



AMERICAN UNIVERSITY

WASHINGTON, D C

OFFICE OF THE VICE PRESIDENT OF CAMPUS LIFE

**To:** AU Student Government President Sophia Wirth

**CC:** Students Against Sexual Violence (SASV)

**Fr:** Gail Hanson, Vice President of Campus Life  
Rob Hradsky, Assistant Vice President & Dean of Students and Chair of the Sexual Assault Working Group (SAWG)

**Re:** Progress Report on Sexual Assault Awareness & Prevention Task Force Recommendations

**Date:** April 15, 2015

On November 10, 2014, the Student Government Task Force on Sexual Assault & Prevention delivered its report and recommendations to the Office of Campus Life. By prior agreement, the report was referred to the Sexual Assault Working Group (SAWG) for consideration.

As SG President and SG representative to SAWG, you presented the report to the working group the week it was issued and have been an active participant in the group's work in subsequent meetings. This is a status report summarizing the work completed to date by the Office of the Dean of Students and the Sexual Assault Working Group as it pertains to SG Task Force recommendations.

The Task Force advocated for...

1. The creation of a Sexual Assault Response & Prevention Program to operate out of the Wellness Center and be coordinated by the Sexual Assault Prevention Coordinator and the Coordinator of Victim Advocacy Services.

**PROGRESS:** On April 8, 2015, AVP and Dean of Students Rob Hradsky announced the launch of OASIS: The Office of Advocacy Services for Interpersonal and Sexual Violence – a recognizable umbrella within the Wellness Center with single points of contact for the staff's two full-time confidential advocates who work with students affected by sexual assault, dating and domestic violence, and stalking. Advocacy is a confidential service. E-mail [OASIS@american.edu](mailto:OASIS@american.edu); phone (202) 885-7070; web – [www.american.edu/ocl/OASIS](http://www.american.edu/ocl/OASIS).

2. The offices of the Sexual Assault Prevention Coordinator and the Coordinator of Victim Advocacy Services to be moved to the third floor of the Mary Graydon Center upon its transition from being used as swing space.

**PROGRESS:** OASIS is part of the Wellness Center, located in McCabe Hall, along with the Student Health Center, and proximate to first year residential communities. The recommendation to relocate the Wellness Center will be considered when third floor Mary Graydon Center is no longer needed as swing space – in approximately 3-4 years.

3. American University to outline a plan to implement in the next three years, mandatory preventative sexual assault education for all members of the university community. Furthermore, this Task Force advocates that education for students would begin with in-person training freshmen year, and continue with reinforced education throughout their careers at American University.

**PROGRESS:** SAWG has discussed alternatives for enforcing a sexual assault prevention education requirement, but has not yet reached consensus on an enforcement strategy. The group anticipates having a recommendation by the end of the semester.

The Office of the Dean of Students and Wellness Center have launched elements of a “curriculum” on sexual assault prevention that are delivered through peer educators and in both online and in-person formats. Work on this objective will continue until the curriculum is complete – projected for fall 2016. Here are program elements that have been implemented to date:

- All new undergraduates are expected to complete the online course, Haven-Understanding Sexual Assault, prior to enrollment. Students receive repeated electronic reminders until they complete the course.
- All graduate and law students were expected to complete Haven in fall 2014; new graduate and law students will have this expectation going forward. They will receive repeated reminders until they complete the course.
- All AU faculty and staff – about 3,000 employees, were required to complete an online training module on Title IX and Campus Save this year.
- New faculty and staff will take the course when they are hired, and refresher training will be required on a periodic basis.
- AU’s Eagle Summit orientation program includes a session on critical issues led by staff, with small group discussions led by Orientation Leaders. The session content currently addresses myths about rape, consent, and principles of bystander intervention. In fall 2014, 90.2% of new first year students participated in Eagle Summit.
- Step Up Training reinforces learning about bystander intervention. It is peer led and is presented to target audiences in Athletics, Fraternity & Sorority Life, and student organizations. It is available to other groups on request and is offered to individuals through general sign-up sessions. In all, 2,400 students were trained this year.
- Campus Life, in partnership with University Communications & Marketing, produced a training film, “Step Up – Be More than a Bystander.” The film is used in in-person trainings and is available to the University community through the Step Up website: [www.american.edu/StepUp](http://www.american.edu/StepUp)
- Campus Life developed messages reinforcing elements of Step Up training that are on display regularly on campus electronic message boards.
- PEERS (Peer Educators for the Elimination of Relationship and Sexual Violence) are trained to present workshops on dating violence, stalking, and sexual violence. This year, PEERS presented 20 workshops on Sexual Violence, Consent & Communication; six workshops on Dating Violence & Healthy Relationships; and one workshop on stalking. We plan to grow PEERS workshop activity as part of the curriculum development plan.

4. Two hours to be dedicated during Welcome Week to peer-facilitated in-person sexual assault education for all first-year students with an implied mandate. This education must include consent-based education, bystander intervention training, and information regarding resources for survivors and friends-of-survivors. It is recommended that the training be a hybrid version of PEERS training and “Step Up!” and be preceded by an introduction to the issue of sexual assault at Eagle Summit, with additional preliminary education to be administered through an online program prior to students’ arrival for the fall semester.

**PROGRESS:**

- We just recently received Student Government’s proposed plan for a new peer led education program conducted by the Wellness Center during Welcome Week. At full implementation, the program would reach all new undergraduates through 32, 90-minute sessions over five days. We appreciate the financial support the SG has put behind this proposal. In fall 2015, we will pilot this program, scaling it to the number of already trained peer educators that can commit to staffing it. Content will draw from existing training materials on consent, bystander intervention, and campus resources for survivors. Program evaluations will inform planning on a larger scale for fall 2016.
  - Online education on sexual assault prevention prior to students’ enrollment will continue to be an element of AU’s education strategy. A committee of the Sexual Assault Working Group (SAWG) has previewed new online sexual assault prevention programs and narrowed the field to three, one of which is a new edition of Haven. Recommendations will be made this semester on the best choices to meet the needs of undergraduate students and graduate and law students, respectively. All new AU students will be expected to complete the online program.
  - The Critical Issues session included in Eagle Summit will continue with a sharper focus on sexual assault prevention and high risk drinking. All Eagle Summit participants attend all program sessions in groups led by Orientation Leaders.
5. American University to develop a flowchart to be made available on the university website that would outline all available resources for survivors, and clearly delineate those which are confidential and those which are not.

**PROGRESS:** The Sexual Assault Working Group (SAWG) has developed charts mapping the options and resources available to survivors of sexual assault. Confidential and non-confidential resources are clearly marked. The charts are available at:  
[www.american.edu/ocl/wellness/reporting-interpersonal-violence.cfm](http://www.american.edu/ocl/wellness/reporting-interpersonal-violence.cfm)

6. The incorporation of Title IX language and survivor resources into all syllabi at American University.

**PROGRESS:** The Sexual Assault Working Group (SAWG) has developed Title IX language appropriate for inclusion in the syllabi of academic courses. The Center for Teaching, Research and Learning (CTRL) has agreed to incorporate the approved language into its course syllabus template as “Important Information for All Students.” The text will be available for fall 2015 courses.

In addition to recommendations made by Student Government, there are other important developments related to sexual assault prevention and responses. These include:

- The Campus Climate Assessment, developed by Professor Jane Palmer and sponsored by the Office of Campus Life, was administered in spring 2015, to an expanded stratified random sample of AU undergraduates. As is our practice, results of the assessment will be shared at the fall 2015 Town Hall Meeting hosted by the Sexual Assault Working Group.
- A revision to the Student Conduct Code that adds “sexual exploitation” to prohibited conduct is pending review by the Student Conduct Advisory Board.
- New information brochures have been developed on the topics of Sexual Assault and Interpersonal Violence. They will be available once the changes to the Student Conduct Code are approved.
- Student Conduct & Conflict Resolution Services has implemented the use of a privacy screen between the complainant and respondent as standard procedure in cases involving interpersonal violence. It had previously been provided on request.

### Conclusion

As you know, the university is working with the U.S. Department of Education’s Office for Civil Rights on a Title IX inquiry. We will provide them with full information about our case management and our programs to prevent sexual assault and support survivors. As President Kerwin communicated to the campus community in his recent letter, our commitment is to continuously review and improve our prevention, survivor support, investigation, and adjudication processes.

On Monday, April 20, at 6:30 p.m. in Ward 1, SAWG will co-sponsor with Student Government, Students Against Sexual Violence, and others the semi-annual open meeting on sexual assault prevention. This meeting features a showing of the film, *The Hunting Ground*. We are pleased to partner with you to achieve a good turnout for this important event.

Thank you for your leadership in helping to ensure that American University has the best possible practices to prevent and respond to sexual assault.