

Annual Update: Preventing and Responding to Sexual Misconduct

Dean Gina Casalegno and Title IX Coordinator Holly Hippensteel

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Dear Carnegie Mellon Community:

With the new school year underway, we want to reiterate the university's unwavering commitment to an environment in which we can all learn, work and fully participate in the life of the community, free from harassment, discrimination and the threat of violence. In particular, as a community, we will not tolerate sexual violence, intimate partner violence or sexual harassment. Sexual harassment and sexual violence are against the law and violate our core values.

As part of our commitment, we want to ensure that every community member understands the university's policies and resources regarding sexual misconduct, and to know about significant steps the university has taken to fulfill its commitment. Each of us has a responsibility for upholding these standards in our personal behavior and reporting inappropriate conduct when we see it.

Over the past year, we have taken additional steps to coordinate our campus efforts in prevention, education and response, which build on our existing programming in this area. Most importantly, the university has established the Office of Title IX Initiatives, which is charged with ensuring gender equity at each of our worldwide locations, including coordinating the university's education for faculty, staff and students about the prevention of, and response to, sexual misconduct. Jamie Edwards and I, Holly Hippensteel, are serving as the inaugural staff members in this office that is located in West Wing 102. We also can be reached at 412-268-7125 or tix@cmu.edu. All members of the university community are encouraged to contact our office for assistance regarding Title IX matters at any time. To learn more about how to make a report or seek support and resources from the university and Pittsburgh-based organizations, we encourage you to visit the [Office of Title IX Initiatives website](#).

We also have made available a variety of new venues and opportunities to learn about and discuss these important issues:

- As dean of student affairs, I, Gina Casalegno, hosted a series of roundtable discussions on the Pittsburgh campus with student government leaders, student athletes, the Survivor Support Network, Greek leaders and members, and student advisory councils to seek guidance on how the university can best educate students about these issues;
- Student Government's Sexual Assault and Relationship Violence Prevention Committee, the "Got Consent?" student organization and Student Affairs hosted a series of roundtable discussions involving faculty, staff and students to educate the community about campus resources, reporting procedures, and broader issues of sexual misconduct and violence;
- The university launched a web-based resource, www.cmu.edu/title-ix, which includes vital information about the university's policy; definitions of all forms of sexual misconduct; strategies for reducing risk; campus and community resources; and how the university handles reports;
- We have revamped existing education and training programs to address all forms of sexual misconduct, discuss risk reduction strategies, and explain how the university handles reports;
- We have developed education and prevention efforts tailored to our graduate student population, including programs offered during university-wide and departmental graduate student orientations;

- We streamlined a print [resource guide](#) for those impacted by sexual misconduct;
- We have centralized processes for responding to reports of sexual misconduct, including the provision of interim support and safety measures; and
- We have dedicated additional resources to support students responding to allegations of sexual misconduct and male survivors of sexual misconduct, and to grow the university's bystander intervention education programs.

In addition to these enhancements, we continue to offer high quality, individualized support. Information about support resources may be found at <http://www.cmu.edu/title-ix/resources-and-information/resources.html>.

In the coming year, we will continue to partner with campus and community experts to address the following high-priority objectives:

- Revisiting our university Policy Against Sexual Harassment and Sexual Assault;
- Expanding the trainings and educational programs offered to all community members beyond the orientation programs currently offered for new community members and focus on individuals in key support roles;
- Enhancing the resources, educational programs, and Title IX initiatives offered at all Carnegie Mellon locations;
- Ensuring that the university's process for handling reports of sexual misconduct is fair, just and transparent; and
- Analyzing data obtained over the past three years to target further preventative efforts.

As those of you who are returning to Carnegie Mellon know, the university undertook an ambitious Pittsburgh-based survey last spring about experiences students have had with sexual assault and relationship violence. We are completing the analysis of responses and expect to make those findings public this fall. That will provide an important occasion to discuss the challenges our university – and all universities – face, as we continue to work to improve our efforts at prevention and response. We welcome your ideas, suggestions and feedback.

In closing, we would like to reinforce Dr. Suresh's message earlier this week that together we will demonstrate that Carnegie Mellon University is a community in which mutual respect, personal integrity, and the highest standards of personal and professional conduct prevail.

Sincerely,

Gina Casalegno, Dean of Student Affairs, and
Holly Hippensteel, Interim Director of Title IX Initiatives and Title IX Coordinator