

**RESPONDING TO ALLEGATIONS  
OF SEXUAL ASSAULT AS A  
STUDENT ORG:  
*A CASE STUDY***

Project Safe Center & Title IX Office

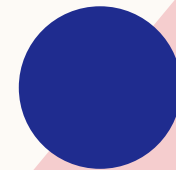
# OUTLINE

How VU Responds to Allegations

Best Practices

Case Studies

Questions





# **HOW VU RESPONDS**

The Title IX Office's Role at Vanderbilt

“ NO PERSON IN THE UNITED STATES SHALL, ON THE BASIS OF SEX, *BE EXCLUDED FROM PARTICIPATION IN*, BE DENIED THE BENEFITS OF, OR BE SUBJECTED TO DISCRIMINATION UNDER ANY EDUCATION PROGRAM *OR ACTIVITY* RECEIVING FEDERAL FINANCIAL ASSISTANCE ”

Title IX of the Educational  
Amendments of 1972

# TIMELINE

## INCIDENT REPORT

Title IX Office receives notice of potential sexual misconduct from a complainant, mandatory reporter, or other community member

## INFORMATIONAL MEETING

Title IX Office offers to meet with complainant, *if they want to*, to share more about supportive measures and the Title IX process

## FORMAL COMPLAINT

Complainant requests that the Title IX Office formally investigate. Title IX Coordinator reviews and determines next steps

## INVESTIGATION

Title IX Office investigates the allegations of sexual misconduct with interviews and evidence gathering

## DETERMINATION

Decision Maker decides if based on the information available it is more likely than not the sexual misconduct occurred

# SO, WHO DOES WHAT?



## INVESTIGATES

- The Title IX Office is the only office at Vanderbilt able to investigate reports of sexual misconduct
- The Title IX Office is the only office that determines whether or not a respondent is responsible for the reported misconduct



## SUPPORTS

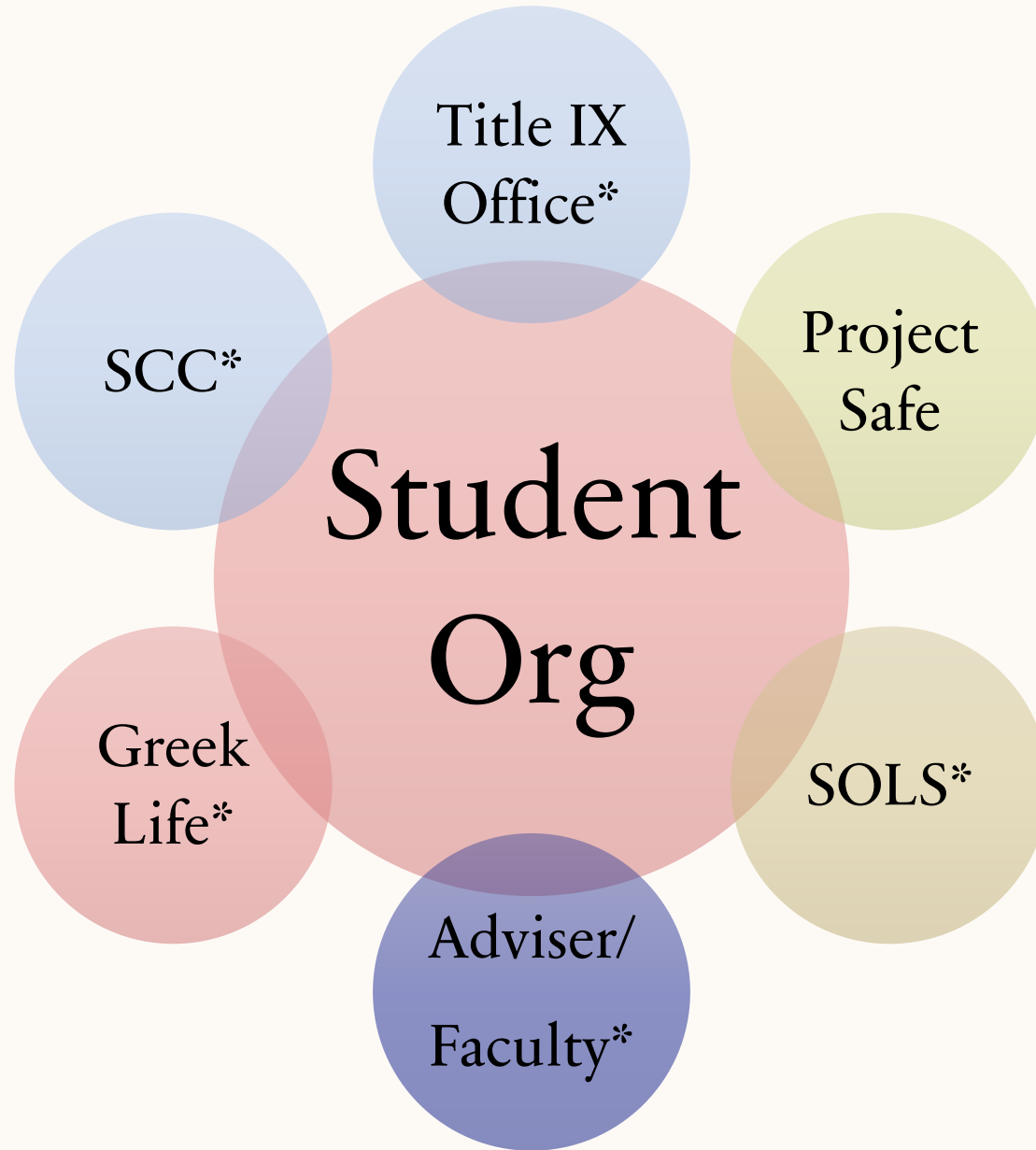
- Title IX Office partners with campus partners, such as Project Safe, to provide supportive measures resources
- Examples: Dean's Notification, No-Contact Directive, Course section changes, student org participation coordination



## GIVES SANCTIONS

- *If* a respondent is found responsible, the Title IX Office works with appropriate campus partners to implement the sanctions given
- There is no standard sanction; every case is considered independently

# WHO CAN HELP US?



\*Mandatory Reporter

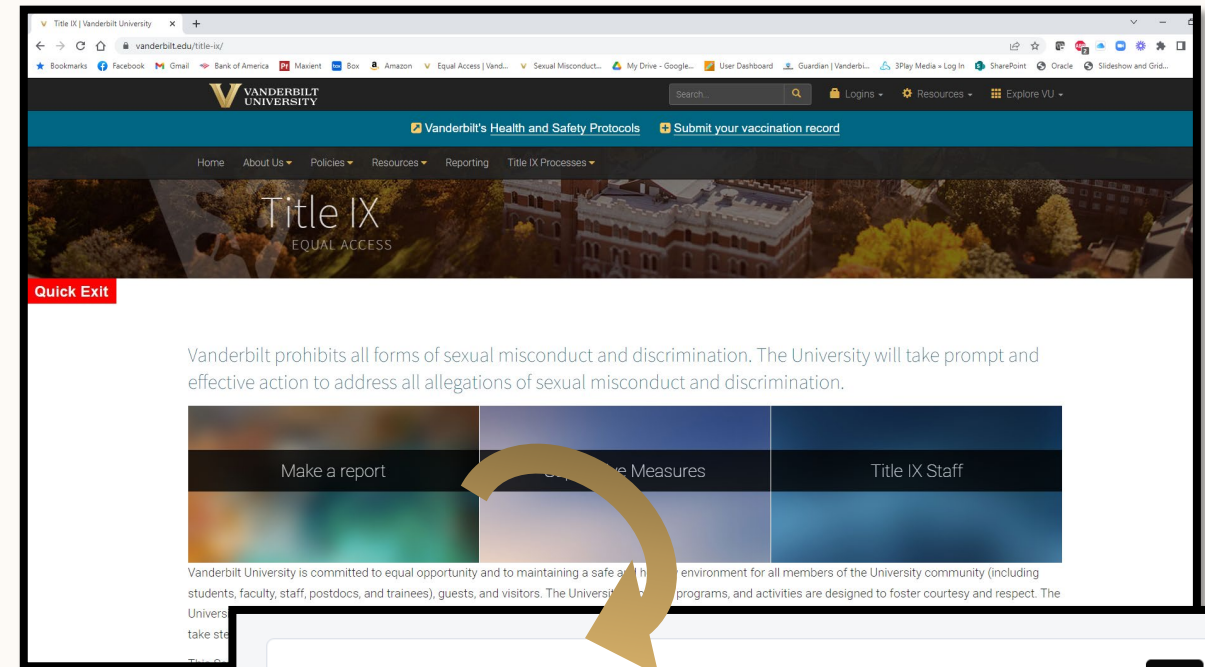
# REPORTING

MANDATORY REPORTERS

ONLINE FORM

ANONYMOUS REPORTING

CONFIDENTIAL RESOURCES



### Incident Report and Accommodation Request Form

[Go back](#)

Please complete this form to report an incident or submit an accommodation request.

Please use the below form for the following reports:

- ~Sexual harassment
- ~Sexual misconduct
- ~Harassment
- ~Discrimination
- ~Retaliation

Please use the below form for the following requests:

- ~Medical accommodations for staff, faculty, and post-doctoral fellows (including for COVID-19 Vaccine exemption requests)
- ~Religious accommodations for students, staff, faculty, and post-doctoral fellows (including for COVID-19 Vaccine exemption requests)
- ~Pregnancy related accommodations
- ~Translation services

Disability accommodation requests for students should be submitted through **Student Access**.

Please do not use this form to report emergency events. If this is an emergency, please contact VUPD at (615)322-2745.

If you have any questions about completing this form please email [equalaccess@vanderbilt.edu](mailto:equalaccess@vanderbilt.edu).

Please note, if you are affiliated to Vanderbilt University, we will communicate with you via your official vanderbilt.edu email address. Please ensure you are able to access this email box and check it regularly as we may need to communicate about your report or request.

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#### Information

Report or Request Type*	Date of Incident or Request*	Time*
<input type="text" value="Choose report or request type"/>	<input type="text" value="MM/DD/YYYY"/>	<input type="text" value="08:00 am"/>
Location of Incident or Request*	Building*	Specific Location*
<input type="text" value="Choose location of incident or request"/>	<input type="text" value="Choose building of incident or request"/>	<input type="text" value="Choose specific location"/>





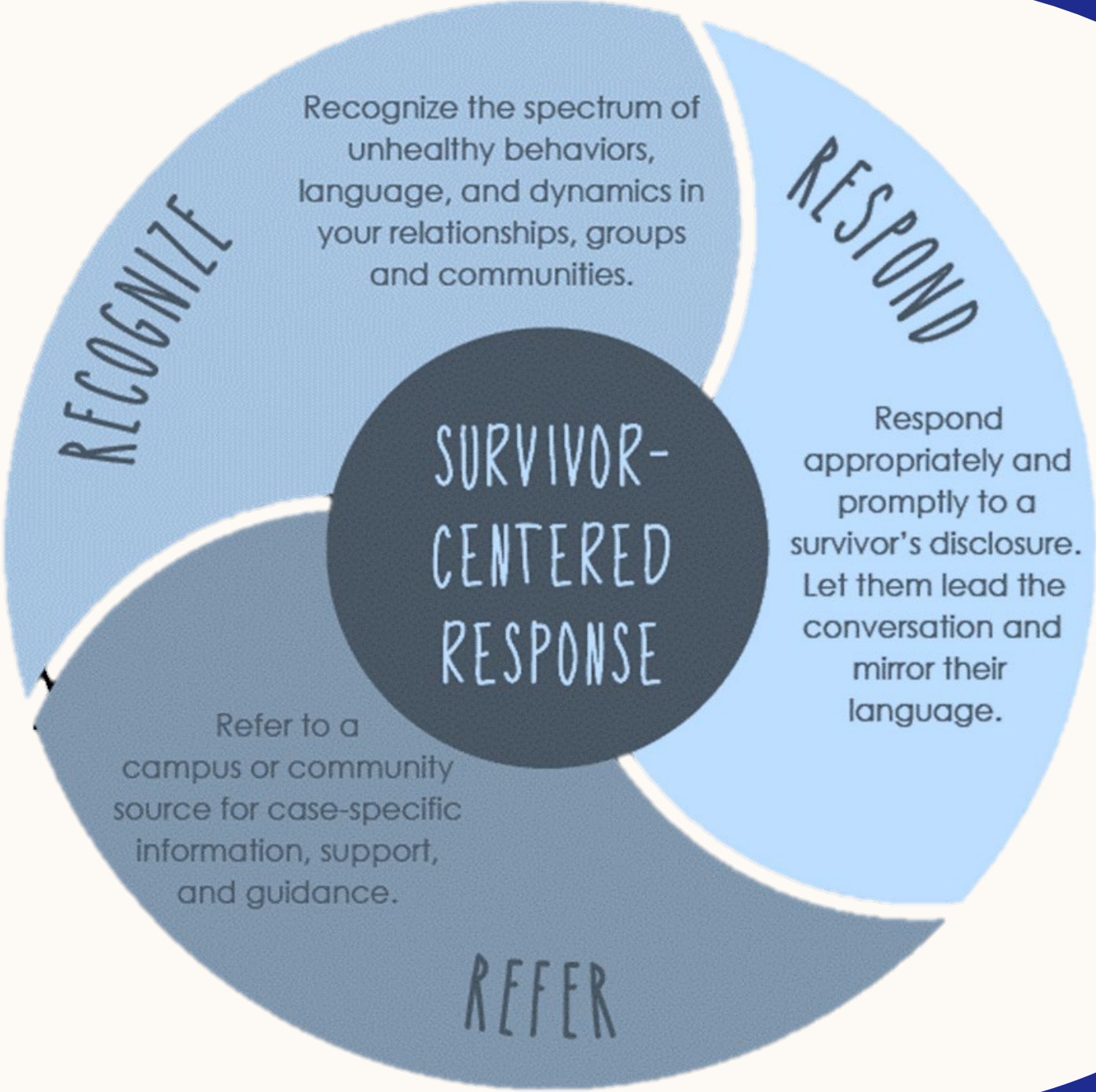
# **BEST PRACTICES**

Responding to Allegations as a Student Org

# WHAT WE ARE TEMPTED TO DO:

- ▶ “I know exactly how you feel.”
  - ▶ Sharing own experience to validate/relate.
- ▶ “It’s Going to be okay.”
- ▶ “You’re totally safe now.”
- ▶ Touching, hugging, etc.
- ▶ Pushing own ideas of what you think your friend should in their situation.
- ▶ Telling everyone about how your friend has been harmed/hurt/wronged.





**IT'S NOT ABOUT YOU**

# WHAT WE ACTUALLY NEED TO DO:

- ▶ Listen.
- ▶ Tell your friend you are sorry that they have had that experience or for what they are going through.
- ▶ Do not ask “why?”
- ▶ Provide resources.
- ▶ Ask what they need from you.
- ▶ Allow friends to sit with feelings/emotions.
- ▶ Respect Survivor’s autonomy and choice.





# **CASE STUDIES**

Break into three groups

# CASE STUDY 1

Earth is a junior and active in multiple student organizations. As a result, Earth has a diverse friend group and feels really connected to campus. This year Earth decided to run for president of one of the organizations they are involved in and won. It has been a lot of work, and Earth has been able maintain their grades as well as participation in other interests.

Yesterday, Earth was approached by Wind between classes. Earth has known Wind since sophomore year, is in the same major, and two major related student groups. Wind congratulated Earth on their presidency. Earth excitedly began to share what they hoped to accomplish in the group. Earth mentioned that they hadn't seen Wind at recent events and hope to see them at upcoming events.

Wind told Earth that they were happy for Earth but that they would never attend any events as long as Fire was a member. Wind shared that Fire had sexually assaulted Wind after an event at the end of sophomore year and Wind just wanted nothing to do with the group.

## CASE STUDY 2

Earth has known Fire since they lived on the same floor in the commons. Earth wouldn't consider Fire to be a close friend, but they have been in many of the same groups for the past three years. They are currently active in two student groups together.

Recently a rumor has been circulating on a couple different GroupMe's that Fire sexually assaulted another student. While the other student has not been identified, the rumor has grown for calls to cancel Fire and remove him from any leadership positions that he has on campus.

# CASE STUDY 3

Water and Air have been close friends since arriving at Vanderbilt. One night while hanging out, Water tells Air about an interaction with Earth the weekend prior. Water describes Earth sexually assaulting them but does not want to report the incident.

Earth is a popular student leader and president of a student org that both Water and Air participate in. Water is thinking about dropping out of the org so that they can avoid Earth



# WRAPPING IT UP

- Continue to include both the affected person and the reported respondent unless you are told otherwise
- Respect the survivor's autonomy
- You are not the investigator, do not question the affected person's experiences to determine if it is true
- When in doubt, **come ask Project Safe or the Title IX Office**

# MEET THE TITLE IX OFFICE TEAM



**MARY ROY**  
Director/ TIX Coordinator



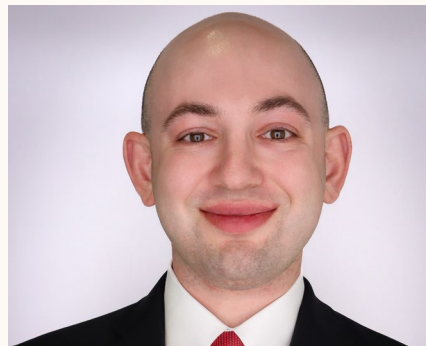
**MICHAEL FAZI**  
Assistant Director



**NATHAN PERRY**  
IR and SM Manager



**DAVID ANDERSON**  
Senior Investigator



**MATTHEW MEYERS**  
Investigator



**TAMMY KING**  
Office Manager

# MEET THE PROJECT SAFE TEAM



**CARA TUTTLE BELL**

Director



**OTIS MCGRESHAM**

Assistant Director for  
Prevention Education



**OLIVIA DARROW**

Assistant Director for  
Advocacy Services



**REILLY NOBLE**

Prevention Educator &  
Victim Resource Specialist



**GENNA YONGE**

Graduate Assistant

# QUESTIONS?

## **Title IX Office**

615-343-9004

[titleix@vanderbilt.edu](mailto:titleix@vanderbilt.edu)

[www.vanderbilt.edu/title-ix/](http://www.vanderbilt.edu/title-ix/)

## **Project Safe Center**

24 Hour Crisis Hotline: 615-322-7233

[projectsafe@vanderbilt.edu](mailto:projectsafe@vanderbilt.edu)

[www.vanderbilt.edu/projectsafe/](http://www.vanderbilt.edu/projectsafe/)