a Title IX coordinator and to investigate all allegations of sexual misconduct, regardless of whether a criminal investigation is ever initiated with the police.
The 2014 changes focused on the handling of sexual misconduct cases, and included allowing both complainants and respondents to engage an adviser of their choice in the process, shortening the timeframe for the investigation and resolution of complaints whenever possible, and affording both parties similar and timely access to information.

Subsequent reviews and substantial community input revealed that many found Johns Hopkins’ policies related to sexual misconduct to be overly complicated and confusing. Others offered important suggestions for further improving the university’s process for investigating and resolving reports of sexual misconduct.

In August 2015, the university released a full update of sexual misconduct policies reflecting many months of consultation among students, faculty, and staff. This update consolidates multiple prior policies into a single, clear, and comprehensive policy. Among the changes, it streamlines the investigation and resolution process, placing all sexual misconduct cases under the direction of the Office of Institutional Equity’s Title IX coordinator. For cases in which a student is the subject of a complaint, hearings and appeals will no longer be adjudicated by individual schools or divisions but by a panel made up of two university faculty or staff members and one retired judge or other legal professional, drawn from a specially trained pool. Any appeals in such cases will be reviewed by the vice provost for student affairs.

Policies and Resources
The Johns Hopkins University Sexual Misconduct Policy and Procedures is available in full at: sexualassault.jhu.edu/policies-laws.

The document includes information about:
• Purpose and scope
• Prohibited conduct
• Definitions
• Reporting sexual misconduct
• Obligations of university employees
• Confidentiality
• Procedures for investigation and resolution of cases
• Medical treatment
• Education and training

Staff members at the Office of Institutional Equity: Linda Boyd and Oana Brooks, equity compliance investigators; Allison Boyle, assistant vice provost and Title IX coordinator; Caroline Laguerre-Brown, vice provost for institutional equity and chief diversity officer; and Tara Berrien, equity compliance investigator.
II. The Clery Act and Campus Security

Along with changes in policies and procedures, Johns Hopkins has worked to improve the way it tracks and shares information with the university community about reports of sexual misconduct and other crimes.

The federal law commonly known as the Clery Act requires colleges and universities to disclose information about certain types of crimes occurring on and around their campuses and to send timely warnings that alert the community to any serious or ongoing threat. These timely warnings are one of several ways security information is shared with students, faculty, and staff. Others include the university's public safety advisories, which are emails alerting community members to patterns of criminal activity or providing safety tips, and the security blotter, which is an online listing of all reports made to security.

Following questions last year about how the university handled the report of an incident at a fraternity house in March 2013, Johns Hopkins commissioned an independent review of the incident, and of its security policies and practices. Once the review was complete, President Daniels made it clear that the university should have issued a timely warning immediately after the March 2013 incident and that Johns Hopkins would handle any future incidents differently. The university has since adopted new protocols to strengthen its Clery compliance, including creating a new position for a Clery compliance administrator.

What is Clery?

The Jeanne Clery Disclosure of Campus Security Policy and Campus Crime Statistics Act—or the Clery Act—is a federal law that requires colleges and universities to collect and report serious crime statistics, to issue timely warnings to the community whenever certain reported crimes pose a serious or ongoing threat, to provide certain rights for survivors of sexual assaults on campus, and to offer protections against sexual assault, dating violence, domestic violence, and stalking. The annual statistical report discloses information about designated crimes occurring on and around campuses, without including identifying details about particular incidents or individuals.

Under the Clery Act, “campus security authorities,” including all security and most student affairs personnel, are required to report serious crime on campus. Under Title IX, “responsible employees” are required to report any serious crime on campus to security. At Johns Hopkins, all faculty and staff with the exception of the chaplain and medical and psychological counseling personnel fall under this requirement to report.

Keith Hill, vice president for corporate security, and Leroy “Lee” James, executive director for campus safety and security.
“Another thing we’ve done is rethink the geographical boundaries required by the Clery Act,” says Keith Hill, the university’s vice president for corporate security. Johns Hopkins reassessed Clery reporting boundaries on all its campuses and in some cases included more of the areas immediately adjacent to a campus. In addition, Hopkins’ security team often sends an alert when a crime is reported close to one of the campuses but outside the Clery Act boundary, if such an alert can help keep the university community safe.

In 2013, Johns Hopkins also centralized its security function. It brought the security of the Johns Hopkins Health System and the university’s 10 campuses under the jurisdiction of a single Office of Corporate Security, a change that helps ensure greater consistency in the training provided to all officers. And in spring 2015, the university hired Leroy James as executive director for campus safety and security, a new position that will oversees programs and activities related to safety and security at all Johns Hopkins campuses. James brings nearly three decades of law enforcement experience, including as head of campus security at Howard University.

“Hopkins has a robust policy framework to keep its campuses safe,” James says. “We will be working directly with students and student groups to hear their concerns and to help ensure those policies are incorporated in their daily practices.”

III. Education and Training

Education and training have long been important components of the university’s approach to preventing sexual misconduct, but over the past year, the quality and reach of that training have been vastly enhanced. In March 2015, the administration issued a new requirement that every student, faculty member, and staff member receive training regarding Title IX and the university’s sexual misconduct policies and procedures by the end of the calendar year. In addition, the university rolled out a rigorous bystander intervention training (BIT) for all new students and interested student groups.

The mandatory training for faculty, staff, and students is provided by the Office of Institutional Equity (OIE) online at the university’s Sexual Assault Response and Prevention website or through in-person sessions led by OIE staff. It provides facts and statistics about sexual assault and information about obligations, expectations, and resources. The training also addresses the university’s policies on sexual misconduct, including defining prohibited conduct and explaining how to file a complaint or access resources.

In addition to providing everyone at Johns Hopkins with the insight needed to contribute to an environment free from discrimination and violence, the training also gives faculty and staff who have direct contact with students the tools they need to help connect a student who confides in them with the right university resources.
Kevin Shollenberger, vice provost for student affairs; Terry Martinez, associate vice provost and dean of student life; and Jennifer Calhoun, special adviser to the vice provost for student affairs.

“The message I try to drive home is that faculty and staff are in a position to make or break what a student does next,” says Allison Boyle, the university’s Title IX coordinator. She says that if a student reporting sexual misconduct is made to feel uncomfortable, he or she is much less likely to reach out for help.

For students, the university also is developing a four-year training program on sexual misconduct and other issues that will reinforce the key messages of new-student orientation throughout their time at Hopkins. “The education of students on these issues is critical,” says Kevin Shollenberger, vice provost for student affairs. “The educational programs are where we have gotten the most positive response from students. It’s a very collaborative effort with student leaders.”

A key component of student education will be an expansion of the bystander intervention training. BIT is an interactive program that uses realistic examples to highlight the ways individuals can promote a safe environment. During the 2014–15 academic year, nearly 900 students—including all resident advisers at Homewood and Peabody, as well as nearly all the university’s athletic teams—participated in the five-hour program led by rigorously trained peers. In addition, the Inter-Fraternity Council, the governing board for the university’s 12 fraternities, has made BIT mandatory for all new recruits, executive board officers, and at least 50 percent of all fraternity members.

“On the Inter-Fraternity Council, we are definitely seeing big changes. Frats are willing to come together now more than ever, and that’s a big deal. There’s a lot more concern right now, and the only thing we can hope for is that it continues.”

Daulton Newman, a senior majoring in public health studies who is president of the Inter-Fraternity Council.
Standing Together

Daulton Newman, the newly elected president of the Inter-Fraternity Council, says it was important to make BIT an integral part of Greek life on campus. “Obviously, Greek life at Hopkins has gotten some bad press lately,” says Newman, a senior majoring in public health studies. “We decided something had to be done—something new we haven’t done before to stop this in its tracks.”

IV. Climate and Research

Johns Hopkins is also working to help stop campus sexual violence on a larger scale by tapping into its strength as one of the nation’s leading research universities. Among those efforts, Dr. Jacquelyn Campbell, a professor at the School of Nursing and a national leader in the area of intimate partner violence, is now advising the White House Task Force to Protect Students from Sexual Assault.

In spring 2015, Campbell and her co-investigator, Dr. Bushra Sabri, also at the School of Nursing, developed a sexual violence climate survey that was distributed to all Johns Hopkins students. With input from students, Campbell and Sabri designed the survey to learn more about the prevalence of and risk factors for sexual assault, students’ perceptions of problems and responses on Hopkins campuses, and students’ understanding of available resources.

The White House Task Force has recommended that the federal government require schools to conduct such surveys in 2016. “Reports to authorities, as we know, don’t provide a fair measure of the problem,” the Task Force wrote in an April 2014 report. “But a campus climate survey can. When done right, these surveys can gauge the prevalence of sexual assault on campus, test students’ attitudes and awareness about the issue, and provide schools with an invaluable tool for crafting solutions.”
Campbell’s team plans to finish analyzing survey results in fall 2015, and to report on those results to both the Hopkins community and the White House Task Force.

In the meantime, a cross section of students on the Homewood and East Baltimore campuses have begun to address the campus culture by joining nearly 200 college and university groups, nonprofit organizations, and private companies to promote the national It’s On Us campaign, which was launched by the White House last year to emphasize the shared responsibility to help prevent sexual assault.

The Hopkins’ It’s On Us campaign gladly joined forces with graduate students in East Baltimore who were working to promote the climate survey, according to William Coe, a medical doctor candidate at the School of Medicine. Coe says along with assistance from It’s On Us and the Student Government Association, Homewood’s filmmaking club spent close to 60 hours putting together a promotional video for the survey.

“I know it’s on everyone’s mind to continue to make this a top priority for more than just this year,” says Coe.

V. Student Engagement

The university is committed to continuing to improve the climate on its campuses and to advance efforts that promote the health and well-being of its entire community. “Policy changes are critical,” says Provost Robert C. Lieberman. “But culture change is even more important and that is not easy. This issue will remain an ongoing priority for months and years to come.”

Students have long supported sexual assault awareness and prevention on campus, through groups such as the JHU Sexual Assault Resource Unit (SARU), which offers peer support to those affected by sexual assault and works to increase attention to this challenge on college campuses. Over the past year, students, faculty, and staff have also stepped up in new ways to help to steer Johns Hopkins’ efforts.

Last summer, the university created the Provost’s Sexual Violence Advisory Committee (SVAC), made up of students, faculty, and staff. The SVAC has been meeting regularly and soliciting views from across the university to provide the provost with recommendations on policy, education, and training. The SVAC’s recommendations, including those on how to investigate and resolve sexual misconduct cases, informed the new policy and procedures and will continue to help shape the university’s work.
Students and student-led groups also have been active participants in the university’s response efforts, using student-led marches on the Homewood campus and public forums—including two held by the Homewood Student Government Association—to demand action and transparency from the university.

Carlene Partow, president of Hopkins Feminists, says bystander training has been popular and has increased students’ interest in talking about difficult situations. “My phone is constantly going off with texts asking me what I think about this scenario, or people are coming up to ask me hypothetical questions,” says Partow, a senior majoring in neuroscience.

In response to students, the university has worked to ensure the community is receiving timely, frequent, and transparent communications about both specific incidents and general progress on these issues.

VI. Looking Ahead

Starting in August 2015, the university will face several important moments, beginning with the implementation of its new policy and procedures. The climate survey results, expected in fall 2015, will help deepen the understanding of the campus environment. OCR will continue its investigation. And Johns Hopkins will continue following the development of research-based best practices as campuses across the country grapple with similar challenges.

Trustee Boggs, who spent part of her career as an attorney for the U.S. Army, the Department of Defense, and the White House Office of Legal Counsel investigating sex crimes in the military, says these issues are always tough, but the university is working on a long-term strategy that will serve its students. “There is no silver bullet that moves organizations and institutions forward on these issues,” she says, “but you have to set the tone at the top, which Hopkins has done.”

President Daniels says he is ready to build upon the university’s accomplishments and continue this vital effort.

“It will take our entire community standing together to stop sexual assault and its corrosive effects on our campuses and to build a climate that is healthy and safe for everyone,” he says.
Alcohol policies

While Hopkins’ approach to student use and abuse of alcohol is distinct from its focus on combating sexual assault, the two issues can intersect in troubling ways.

A study released in August 2014 that looked at the drinking habits of Maryland undergraduates found that alarming numbers of students binge drink, and the consequences of such activities include illness, academic concerns, run-ins with police, and unsafe behavior.

In the fall of 2014, Homewood Student Affairs piloted a harm-reduction program called BASICS, aimed at helping undergraduate students consider their use of alcohol and reduce risky behavior. The university also expanded bystander intervention programs and staff training, and worked with law enforcement, local businesses, and the community to bolster efforts to create a safe environment.

Also in the fall of 2014, Johns Hopkins President Ronald J. Daniels and Provost Robert C. Lieberman launched an Alcohol Strategy Working Group chaired by Dean of Student Life Terry Martinez. The group, comprising faculty, staff, and a subgroup of undergraduate students, worked to identify ways to build a culture of individual and community responsibility around alcohol consumption.

The working group offered its recommendations in spring 2015, then hosted a series of community meetings to solicit additional student input. The final recommendations, which will help the university develop and implement new policies this year, addressed a number of areas, including:

• Required alcohol education for incoming students;
• Amnesty from university penalties for those seeking medical help for themselves or others;
• Party guidelines, including the use of trained sober party monitors and security checks for parties hosted by recognized student organizations and student affiliated groups;
• Increased opportunities for on-campus socializing;
• Heightened screening of students for potential alcohol problems, and
• Additional educational resources.
Important Contacts

sexualassault.jhu.edu

Sexual Assault Helpline: 410-516-7333

Emergency Contacts

Homewood Campus: 410-516-7777
East Baltimore Campus: 410-955-5585
Bayview Medical Center: 410-550-0333
Peabody Campus: 410-234-4600
SAlS: 410-234-4600
Montgomery County Campus: 301-294-7191