



ADDRESSING SEXUAL MISCONDUCT AT POSTSECONDARY EDUCATIONAL INSTITUTIONS

INTRODUCTION

Washington State University (WSU) respectfully submits the following report in accordance with RCW 28B.112.050. This report outlines WSU's campus climate assessments, outreach efforts, and the impact of this bill on institutional hiring practices, campus safety, and other relevant considerations. WSU has also implemented a number of other campus safety protocols, education, and processes to combat sexual violence in its community; which we can provide further information on upon request.

SUMMARIES OF CAMPUS CLIMATE ASSESSMENTS

WSU previously conducted student surveys relating to sexual assault but in recent years has moved to a broader assessment program. WSU conducts at least two broad surveys of the student experience and climate: the American College Health Association (ACHA) survey on a bi- or tri-annual basis and the National Survey of Student Engagement (NSSE) on a bi-annual basis. Neither of these surveys is designed to specifically assess the prevalence of sexual assault on campus but both include questions about well-being, campus climate, and access to resources. The NSSE was last administered in spring 2023 and WSU chose to include an optional module with questions designed to examine “environments, processes, and activities that reflect the engagement and validation of cultural diversity and promote greater understanding of societal differences.” Some of these questions specifically address possible experiences of stigmatization due to gender (or other identities) as well as resources and skills to effectively address possible discrimination and harassment. The results have recently become available for analysis and are posted on a public WSU website: [NSSE Survey](#). Because the 2023 NSSE survey results were just recently available, WSU is not yet able to report on how these survey results impacted policies, programs, and resources, but WSU has historically used the NSSE survey results to identify areas of need and to then support funding and resources for appropriate programs to support students. One of the challenges of using surveys to develop and/or refine programs and services is ensuring there is a point person to lead the work all the way through. In 2022, WSU Student Affairs created a new position, Director of Student Affairs Assessment, whose charge is to use data such as this to evaluate, develop, implement, and refine student-facing initiatives. The director has convened a working group specifically to review the results of the 2023 NSSE survey and develop plans based on those results.

WSU conducts a Faculty & Staff Employee Engagement Survey on a regular basis with the goal of gathering employee feedback relating to satisfaction in the working environment, available online: [Employee Engagement Survey](#). Although not specifically designed to assess the prevalence of sexual assault on campus, it includes questions about whether employees feel their department embraces university values of equity, diversity, inclusion, and wellbeing. The survey is utilized to measure progress with institutional goals and determine how effective improvement efforts are over time.

WSU plans to comply with the Violence Against Women Act Reauthorization Act of 2022, which has directed the Secretary of Education to “develop, design, and make available through a secure and accessible online portal, a standardized online survey tool regarding postsecondary student experiences with domestic violence, dating violence, sexual assault, sexual



harassment, and stalking.” Once developed by the Department of Education, institutions will be required to administer the survey on a biennial basis. WSU anticipates this standardized approach for all institutions will result in a stronger understanding of the prevalence and impact of sexual assault on college campuses.

EFFORTS TO REACH OUT TO AND CAPTURE INFORMATION FROM STUDENTS

As a land-grant institution, WSU is dedicated to promoting and sustaining an inclusive campus and community environment. WSU utilizes a number of approaches to engage with students who have traditionally been marginalized or experience disproportionate impacts of systemic oppression. WSU provides a number of venues for students to engage with, receive mentorship and support from, and to provide feedback to campus administrators. WSU’s Student Affairs operates an African American Student Center, Asian American and Pacific Islander Student Center, Chicanx/Latinx Student Center, Undocumented Student Center, LGBTQ+ center, and Women*s Center. Student Affairs also facilitates student organization engagement and facilitates meetings and forums throughout the year. Student Affairs facilitates a team of Social Justice Peer Educators (SJPEs) that provide opportunities for DEI and social justice dialogue between students through the Office of Outreach and Education (OOE). OOE also provides a community and educational dialogue space to allow students to connect with each other and campus administrators on DEI and social justice topics. Trainings, workshops, presentation, consultations, and facilitation of cultural events are additional services from OOE. Similar resources are available at system campuses (e.g. Mobilizing Opportunities for Student Advocacy, Inclusion, and Culture (MOSAIC) Center at WSU-Tri-Cities, Student Diversity Center at WSU-Spokane, Center for Intercultural Learning and Affirmation at WSU-Vancouver).

WSU maintains a database of student concerns relating to discrimination and harassment, facilitated by WSU’s Compliance and Civil Rights (CCR). WSU requires most employees, with limited exceptions, to report concerns of sexual harassment and sexual misconduct, and requires all supervisors to report all incidents of discrimination to CCR. The reporting requirement allows CCR to reach out to each and every student who may have a concern and offer consultation, education, training, resolutions, and an opportunity to engage in formal grievance procedures. CCR also tracks for patterns in reports and engages with campus partners to more broadly address trends through the campus community or bias response teams, collaboration with student care case managers, and departmental resolutions, education, and strategic planning. CCR monitors a feedback form and reporting form, which allow for anonymous and named reports of any concerns of discrimination or harassment in our community, or for feedback on institutional response to those concerns. CCR also facilitates a yearly Student Feedback Committee open to any interested students designed to gather student input on university processes and response to concerns of discrimination, harassment, and sexual misconduct. Based on student feedback, CCR has updated websites and handouts to provide for better searchability and access and updated procedural deadlines to prevent parties from extending investigation timelines. Finally, CCR engages in significant outreach to both students and employees to ensure community members have knowledge of and access to their resources.

IMPACTS OF THE ACT

WSU recognizes the importance of enforcing safety protocols when recruiting applicants to ensure students and employees are not put at risk for preventable harm. WSU Human Resource Services (HRS) has implemented the attestation and disclosure process required under RCW [28B.112.080](#). To date, there have been four (4) reported instances or reviews of



documents received by Human Resources from current or past postsecondary educational institutions. There have been zero reported instances or review of documents from relevant associations.

There have been challenges in implementation of the attestation and disclosure process. It has been a significant challenge to receive responses from candidates' former postsecondary educational institutions, where those institutions are located outside of Washington state. When a response is received, additional steps are often required from the responding institution, such as a formal public records request or occasionally institutions will decline to provide a response. Some institutional response delays are significant. These delays impede WSU's ability to make offers to candidates and can result in WSU losing a quality candidate during a delay.