

Vanderbilt Student Government

Student Perspective Report

VSG Sexual Assault Awareness and Prevention Committee

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Acknowledgements

The 2016 Student Perspective Report (SPR) of Vanderbilt Student Government's Sexual Assault Awareness and Prevention (VSAP) Committee is the first of its kind for Vanderbilt's campus. It seeks to offer student perspectives, interpretations, and recommendations related to the campus climate of sexual misconduct, and it is our sincere hope that the SPR be released annually in order to maintain our commitment to reflective and critical analysis of how best to serve the Vanderbilt undergraduate community.

This report required an enormous amount of effort on the part of many individuals and campus partners, as well as the expertise of committed student activists and the examples set by reports such as the Association of American Universities (AAU) Campus Climate Survey on Sexual Assault and Sexual Misconduct project. The VSAP team – of Kaitlin Spear, Asheeka Desai, Sara Starr, Nicole Jenkinson, Logan Brown, Samantha Garfield, Erica Comer, Yoko Kanai, Maggie King, Sydney Silberman, Carson Lystad, and Michael Frankland – would like to extend our thanks to Vanderbilt Student Government, without whose support this endeavor could not have progressed. We would also like to thank the following campus partners for all of their enduring patience and advice, as well as the time they devoted to countless meetings: the Equal Opportunity, Affirmative Action, and Disability Services Department (EAD), particularly Anita Jenious and Damian Marshall; the Project Safe Center, particularly Cara Tuttle Bell and Sarah Jordan Welch; the Office of General Counsel, particularly Audrey Anderson, Kevin Davis, and Sheree Wright; Mark Bandas, Dean of Students; Susan Wente, Provost; George C. Hill, Vice Chancellor; and Vanessa Beasley, Dean of the Commons. Their commitment to the wellbeing of every member of the Vanderbilt community was critical to the success of this project.

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Most importantly, we'd like to thank the students who participated in the Vanderbilt Campus Climate Survey on Sexual Assault. Your participation and candidness provided us with key data and talking points for this project, as well as for initiatives in many years to come.

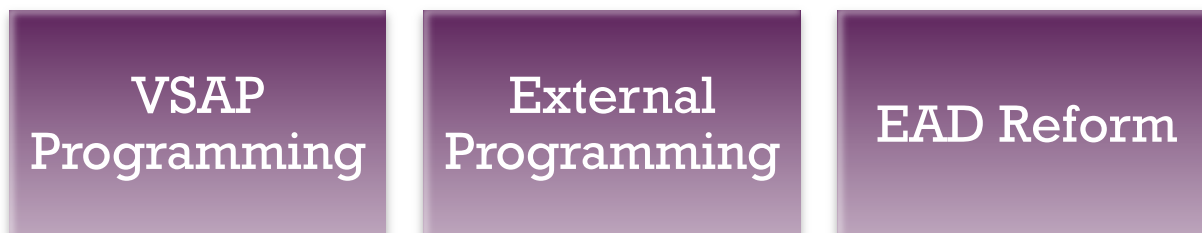
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Executive Summary

Current studies reveal that 1 in 5 women and 1 in 16 men will become survivors of sexual assault during their college years. Vanderbilt is no exception, although we have our own set of unique risk factors that may make our students disproportionately likely to experience sexual assault. In addition to sexual assault occurring at an unacceptably high rate, there are significant social and institutional barriers to reporting, including, but not limited to, the victim believing that harm was not intended by the perpetrator, concerns about confidentiality, and fear of retaliation.

Sites of high risk (as reflected in the Campus Climate Survey results), and therefore sites of intervention as well, are the consistent and proper exchange of consent in private dorm rooms, and the practice of gendered partying in Greek life, in particular.

In our resolutions section, we discuss a wide variety of interventions, including interventions aimed at VUPD and Allied Barton officers; however, the three major categories of resolutions which we have proposed are (1) “VSAP Programming,” which focuses on what the source organization for this report can do, (2) “External Programming,” which focuses on what other entities can do, and (3) “EAD Reform,” which focused on what the Equal Opportunity, Affirmative Action, and Disability Services Department can improve.



We have compiled necessary initiatives for both sexual assault prevention and proper treatment of survivors into a single report, because we know that each initiative is vital, but only when the initiatives are undertaken simultaneously will we see their full impact.

Citations

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Methodology: The “How?” and “Why?” of the SPR

Sexual assault is a problem running rampant across the world, and college campuses are experiencing one of the highest rates of sexual assault. Current studies reveal that 1 in 5 women and 1 in 16 men will become survivors of sexual assault during their college years.¹ We, as representatives of the student body, are speaking out to say that this number is too high. We are speaking out to say that as long as sexual assault persists on Vanderbilt’s campus, and any college campus, it is something we must fight against. This report contains a series of initiatives we believe will help reduce the rate of sexual assault at Vanderbilt University as well as initiatives that we believe will make survivors more comfortable stepping forward to report.

VSAP is dedicated to creating a climate on campus that is friendly to survivor reporting and actively involves all students, faculty, and administrators working together to prevent sexual assault. We believe that these initiatives, which we detail in the following pages, will lay the groundwork to do just that. As the status of having experienced sexual assault is considered “a condition that endures over time and requires treatment to restore the victim,”² initiatives will include both immediate and more long-term actions to assist the survivors. We recognize that if implemented successfully the number of reported assaults will increase at Vanderbilt University, however the committee believes that it is vital for this to happen in order to fully understand the scope of the problem and how best to continue to counter sexual assault as more details are made aware. Sexual assault is perhaps the most pressing danger to students attending Vanderbilt University – and to those attending any institute of higher education, for that matter – and we have compiled this student perspective report to urge the campus community to do all it can to help us in our efforts to prevent sexual assault and make Vanderbilt a leader amongst its peer institutions in regards to student safety.

This report was broken down into the sections present in the “Table of Contents,” and members of the VSAP committee individually authored each section, although the concepts discussed were the products of the committee as a whole. The sections were then edited by the Chair of VSAP, Kait Spear, and redistributed to the committee members (named in the “Acknowledgements” section) for evaluation. Upon approval of a draft, representatives from various campus organizations were contacted in an effort to collect feedback from a larger subsection of the student body. Of the organizations contacted, three sent representatives to the community feedback sessions. VSAP does not claim that we offer solutions that will be uniformly endorsed by every member of the student body, but we do offer solutions that have been carefully researched, particularly using the Association of American Universities (AAU) Campus Climate Survey on Sexual Assault and Sexual Misconduct project³ and The First Report of the White House Task Force to Protect Students From Sexual Assault⁴. VSAP has also made efforts to make this report inclusive of institutions outside of Vanderbilt Student Government and to center the voices of campus leaders from a diverse range of perspectives. To that end, we have included student critiques and endorsements of the ideas present in the SPR where appropriate.

VSAP first reviewed the state of affairs regarding campus sexual assault, and then compiled a list of initiatives to address areas that we believe could be improved. Such an epistemological framework is reflected in the SPR, which first addresses the campus climate and then goes on to suggest resolutions.

¹ *It's On Us* (n.d.): Campaign organizing tools. Retrieved on 22 Nov. 2015 from: itsonus.org

² House, C. C., et al. (2014). Estimating the incidence of rape and sexual assault. *Washington, D.C.: National Academies Press. eBook Collection (EBSCOhost)*. Web. 23 Nov. 2015.

³ Cantor, D., Fisher, B., Chibnall, S., Townsend, R., Lee, H., Bruce, C., & Thomas, G. (2015). Report on the AAU campus climate survey on sexual assault and sexual misconduct. Retrieved from: https://www.aau.edu/uploadedFiles/AAU_Publications/AAU_Reports/Sexual_Assault_Campus_Survey/Report%20on%20the%20AAU%20Campus%20Climate%20Survey%20on%20Sexual%20Assault%20and%20Sexual%20Misconduct.pdf

⁴ *The White House Task Force to Protect Students From Sexual Assault*. (2014). Not alone. Retrieved from: www.notalone.gov/assets/report.pdf

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Campus Climate

What are Impediments to Reporting?

What Are the Most Common Barriers to Reporting Sexual Assault Among Female College Students in the United States?

Over the past fifteen years, several studies have come to the conclusion that approximately one in five women will experience sexual assault during her collegiate career.⁵ However, a much lower statistic appears on college and university reports. For example, according to the Vanderbilt University Annual Security and Fire Safety Report (2015), at Vanderbilt University, an institution with an undergraduate female student population of 3,598, only 22 reports of “forcible sex offenses” were reported during the 2014-2015 academic year, suggesting a rate of sexual assault closer to 0.6% than 20%.⁶ This phenomenon of underreporting is not unique to Vanderbilt. In fact, reporting rates for campus sexual assault nationwide are very low. On average, only about 12% of survivors report their assault to campus officials⁷ and an even lower number of survivors report to law enforcement.⁸ Data from the National Crime Victimization Survey indicates that sexual victimization is less likely to be reported than aggravated assault and simple assault and in fact, is the most underreported crime.⁹

In recent years, campus sexual assault has risen to the forefront of the national agenda and legislation has provided college administrators with basic guidelines for dealing with instances of sexual assault, including requirements to provide more avenues for reporting and more resources for survivors. So why, when colleges and universities nationwide are facing pressure to support survivors and adequately address sexual assault, does this crime remain so greatly underreported? This review of literature seeks to identify the most common barriers to reporting sexual assault amongst female college students in the United States in order to help explain the discrepancy between high rates of perpetration and low rates of reporting.

Perceived Importance of Barriers to Reporting Sexual Assault

Sable et al. conducted a study on college students’ perceived importance of barriers to reporting sexual assault.¹⁰ While the researchers aimed to identify gender differences in perceptions, for the purpose of this literature review, only the findings for women will be explored. Participants were recruited through the Psychology 1 course at the University of Missouri, a course that requires students to participate in five hours of university-sponsored research.¹¹ Two-hundred and fifteen college-aged students self-selected to participate in the study, 54.7% of whom were female;

⁵ See footnote 3

⁶ Vanderbilt University Police Department (2015). *Annual security and fire safety report*. Nashville, TN: Vanderbilt University.

⁷ Kilpatrick, D. G., Resnick, H. S., Ruggiero, K. J., Conoscenti, L. M., & McCauley, J. (2007). *Drug-facilitated, incapacitated, and forcible rape: A national study* (Report No. 219181). Charleston, SC: Medical University of South Carolina National Crime Victims Research & Treatment Center.

⁸ Koss, M. P., Gidycz, C. A., & Wisniewski, N. (1987). *The scope of rape: Incidence and prevalence of sexual aggression and victimization in a national sample of higher education students*. *Journal of Consulting and Clinical Psychology, 55*(2), 162-170.

⁹ Hart, T. C. (2003). *Violent victimization of college students* (Report No. 196143). Washington, DC: U.S. Department of Justice.

¹⁰ Sable, M. R., Danis, F., Mauzy, D. L., & Gallagher, S. K. (2006). *Barriers to reporting sexual assault for women and men: Perspectives of college students*. *Journal of American College Health, 55*(3), 157-162.

¹¹ See footnote 10

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participants comprised a range of races and ethnicities. Participants were given a survey in which they rated the level of perceived importance for 13 barriers to reporting sexual assault using a 5-point Likert scale.¹² The researchers computed frequency distribution and mean score to analyze the results.¹³

The results show that female respondents rated feelings of guilt, shame and embarrassment, fear of retaliation, concerns about confidentiality, and fear of not being believed as the most important perceived barriers to reporting.¹⁴ Other barriers identified in the study include denial, and fear of being blamed by others, self-blame, belief that the criminal justice system would be ineffective, and prior victim-offender relationship. These findings are consistent with other studies that have found shame and embarrassment,^{15 16 17 18 19} fear of retaliation,^{20 21 22} concerns about confidentiality,^{23 24} denial,^{25 26} fear of being blamed by others,^{27 28 29} and self-blame³⁰ to be amongst the most common psychological barriers to reporting sexual assault. This suggests that despite abundant research following the rape reform movement, many of the same barriers to reporting still exist today.

Strengths of the study include a large and diverse sample that was representative of the University's student population. The sample population included students of different races and ethnicities, and thus, cultural differences were likely accounted for. Although other scholars often cite this study as the leading research in this field, it does have some limitations. Respondents were not limited to survivors of sexual assault, so the barriers identified are not experienced barriers, but rather supposed barriers. Perhaps the largest limitation of the study is that the population was a convenience sample of first-year college students who were required to participate in 5 hours of university research as part of their course requirements. Thus, the sample was not truly randomized, and may not necessarily

¹² See footnote 10

¹³ See footnote 10

¹⁴ See footnote 10

¹⁵ Binder, R. L. (1981). *Why women don't report sexual assault*. *Journal of Clinical Psychiatry*, 42(11), 437-438.

¹⁶ Felson, R. B., & Paré, P. (2005). *The reporting of domestic violence and sexual assault by nonstrangers to the police*. *Journal of Marriage and Family*, 67(3), 597-610.

¹⁷ Peretti, P., & Cozzens, N. (1983). *Characteristics of female rapees not reporting and reporting the first incidence of rape*. *Indian Journal of Criminology*, 11(2), 118-124.

¹⁸ Thompson, M., Sitterle, D., Clay, G., & Kingree, J. (2007). *Reasons for not reporting victimizations to the police: Do they vary for physical and sexual incidents?* *Journal of American College Health*, 55(5), 277-282.

¹⁹ Weiss, K. G. (2010). *Too ashamed to report: Deconstructing the shame of sexual victimization*. *Feminist Criminology*, 5(3), 286-310.

²⁰ Bachman, R. (1998). *The factors related to rape reporting behavior and arrest: New evidence from the national crime victimization survey*. *Criminal Justice and Behavior*, 25(1), 8-29.

²¹ See footnote 17

²² Fisher, B. S., Daigle, L. E., Cullen, F. T., & Turner, M. G. (2003). *Reporting sexual victimization to the police and others: Results from a national-level study of college women*. *Criminal Justice and Behavior*, 30(1), 6-38.

²³ See footnote 22

²⁴ See footnote 18

²⁵ Fisher, B. S., Cullen, F. T., Turner, M. G. (2000). *The sexual victimization of college women (Report No. 182369)*. Washington, DC: U.S. Department of Justice.

²⁶ See footnote 17

²⁷ See footnote 15

²⁸ Kilpatrick, D. J., Edmunds, C. N., & Seymour, A. (1992). *Rape in America: A report to the nation*. Arlington, VA: National Victim Center.

²⁹ See footnote 18

³⁰ Stewart, M., Dobbin, S., & Gatowski, S. (1996). *'Real rapes' and 'real victims': the shared reliance on common cultural definitions of rape*. *Feminist Legal Studies*, 4(2), 159-117.

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be representative of all college-aged students. Despite these limitations, findings of this study are consistent with the results of other studies in the field and thus, likely represent universal barriers reporting.³¹

Reporting Sexual Victimization

Fisher et al. analyzed existing national-level data to discover patterns in sexual victimization reporting practices amongst female college students.³² Their study is not limited to reporting practices amongst victims of sexual assault, but rather analyzes reporting practices for incidents ranging from sexual harassment to rape. The researchers randomly sampled 4,446 female college students enrolled at 233 institutions of higher education around the country.³³ Institutions were selected using a formula to ensure that the size of their female enrollment would provide a large enough population from which to select the sample.³⁴

Participants were surveyed using a two-stage measurement process that combined questioning strategies used in prior studies measuring sexual victimization and process strategies used in the National Crime Victimization Survey.³⁵ In the first stage of the measurement process, each respondent was asked a series of screen questions designed to prompt the recall of specific kinds of sexual victimization that they may have experienced.³⁶ In the second stage of the measurement process, respondents who answered “yes” to any screen question were then asked a series of detailed incident-specific questions.³⁷ This stage was used to accurately categorize what kind of victimization each respondent experienced. To determine if respondents reported incidents of sexual victimization, the researchers asked respondents if they or someone else reported the incident to (1) a police agency, (2) at least one campus authority, and/or (3) at least one person other than a police agency or campus authority.³⁸ In order to determine what factors influenced respondents’ decision to report, details about the victim, offender, incident, and context were also analyzed.

A multivariate analysis of responses shows that the most common reasons for not reporting sexual victimization were incident-related.³⁹ The majority (81.7%) of respondents stated that they did not report because they didn’t deem the incident of sexual victimization to be serious enough and 30% of respondents believed the police wouldn’t think the incident was serious enough.⁴⁰ Further, 42.1% of respondents cited that ignorance about whether or not harm was intended affected their decision not to report.⁴¹ Concerns about confidentiality also proved to be an important factor in determining whether respondents chose to report or not. About 20% of respondents did not report because they did not want their families or others to know about the incident and 19% of respondents cited fear of retaliation by their assailant as a deterring factor to reporting.⁴² In addition to these factors, victim-offender relationship was also an

³¹ See footnote 10

³² See footnote 22

³³ See footnote 22

³⁴ See footnote 22

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⁴¹ See footnote 22

⁴² See footnote 22

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important factor affecting reporting practices. Incidents involving strangers were much more likely to be reported than incidents involving friends and/or acquaintances.⁴³

One limitation of this study is that it did not address feelings of shame, guilt, and embarrassment as a potential barrier to reporting incidents of sexual victimization. However, the fact that 20% of respondents felt that not even their families should know about their victimization may stem from deeper feelings of shame and embarrassment. Further, while this study analyzed reporting practices across victims of various types of sexual victimization and was not limited to only victims of sexual assault, the findings can be generalized to victims of sexual assault because the findings of this study are consistent with those of similar studies in this field that have focused solely on victims of sexual assault. This study is highly reliable due to the large and diverse sample and the precise measurement strategy.

Reasons for Not Reporting Victimization to the Police

Although several studies have examined how certain victim-offender relationships and incident-related factors affect the likelihood of reporting sexual victimization, Thompson et al. studied whether the reasons for not reporting varied across different types of crime (sexual assault vs. physical assault) experienced by the same individual.⁴⁴ 492 undergraduate female students at a large university in the Southeastern United States self-selected to participate in the study by completing a 30-minute self-report survey on victimization.⁴⁵ The sample was not representative of the population from which it was drawn since the respondents self-selected to participate. Respondents were first asked whether they were victimized and in what way (physical or sexual). All students who had been victimized were then asked whether they reported their victimization to the police; only 1.8% of those who had been victimized reported to the police.⁴⁶

Respondents who indicated that they did not report were presented with a variety of reasons for not reporting. The most common reason cited for not reporting both sexual (79.9%) and physical (68.1%) victimization was feeling that the incident was not serious enough.⁴⁷ For sexual victimization, the next most common reasons for not reporting were not wanting anyone to know (48.5%), not wanting the police involved (47%), and feelings of shame and embarrassment (39.6%).⁴⁸ For physical victimization, the next most common reasons for not reporting were not wanting the police involved (35.4%), not wanting to incriminate the offender (25.7%), and not wanting anyone to know (23.9%).⁴⁹ These findings indicate that the reasons given for not reporting varied depending on the nature of the victimization. For instance, when the victimization was sexual, women more often cited fear of being blamed, feelings of shame and embarrassment, concerns about confidentiality, and not wanting the police involved than they did in cases of physical victimization.⁵⁰ Despite the small sample size, the findings of this study are consistent with

⁴³ See footnote 22

⁴⁴ See footnote 18

⁴⁵ See footnote 18

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those of Sable et al.⁵¹ and Fisher et al.,⁵² presenting evidence that national, college women cite similar barriers to reporting sexual assault.

Felson and Paré also examined whether type of assault (physical vs. sexual) influences the likelihood of reporting victimization to the police and explored the frequency of reasons cited for not reporting assault, including embarrassment, fear of retaliation, belief that they would not be believed, belief that the police would be ineffective, and belief that the incident was not serious enough.⁵³ 6,026 female respondents participated in the study; participants were randomly selected and were all over 18 years of age. Respondents were first asked if they experienced sexual and/or physical violence. Those who answered yes were then asked if the incident was reported to the police. Non-reporting respondents were subsequently asked to provide up to four reasons for not reporting.⁵⁴

The findings indicate that the most common reason victims of both physical and sexual assault cite for not reporting is belief that the incident was not serious enough.⁵⁵ Additionally, results show that victims of sexual assault are more likely than victims of physical assault to cite the following reasons for not reporting: (1) belief that they wouldn't be believed, (2) fear of retaliation, (3) feelings of shame and embarrassment, and (4) belief that the police would be ineffective.⁵⁶ Although this sample was not limited to female college students, the findings were consistent with several other national studies that sampled female college students^{57 58 59} and thus, can be generalized to this population.

Conclusion

Sexual assault is a serious issue plaguing college campuses nationwide. Recent activism around this issue has uncovered distinctly high rates of perpetration and low rates of reporting. The literature reviewed in this paper suggests that victims of sexual assault choose not to report their victimization for a number of distinct reasons. These barriers include fear of not being believed, fear of retaliation, concerns about confidentiality, belief that the incident was not serious enough, and feelings of shame and embarrassment. In each study reviewed, fear of not being believed and feelings of shame and embarrassment were cited as important factors affecting a victim's decision not to report sexual victimization. These findings are important because they provide critical information that if properly addressed, can help victims of sexual assault feel more comfortable reporting and move past these barriers.

⁵¹ See footnote 10

⁵² See footnote 22

⁵³ See footnote 16

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⁵⁵ See footnote 16

⁵⁶ See footnote 16

⁵⁷ See footnote 22

⁵⁸ See footnote 10

⁵⁹ See footnote 18

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How Extensive is Sexual Assault & How Do We Compare?

The 2015 Campus Climate Survey (CCS) shows that the rate of sexual assault at Vanderbilt University is roughly in line with the often-quoted “one in five”⁶⁰ statistic. According to widely supported data, this statistic indicates that one in five women experience sexual assault during their college years. According to the Education Advisory Board (EAB) version of the 2015 Campus Climate Survey, 19.8% of undergraduate respondents (roughly “one in five”), regardless of gender, reported that they had experienced sexual assault.⁶¹ This number excludes those who were uncertain if they had experienced sexual assault, which could only increase the rate reported should those respondents later become certain that they had experienced sexual assault.

Additionally, undergraduate women reported sexual assault at a rate of 28%,⁶² which could be rounded up to “one in three” – a far higher rate than expected for women specifically. The results for men were slightly lower than the Bureau of Justice Statistics data, which places the overall prevalence rate for men experiencing sexual assault “since entering college” at an average of 7.0%.⁶³ The EAB version of the CCS cited a rate of 5.9% (“one in seventeen”) for men reporting instances of sexual assault.⁶⁴

The CCS had an undergraduate response rate of 26% for the EAB survey and 22% for the longer EverFi survey.⁶⁵ Both of these rates are in line with the response rates for similar institutions and surveys,⁶⁶ but could be improved by several methods. The Bureau of Justice Statistics suggests such improvements as the use of survey incentives, the timing of survey administration, and personalized email greetings.⁶⁷ From the BJS:

“The use of survey incentives likely contributed to the high response rates and minimal nonresponse bias among the sample... The timing of the survey administration, fairly lengthy field period, and use of multiple follow-up reminders to nonrespondents likely helped increase participation and reduced the likelihood of bias. In most schools, the survey was fielded shortly after spring break and was kept open until right before final exam week, which was a 57-day field period, on average. This timing minimized students’ competing demands during spring break and finals. In addition, it allowed time for repeated follow-up reminders with nonrespondents (up to five reminders were sent), which appeared to be effective given that bumps in response rates were observed each time a follow-up was sent... Based on the results of the greeting experiment conducted in five of the CCSVS Pilot Test Schools, future climate surveys similar in scope should use a personalized, as opposed to generic, greeting when recruiting students to participate in the survey. The personalized email greetings led to significantly higher survey participation rates and no substantive differences in victimization rates when taking into account the characteristics of participating students.”⁶⁸

⁶⁰ Krebs, C., Lindquist, C., Berzofsky, M., Shook-Sa, B., Peterson, K., Planty, M., Langton, L., & Stroop, J. (2016, January). Campus climate survey validation study final technical report. Retrieved from: <http://www.bjs.gov/content/pub/pdf/ccsvsfr.pdf>

⁶¹ Vanderbilt University. (2016). Vanderbilt University 2015 campus climate survey executive summary. Retrieved from: <http://www.vanderbilt.edu/provost/climate-survey/2015-Campus-Climate-Survey-Summary.pdf>

⁶² See footnote 61.

⁶³ See page 74 of the Bureau of Justice Statistics report listed in footnote 60.

⁶⁴ See footnote 61.

⁶⁵ See footnote 61.

⁶⁶ See footnote 3.

⁶⁷ See footnote 60.

⁶⁸ See footnote 60.

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As the Vanderbilt CCS response rate was significantly lower than 100%, there is a non-response bias concern. For example, individuals may be more likely to complete a survey that is relevant to their lives. In the case of the CCS, this could lead to proportionately more survivors of sexual assault taking and completing the survey than those who have not experienced sexual assault and do not know anyone who has. Similarly, this bias concern could also imply that men may be less likely to take a survey if they feel that – due to the topic itself – they will have undue guilt placed upon them as possible perpetrators. Both of these theorized trends could explain the relatively high number of female respondents who reported experiencing sexual assault and the relatively low number of men reporting the same. However, given how closely the actual results compared to the expected results for similar institutions, and Vanderbilt’s varied risk factors, the results should be considered largely accurate.

However, the statistics reflect risk that is far from uniform and does not arise unprompted. It is critical that we reflect on how our institutions may contribute to increased risk of sexual assault in order to fully understand what it means to have a campus climate that tolerates or promotes sexual assault. Fully understanding comparative risk factors will allow us to identify potential sites of intervention and, more importantly, possible practical interventions.

From the AAU report: “For undergraduate females, there were also small differences by the size of the enrollment, with smaller institutions having a rate of 24.4 percent compared to 22.5 percent for larger institutions. Private universities had a higher rate of 25.3 percent compared to public universities at 22.8 percent.”⁶⁹ Vanderbilt is a small private institution, which increases our risk of sexual assault, but is an impractical site of intervention. Residential life is significant because the privacy of dorm rooms allows for sexual intimacy in general, becoming the site for the successful (or unsuccessful) exchange of effective consent, which is necessary in sexually intimate encounters. Vanderbilt is an almost exclusively residential community, which increases our risk, but which is also an impractical site of radical intervention, such as eliminating student housing. Understanding the importance of the proper exchange of consent in a private setting (which does not offer avenues for bystander intervention), however, is a more practical site of prevention programming.

According to a 2006 report by Elizabeth A. Armstrong, Laura Hamilton and Brian Sweeney entitled “Sexual Assault on Campus: A Multilevel, Integrative Approach to Party Rape,” Greek life on college campuses may contribute to environments that promote sexual assault, insofar as fraternities typically have control of the party scene.⁷⁰ A study by researchers at Oklahoma State University corroborates this claim by stating, “Sorority women and fraternity men are more likely than other students to be survivors and perpetrators of sexual assault, respectively,” and “Research has shown that fraternity men are significantly more likely than other college men and the general population to approve of coercing women to engage in sexual behavior (Boeringer, 1999; Foubert et al., 2007; Murnen & Kohlman, 2007).”⁷¹

Greek life is present on Vanderbilt’s campus, which increases our overall risk, but considering that our Greek housing programs are largely non-residential, that risk factor is significantly mitigated. Peer institutions have various models to look toward for interventions regarding Greek life, however we caution students and administrators to

⁶⁹ See footnote 3.

⁷⁰ Armstrong, E. A., Hamilton, L., & Sweeney, B. (2006). *Sexual Assault on Campus: A Multilevel, Integrative Approach to Party Rape*. *Social Problems*, 53(4), 483–499. <http://doi.org/10.1525/sp.2006.53.4.483>

⁷¹ Bannon, R. S., Brosi, M. W., & Foubert, J. D. (2013). *Sorority women’s and fraternity men’s rape myth acceptance and bystander intervention attitudes*. *Journal of Student Affairs Research and Practice*, 50(1), 72–87. doi:10.1515/jsarp-2013-0005. Available at <http://journals.naspa.org/jsarp/vol50/iss1/art5/>

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consider which interventions are based on residential Greek programs. In systems where Greek life is residential, the risk for Greek women to experience sexual assault is much higher than it is for non-Greek women.⁷² It is theorized that this increased risk is partially due to sorority women's considerable presence at parties, and Greek sorority houses' typical ban on men entering the building after a certain point in the night. This means that any sexual encounters that occur between Greek men and women must occur in fraternity houses. Additionally, fraternity control of parties is theorized to be a risk factor regarding sexual assault. Even on Vanderbilt's campus in a non-residential Greek system, the EAB version of the CCS indicated that nearly 30% of sexual misconduct incidents occurred in fraternity houses.⁷³

This statistic is of particular concern to Vanderbilt, because – as discussed above – private areas prevent intervention, prevent witnesses, and are also the sites of the exchange (or lack thereof) of consent. Given the scarcity of private residential spaces in fraternities, most of the incidents reported to occur at fraternities can be inferred to be occurring in communal spaces and likely at parties. This consideration offers entry points for possible interventions, such as continuing Green Dot training for fraternity members. It also calls into question gender expectations about who may or may not throw parties, which may be out of the control of Vanderbilt Greek chapters specifically. The VSAP Committee suggests thorough, Vanderbilt-specific studies into the intersection of Greek life and sexual misconduct.

⁷² Minow, J. C., & Einolf, C. J. (2009). Sorority participation and sexual assault risk. *Violence Against Women, 15*(7), 835–851.

⁷³ See footnote 61.

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Resolutions

Disclaimer

We recognize that as the research into issues of sexual assault on college campuses is limited, there are not many examples to look to for advice or information. We therefore accept that some of these suggestions may not make as substantial of an impact or the kind of impact we intend. However, they are informed by the best practices currently available.

Goals for VSAP

- **Annual SPR**

Either every year, or in tandem with the release of future Campus Climate Survey results, the SPR should be reviewed to see which resolutions have been implemented, which resolutions impacted campus culture, how campus culture has changed, and what projects are no longer relevant to the student body. The SPR should be a living document that develops along with the student body so as to accurately reflect our concerns. It should also be reviewed with administrative officials to reflect their need and student ability to collect further data and research on the subject.

Future SPRs may include excerpts from interviews with peers at similar institutions who are implementing the sorts of interventions we propose here. Future versions of this report may also include diversified student body commentary, as more student organizations become willing to engage in community feedback sessions.

- **Annual Line Edits**

Beginning in the Spring semester of each academic year, the Sexual Misconduct and Power-Based Personal Violence Policy goes through a revision process. Multiple faculty and administrative members participate in this process, ultimately leading to an updated version of the policy for the following school year. Although it is not highly advertised to the public, students may, at any time, share their comments and concerns with any of these parties. We find that it would be crucial to have a group of knowledgeable students – specifically VSAP – contribute to this revision, offering a thorough and timely line-by-line critique of the policy. By doing this, VSAP will be able to provide a student perspective to the policy and effectively communicate and address other concerns from the student body – concerns we, as students, experience or hear about on a day-to-day basis. VSAP should work closely with G.L. Black, Associate Dean, as we have for the 2016 revision process.

- **Mandatory Procedural Panel**

In collaboration with Dean Vanessa Beasley and her office, VSAP has designed a program that will be integrated with CommonVU, which occurs during first-year orientation. This program aims to address the concerns related to students *after* they experience power-based personal violence, including what the

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investigation process entails. Additionally, this program hopes to adopt multiple points of views, including those of the student's friends, RA(s), and professors. We have many programs on campus that address prevention, but not many that address the issues which arise after an incident occurs. We hope to alter this program using feedback from its pilot implementation and offer it again in the spring season for Greek members who are attending formal events.

- **Spring Mini-Conference**

This initiative stemmed from the overlapping goals of other VSAP initiatives, such as the Mandatory Procedural Panel and general outreach to first year students. Spring semester is notoriously over-programmed, but it also a time when much programming is needed; April is Sexual Assault Awareness Month, as well as a month scheduled to the brim with Greek formals. A conference-style event could allow presenters the time to deeply engage with students on important issues, while shrinking the conference down to a half-day would make it more accessible to attendees. Planning it for a weekend before formal season would create an opportunity to refresh student memory on issues of consent and bystander intervention at a time when they might be more likely to need such information on hand. Additionally, if hosted on the Commons, this mini-conference would provide a forum for first-year students and those not usually involved in campus sexual assault discussions to learn more about campus issues and voice their own opinions. Such an event could include presentations by faculty members, Women's and Gender Studies students, administrators, a modified procedural panel, and perhaps an arts performance.

- **Cooperation with PREVAIL**

Similarly, future iterations of the VSAP committee are encouraged to collaborate with PREVAIL, Vanderbilt's premier Women's Leadership Development Conference. September 2015 saw PREVAIL's inaugural summit and established the program as a Fall semester event. Just as the 2014 OUT in Front Conference provided several "tracks" of suggested workshops for attendees, VSAP is encouraged to develop a "track" of sexual assault prevention workshops and presentations for the 2016 PREVAIL conference. Tracks are not a required feature of any conference, but are merely a guideline for any attendees who would like help choosing their workshops for the day. OUT in Front offered several tracks, and endorsed "using the tracks as you wish, mixing or combining tracks, or completely ignoring the tracks altogether if you'd like." The VSAP track would similarly be a suggestion of corresponding workshops held in succession throughout the conference. Some examples of workshops might be a "Q&A" Session on the 2016 SPR, a Survivor Solidarity Workshop from the Project Safe Center, and Consent 101.

External Programming

- **Project Safe Center Peer Educators & "Let's Talk About Consent!"**

As evidenced by the success of the Vandy Sex Ed program (which is hosted by the Women's Center), student educators can better relate to their peers than can professional staff members in certain situations. Peers can present information in a way that fits into student perceptions of campus life and understand where student concerns might come from based on lived experience. The Project Safe Center (PSC) offers many programs such as Green Dot Bystander Intervention Training and Effective Consent Programming; however, the current model of such programming is presented by trained professionals. The limited staff of the PSC cannot reach

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all of campus (particularly when such programming is requested in large numbers in a short period of time, such as first-year orientation), and cannot fully understand the experience of a residential Vanderbilt student.

We propose a peer education program⁷⁴ for the PSC similar to Liaisons Educating and Advocating for Psychological Support (LEAPS) for the Psychological and Counseling Center and Office of Wellness Programs and Alcohol Education. Through extensive training by the PSC, we believe Peer Educators can reach more of the Vanderbilt campus to meet the increasing demand for personal, power-based violence and sexual assault programming.

Additionally, we propose that one of the first programs available from such a peer education resource be “Let’s Talk About Consent!,” a program similar to Vandy Sex Ed’s “Let’s Talk About Sex, Vandy!” series. Education around consent is inconsistent across the U.S. and largely nonexistent, which is evidenced by the CCS data that 17.5% of Vanderbilt students “had experienced unwanted sexual contact prior to college.”⁷⁵ Programming around consent that is accessible and consistent across our campus is direly needed.

- **EAD Programs**

VSAP suggests that the Equal Opportunity, Affirmative Action, and Disability Services Department (EAD) increase its programming and outreach efforts to responsible parties and mandated reporters. We have found that many of the mandated reporters on campus (faculty, RAs, VUceptors, etc.) do not fully understand the obligations that come along with their responsibility. This often leads to data not being reported, faculty and other staff members getting involved in an investigative process they don’t understand, and students not receiving the entirety of the help they deserve and need. To remedy this, we feel it would be best for the EAD to hold programming for all responsible parties (and other groups which show interest), to explain how the reporting/investigative process works and the specific responsibilities of mandated reporters throughout the process.

The EAD website lists several trainings that the EAD currently offers, of which “The Alphabet Soup Seminar” appeared closest in nature to what this report is suggesting.

“The Alphabet Soup Seminar is offered regularly to inform hiring officials about their obligations under federal and state nondiscrimination laws... It also covers pertinent Vanderbilt policies, administrative responsibilities and procedures on how to file a grievance and complete a Self-Audit Report. The seminar concludes with a panel comprised of representatives from employee relations, general counsel, and EAD. The panel is to give participants an opportunity to ask questions concerning EAD related issues.”⁷⁶

We believe that by having a similar program for mandated reporters, those responsible parties will be able to do their jobs far more effectively and face much less personal distress in pursuit of compliance. This will allow them to properly work with students in ways that best allow for student safety and security after an incidence of sexual assault.

This resolution was developed in conjunction with the representative from the Multicultural Leadership Council, who is, herself, an RA.

⁷⁴ See Section 8 of the University of Kansas’ Community Tool Box, “Establishing a Peer Education Program” for a comprehensive guide to establishing a peer education program. Retrieved from: <http://ctb.ku.edu/en/table-of-contents/implement/improving-services/peer-education/main>

⁷⁵ See footnote 61.

⁷⁶ Retrieved from: <http://www.vanderbilt.edu/ead/train.html>

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- **PCC Expansion**

The Psychological and Counseling Center (PCC) is a wonderful resource for the Vanderbilt community in coping with instances of trauma, tragedy, general distress, and mental health issues. The PCC has a plethora of resources and has been becoming increasingly more popular as the stigma associated with seeking mental health help is decreasing on Vanderbilt's campus. However, with this increased use of the PCC by Vanderbilt students comes less staff availability and longer wait times.

Unless students seek entry through triage services, the wait-time at the PCC can be prolonged. This can be very discouraging to students seeking help, especially for first-time users of the PCC and its services. We suggest increasing professional staff members in order to address the great need of students. If the current staff's ability to see students more frequently is limited by the available rooms at the PCC's current location, we also suggest relocating to a larger building or opening supplemental offices in other parts of campus.

Similarly, the recent creation of the "Let's Talk" program allows students "easy access to informal, confidential consultations with PCC counselors" in easily accessible locations such as the Sarratt Student Center, Blair School of Music, and Commons Center. The popularity and growth of "Let's Talk"⁷⁷ has demonstrated the need for additional counseling outside of the PCC building.

VSAP has also been made aware of complaints that there is only one staff member at the PCC who specializes in sexual assault and trauma, which is wholly inadequate given that one in five Vanderbilt undergraduates experiences sexual assault and may have resulting trauma from the event.

EAD Reform

- **Electronic Data Collection System**

The Equal Opportunity, Affirmative Action, and Disability Services Department (EAD) of Vanderbilt University is the office tasked with investigating instances of sexual misconduct and power-based violence. If complaints of sexual misconduct or power-based personal violence are not initially made to the EAD, non-confidential responsible University faculty and staff will forward the complaint to the EAD, where the office will make a determination if they should or should not proceed with an investigation.

This initiative supports the adoption of an electronic data system to preserve and organize metrics on the complaints which are sent to the EAD office and the office's investigations. The EAD does not currently have an office wide electronic data system to record critical information such as average investigation time length. Although individual employees may or may not have personal records of their investigations, the department itself cannot track or report on trends across the whole of its employees or procedures. Countless students have protested against inefficiencies and inexcusably long investigations when working with the EAD on complaints; however, without a system of recording all characteristics of all investigations, these complaints cannot be measured against one another to determine if they are outliers, or if they are typical for an investigation with similar features. In order to address complaints and work toward a more efficient process, the EAD should keep an electronic data system. The system will help by identifying where problems are systemically occurring and giving a basis for office improvements. It can also serve as a source of data to see whether or not levels of cooperation with EAD are increasing given the implementation of various interventions, such as the other resolutions described in this report.

⁷⁷ By "Let's Talk," we specifically mean the program discussed here: <https://medschool.vanderbilt.edu/pcc/lets-talk>

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Graduate students or unaffiliated third parties could act as interns whose role is to organize the vast amount of data efficiently.

- **Increase Staff**

Given the consistency of student complaints related to the length of time investigations may take, and the lack of a set of data to determine that the EAD is otherwise timely, VSAP suggests that the EAD expand its staff. Such an expansion will allow investigators to process fewer complaints at once and devote more of their time to defending every student's right to a speedy and fair investigation.

Additionally, the EAD balances a wide variety of complaints. Because the EAD is the point office handling complaints of sexual misconduct and personal power-based violence – in addition to disability registration and services, reports of pregnancy discrimination, age discrimination, wage discrimination, and civil rights violations, amongst countless other responsibilities – the relatively few employees at the office manage a large and diverse number of issues. There are currently twelve staff members handling campus-wide complaints on several issues. Ongoing investigations and complaint processes can increase anxiety and create many negative consequences for all parties involved. Increasing the staff at the EAD, particularly by hiring diverse individuals trained in victim-centered, trauma informed investigative procedures, would benefit both the students and the EAD staff. Students would have a more efficient experience, and staff would have fewer complaints to process, and access to a larger pool of human resources.

- **Public History of Trainings**

The EAD has contact with students after a possibly traumatic event. It is imperative that EAD staff members are not only trained in how to conduct impartial investigations, but also receive comprehensive training in how to conduct investigations that will not further traumatize a complainant. One student recently reported to Patrick Zinck, a student journalist, that “the process of reporting to the EAD was almost more traumatic than being sexually assaulted.”⁷⁸

This initiative calls for the EAD to keep a calendar of trainings each employee has received. The calendar should include the details of who attended, which topics and subtopics were covered, what the learning outcomes of the training were, and how it will be communicated to the entirety of the office. By keeping track of this information, students, administrators, and the EAD can better see which trainings are being undertaken (including breakout sessions at conferences) and which subjects still need to be addressed. This is particularly important given student complaints of insensitivity, which could indicate a lack of victim-centered, trauma-informed training. By keeping this record and making it publicly accessible, the EAD will be more informed on the nature of their work with victims of sexual assault.

- **Monthly meetings with VSAP**

Many institutes of higher education have a Student Advisory Committee on Sexual Misconduct, which typically “advises the president of the university of the impact of policies and practices related to the prevention of and response to sexual misconduct affecting students.”⁷⁹ Columbia University's committee “continually works to evaluate policies and procedures, solicit feedback from the Columbia community, and

⁷⁸ Zinck, P.. (2016). Is Vanderbilt doing enough to address sexual assault on campus? Retrieved from: <https://vanderbiltvoice.com/>

⁷⁹ Quoted from the “About” section of the University of Iowa's Student Advisory Committee on Sexual Misconduct. Retrieved from: <http://diversity.uiowa.edu/committee/student-advisory-committee-sexual-misconduct>

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partner with experts across the University with the goal of eliminating sexual assault and other forms of gender-based misconduct from our community.”⁸⁰

In many ways, VSAP is Vanderbilt’s iteration of a Student Advisory Committee, as we have direct contact with the student population, the Project Safe Center, administration, and several key members of the Vanderbilt community committed to addressing sexual assault on campus. While we perform many advisory functions, access to our resolutions is not limited to Chancellor Zeppos, or even to the Vanderbilt Student Government President. In fact, VSAP regularly hears suggestions for improvement across many campus institutions, and particularly with regards to the EAD. Therefore, it would benefit both groups if representatives from each could regularly meet to discuss student feedback and EAD insight.

VSAP and the Office of the EAD would both benefit by working together. This initiative calls for monthly meeting between VSAP and the EAD office for collaboration. VSAP can bring the voice of the students to the EAD office, offer potential solutions and ideas, and facilitate a meaningful discussion. Likewise, the EAD office can communicate problems they face and how VSAP can help eliminate hindrances in the complaint and investigation process, as well as provide possible explanations for student perception of their office.

- **Monthly Office Hours in Sarratt**

One example of the productivity of collaboration between VSAP and EAD is an idea which the EAD proposed to us: holding Monthly Office Hours in Sarratt.

The EAD office is not located in an easily accessible location on main campus, which may lead students to feel disconnected from the EAD, the complaint and investigation process, and their investigator. Sarratt is a central spot on campus where students can easily access and meet with EAD employees on common ground. Holding office hours will allow students the opportunity to ask questions, inquire on the status of their case, and make reports.

This can also facilitate the process of direct student feedback. The EAD consistently welcomes walk-ins, but most students are unaware of their ability to simply walk into the EAD and offer feedback. Announcing specific times and locations where staff members like Damian Marshall, the Title IX Compliance Manager, can make themselves available to students will truly make our feedback seems valued and specifically welcomed. Additionally, advertising for office hours will necessarily increase awareness of students’ ability to walk in to the EAD office in the Baker Building and provide feedback.

VUPD Training

- **VUPD Training Programs for Sexual Assault Situations**

Critical to the protection and empowerment of campus sexual assault survivors is the way in which their case is handled by VUPD should the individual choose to pursue a police investigation. There has been a high degree of public dissatisfaction regarding the reporting and investigation processes involving the EAD by the student body,⁸¹ but the individual VUPD officer on the case can deeply impact an investigation and a student’s perception of and comfort with the investigation. For this reason, we have decided to compare

⁸⁰ Quoted from the Columbia University’s page regarding the Student Advisory Committee on Sexual Assault. Retrieved from: <http://sexualrespect.columbia.edu/presidential-advisory-committee-sexual-assault>

⁸¹ Zinck, P.. (2016). Is Vanderbilt doing enough to address sexual assault on campus? Retrieved from: <https://vanderbiltvoice.com/>

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current VUPD procedures for handling cases relating to sexual assault with those procedures shown to yield the most positive outcome for an investigation.

One of the most important stages in an investigation is the first contact between the investigator and the victim. If the victim feels that the investigator does not believe them or that they are being treated poorly, they may choose not to pursue an investigation. In order to keep lines of contact open, the investigator should show compassion towards the victim and respect his or her response to the assault without bias or judgment. Every victim will respond differently to their assault, and investigators should take care to reserve judgment about the validity of the allegations until the claim has been thoroughly investigated. Victims of sexual assault may be calm, rather than hysterical, after the assault or may be unable to accurately recall exactly what occurred.⁸² These behaviors, while possibly not in line with the investigator's preconceptions about sexual assault survivors, do not imply dishonestly or decrease the gravity of the assault in any way. Furthermore, investigators should avoid bias towards a victim who did not fight back against his or her assailant. Responses to assault are a combination of physiological, mental, and environmental factors and should never be held against the survivor in any way.

A compassionate attitude and an open mind are critical at the onset of the investigation, but must be carried through to the conclusion of the investigation as well. Even once a victim has given a full and detailed account of their assault, investigators must show care not to let their personal bias of what constitutes rape or sexual assault be a driving force in the investigation. See the "Glossary" section for definitions of rape and sexual assault. It is not the duty of the investigator to assign blame to the victim for their assault, belittle the trauma they suffered, decide whether or not consent was necessary. Any form of sexual contact without consent is assault, and should be handled as such by investigators.

In order to maintain a campus police force that operates by these guidelines, the university must implement some form of sensitivity training and sexual assault education to its officers. Furthermore, officers should undergo regular workshops and refresher courses to keep them informed about new insights into the mentality of a sexual assault survivor. Currently, the Director of the Project Safe Center, Cara Tuttle Bell, is facilitating these training efforts and administering Green Dot training sessions to officers annually.

Ideally, we would like to see VUPD go through training focusing on the Forensic Experiential Trauma Interview (FETI), specifically the training created by the University of Texas at Austin. This training stresses the neurobiology of trauma and the importance of victim-centered response. Adopting a victim-centered response will ultimately make those who report sexual assault feel more comfortable throughout the course of their investigation. Additionally, students will be more likely to report if they feel that they will be treated sensitively and respectfully by officials such as VUPD.

At a minimum, VSAP believes that all members of the VUPD should have access to and explicit knowledge of Unit III Section 9 of the University of Texas *Blueprint* report (pages 83-107), which houses "Briefing Sheets" on such topics as the neurobiology of trauma, forensic interviewing, and adopting a victim-centered response.⁸³

⁸² See page 85 of Busch-Armendariz, N., Sulley, C., & Hill, K. (2016). *The Blueprint for campus police: Responding to sexual assault*. Austin, TX: Institute on Domestic Violence & Sexual Assault, The University of Texas at Austin. Retrieved from: <https://utexas.app.box.com/blueprintforcampuspolice>

⁸³ See footnote 82.

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Allied Barton

- **Allied Barton Training Programs for Sexual Assault Situations**

In addition to VUPD having access to the *Blueprint* “Briefing Sheets,” VSAP recommends that Allied Barton staff have similar access. Ideally, the briefing sheets would be present in every Allied Barton binder.

Allied Barton is a constant on Vanderbilt’s campus. They guard the entrance to every residence hall each night and see everyone who enters or exits the building. Given the proper training, Allied Barton could be an invaluable part of stopping campus sexual assault in its tracks.

We recommend requesting that those employed by Allied Barton (who are the individuals guarding residence halls) be put through the sexual assault training created by The University of Texas at Austin.⁸⁴ This training was specifically devised for those employed to watch over campus security, much like Allied Barton. The program is comprehensive, victim-centered, and teaches some of the science behind sexual assault. This could teach them what to look for and how to handle potentially risky situations. In lieu of or in addition to this training, members of Allied Barton should undergo a modified one-hour Green Dot program facilitated by the Project Safe Center. As a consistent and vigilant presence, Allied Barton Officers are uniquely qualified to become intervening bystanders.

An example of such bystander intervention methods might be to institute an escort system, which Allied Barton staff could access if they are worried about the well being of a student. If a student appeared to be worryingly intoxicated, in dangerous company, or being held against their will, Allied Barton could call an escort to see that the student got to their room safely. This escort could be the RA on duty, a roaming Allied Barton guard, or another university official. An escort system would not only give Allied Barton staff peace of mind, but would likely cut down on sexual assault where alcohol is involved by inserting another person into the situation.

“What To Do When?”

- **Online Resource**

We recommend the implementation of a user-friendly, interactive online resource detailing the exact steps one can take after they have an experience with sexual assault. Currently, there is a guide on what to do if you are accused, but nothing easily accessible that lays out the resources available to survivors or the steps to go about reporting (and subsequently engaging in an investigation of) an assault.

The results of the CCS indicated that only 64% of respondents “‘know where to go to get help regarding sexual assault at [Vanderbilt].’ However, only 35% of respondents reported that they ‘understand [Vanderbilt’s] formal procedures to address complaints of sexual assault.’”⁸⁵

While it is important for all students to know the how to report and what reporting a sexual assault entails before they need such information, a “What to do when...” online resource would provide a simple way for

⁸⁴ See footnote 82.

⁸⁵ See page 12 of the “Vanderbilt Campus Climate Survey Results” cited in footnote 61.

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students to fill in the gaps in their knowledge. Having this information readily accessible online makes it easier for all students to access it and preserves their privacy. Someone may be hesitant to ask an RA or university official how to report, as they may fear that their autonomy in making the report themselves will be taken away due to Vanderbilt's mandatory reporting policy. If students are given an online resource, they can make an informed decision on what resources they wish to access and whether or not they would like to begin the reporting process, potentially resulting in more cooperation from survivors in investigations.

This recommendation is a result of a meeting between VSAP, Dean Mark Bandas, Associate Dean G.L. Black, and Cara Tuttle Bell, Director of Project Safe. In that meeting, we discussed the online resource including additional information on "What to do if your property is stolen," "What to do if you want a new roommate," "What to do if you don't think you can take an exam," and other high-stress situations with formal procedures available to help resolve them.

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Call to Action

We, representatives of Vanderbilt's student body, urge the administration to pay great attention and heed to the initiatives we have suggested throughout this report. When it comes to dealing with any issues taking place on a college campus, speed is of great importance. Students come and go over the course of four years, but the problem of sexual assault has remained and will continue to remain unless a great deal of action is taken quickly and with full support of the administration. It would be irresponsible and a great tragedy to wait for yet another class of students to step foot onto Vanderbilt's campus, a class which would then discover for themselves the very real danger of sexual assault and sexual predators that await them. It would be too late to wait for another 20% of an entirely new student body's female population to experience sexual assault firsthand. It would be too late to wait for another .06% of an entirely new student body's male population to experience sexual assault firsthand. If we – students, faculty, and administration – do not act now, it will be too late. Students are only on campus for four years, and the current students on this campus need actions for their safety to come immediately.

We have compiled necessary initiatives for both sexual assault prevention and proper treatment of survivors into a single report, because we know that each initiative is vital, but only when the initiatives are undertaken simultaneously will we see their full impact. As representatives of the student body we believe that the time has come to enact the initiatives and make our campus a safer place for all students. We are and will continue to strive to do our best in making safe, we ask that the administration shows commitment to the same goal by implementing the initiatives we have detailed and maintaining them for the benefit of all future students that will choose to enroll at Vanderbilt University. We are sure that over time, and as more information on the topic of sexual assault both on our campus and on colleges in general is revealed, new needs will arise and for that reason, we suggest follow-ups each semester on the initiatives proposed above. These follow-ups will not only make Vanderbilt University a safer space for students, but also a leader in safety amongst peer institutions. Now is the time to take action and make Vanderbilt a safe space where all students can learn and actively participate without fear. We urge the administration to join the student body in our efforts.

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Glossary: How are Sexual Assault and Misconduct Defined?

As we continue to address the initiatives the Vanderbilt Student Government Sexual Assault Prevention Committee (VSAP) feel is imminently necessary for effective sexual assault prevention and a safe reporting climate it is necessary to establish definitions in relation to sexual assault and sexual assault prevention. It is vital to set out common definitions so that all who read this student initiative report are on the same page as far as terminology goes. By streamlining the terminology we have been using throughout this document, dialogue and discourse surrounding our proposals will be able to take place far more effectively and efficiently. We take many of our definitions on what constitutes different forms of sexual assault from Vanderbilt University's Sexual Misconduct Policy though some definitions will be taken from other resources.

The definitions below have been taken directly from Vanderbilt's Sexual Misconduct Policy:

- **Non-Consensual Sexual Intercourse** is any vaginal and/or anal penetration – however slight – by a penis, object, tongue, or finger, and/or oral copulation (mouth to genital contact), by any person upon another without effective consent.
- **Non-Consensual Sexual Contact** is any contact of a sexual nature – however slight – with the breasts, buttocks, groin, genitals, mouth, or other body part of another, by any person upon another without effective consent. Sexual touching also includes an individual causing someone else to touch him/her/they with, or on, any of these body parts.
- **Sexual Harassment** is unwelcome conduct of a sexual nature, and may include unwelcome sexual advances, requests for sexual favors, and other verbal or nonverbal conduct of a sexual nature. It may be based on or result from power differentials, the creation of a hostile environment (defined below), or retaliation.
- **Sexual Harassment – Hostile Environment** is harassing conduct of a sexual nature that is sufficiently severe, pervasive, or persistent that it interferes with or limits the ability of a member of the community to participate in or to receive benefits, services, or opportunities from the University's programs or activities. One instance that is sufficiently severe, such as a sexual assault or rape, can create a hostile environment.
- **Sexual Exploitation.** Non-consensual abuse or exploitation of another person's sexuality for the purpose of sexual gratification, financial gain, personal benefit or advantage, or any other improper purpose.
- **Other forms of sexual misconduct** include, but are not limited to, the following:
 - Invasion of privacy of a sexual nature;
 - Procuring, offering, or promoting prostitution;
 - Intentional transmission of HIV (human immunodeficiency virus) or another sexually transmitted disease;
 - Attempts to commit sexual misconduct; and
 - Facilitating, aiding, encouraging, concealing and/or otherwise assisting a violation of this policy.

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- **Stalking** is a course of conduct directed at a specific person that would cause a reasonable person to fear for the person's safety or the safety of others or suffer substantial emotional distress. Course of conduct means two or more acts, including, but not limited to, acts in which the stalker directly, indirectly, or through third parties, by any action, method, device, or means, follows, monitors, observes, surveils, threatens, or communicates with or about a person, or interferes with a person's property.
- **Dating Violence** is sexual or physical abuse or the threat of such abuse committed by a person who is or has been in a social relationship of a romantic or intimate nature with the person against whom the violence is perpetrated. The existence of a social relationship of a romantic or intimate nature may be determined by the length of the relationship, the type of relationship, the frequency of the interactions between the persons involved in the relationship, and other relevant contextual factors. Dating violence does not include acts covered under the definition of domestic violence.
- **Domestic Violence** is sexual or physical abuse or the threat of such abuse committed by
 - a person who is the current or former spouse or domestic partner of the person against whom the violence is perpetrated;
 - a person who shares a child in common with the person against whom the violence is perpetrated;
 - a person who is cohabitating or has cohabitated as a spouse or in the context of a social relationship of a romantic or intimate nature with the person against whom the violence is perpetrated; or
 - a person who has another type of intimate relationship, including as a parent, guardian, or other status defined by Tennessee law or University policy, with the person against whom the violence is perpetrated.
- **Retaliation** against any person who makes a complaint or has participated in the investigation or resolution of a complaint involving a violation of this policy, is prohibited. The University will take appropriate action to address any reports of retaliation.
- **Effective consent** is consent that is informed and freely and actively given. Effective consent requires mutually understandable words or actions indicating a willingness to engage in mutually agreed-upon sexual activity.
 - The person who wishes to engage in sexual activity with another bears the burden of specifically obtaining effective consent. If effective consent is in question or ambiguous, then the person who wishes to engage in sexual activity must clarify or explicitly ask for permission.
 - Effective consent must be maintained by both parties throughout the sexual interaction.
 - Effective consent to sexual activity may be revoked at any time, at which point sexual activity must cease immediately.
 - A person who is the object of sexual misconduct is not required to resist physically or otherwise in order to convey or demonstrate a lack of effective consent.
 - Effective consent means communicating "yes" by word or action; the absence of saying or indicating "no" does not equate to effective consent.

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- Previous sexual relationships of the complainant and the respondent with others are generally irrelevant to the existence of effective consent, but a previous and/or current sexual relationship between the complainant and the respondent may or may not be relevant to demonstrating or establishing, depending on the facts and circumstances, whether effective consent was sought or obtained.
- Effective consent expires. Effective consent lasts for a reasonable time, depending on the circumstances. Thus, effective consent on one occasion, whether on the same day or another day, may not carry over to another sexual interaction.
- Effective consent is never implied by attire, nor can it be inferred from the buying of dinner, the spending of money on a date, being invited or accepting an invitation to a person's residence, or engaging in kissing or other foreplay.
- Because effective consent must be informed, an individual may not engage in sexual activity with another person if the individual knows the person is incapacitated, or if a reasonable person would know the person is incapacitated.
- Because effective consent can never be provided by an incapacitated person, effective consent is deemed withdrawn when an individual becomes incapacitated at any point during sexual activity.
- Agreement or acquiescence obtained through the use of fraud or force (actual or implied), whether that force be physical force, threats, intimidation, or other forms of coercion, is not effective consent.
- A person's age may be a factor in determining the ability to give effective consent.
- The existence of a cognitive disability or other condition that significantly limits a person's ability to understand the nature of an action for which effective consent is requested may be a factor in determining the ability to give effective consent;
- **Force** includes physical force (such as pushing, hitting, pinning down), threats (direct or indirect expressions of intent to inflict harm to self or others), *intimidation* (implied or indirect threats), and/or other forms of coercion.

The following definitions come from the Project Safe Center at Vanderbilt University's website:

- **The Project Safe Center** is a facility dedicated to providing information, support, referrals, and education about power-based personal violence (including sexual harassment, sexual assault, dating violence, domestic violence, and stalking), as well as consent, healthy relationships, and healthy sexuality to the Vanderbilt University community.
 - Not currently a confidential resource; Will become partially confidential in Fall 2016.
- **Green Dot Bystander Program** is a comprehensive approach to violence prevention that capitalizes on the power of peer and cultural influence across all levels of the socio-ecological model. Informed by social change theory, the model targets all community members as potential bystanders, and seeks to engage them, through awareness, education, and skills-practice, in proactive behaviors that establish intolerance of violence as the norm, as well as reactive interventions in high-risk situations – resulting in the ultimate reduction of violence.

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- **PETSA** is a module features a series of videos that deal frankly with power-based personal violence (intimate partner violence, sexual assault, stalking, identity-based targeting, and bullying). PETSA was used in the 2013-14 and 2014-15 academic years.
- **Haven** is a 45-minute interactive module. Haven educates students about the types of power-based personal violence, prevention strategies including bystander intervention, as well as relevant laws, policies, warning signs, and campus resources. Haven replaced PETSA as the mandatory power-based personal violence prevention module assigned to incoming students in 2015-16.

The following definitions comes directly from the website of the Equal Opportunity, Affirmative Action, and Disability Services Department (EAD):

- **The Equal Opportunity, Affirmative Action, and Disability Services Department's (EAD)** mission is to proactively assist the university with the interpretation, understanding and application of federal and state laws which impose special obligations in the areas of equal opportunity and affirmative action. The EAD carries out its mission by continuously developing, implementing, evaluating and revising action-oriented programs aimed at promoting and valuing equity and diversity in the university's faculty, staff, and student body. The EAD's core values include equity, diversity, inclusiveness, accessibility and accommodation, all of which represent the spirit and purpose of the EAD.
 - The University recommends that complaints of dating violence, domestic violence, sexual assault, and stalking be made to EAD.

The following definition was taken from Indiana University – Purdue University Indianapolis's Division of Student Affairs' website:

- **Bystander Intervention** involves developing the awareness, skills, and courage needed to intervene in a situation when another individual needs help. Bystander intervention allows individuals to send powerful messages about what is acceptable and expected behavior in our community.

The following definition was taken from the Psychological and Counseling Center website:

- **Psychological and Counseling Center** supports the mental health needs of all Vanderbilt students to help them reach their academic and personal goals. Our highly skilled and multi-disciplinary staff collaborates with students to provide evidence-based treatment plans tailored to each individual's unique background and needs.
 - Currently a confidential resource.

The following definition was taken from the Vanderbilt Student Government Website:

- **Vanderbilt Student Government Sexual Assault Awareness and Prevention Committee (VSAP)** is a committee created to use our voices as students, our resources as VSG, and our passion to prevent power-based personal violence, help those affected, educate our peers, and connect members of the Vanderbilt community to on- and off-campus resources; particularly by supporting and uplifting other campus organizations committed to the same ideas.

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**VSG Sexual Assault
Awareness and Prevention
Committee**