Campus Sexual Misconduct: Prevention and Accountability

Responding to one of the most pervasive threats to students’ wellbeing

Recent reports of sexual harassment, abuse, and assault have received unprecedented attention highlighting a pervasive problem on college campuses in the United States. The nation’s nearly 3 million graduate and professional students are among those facing heightened risk of sexual assault, leaving them vulnerable to severe physical and psychological effects that can detrimentally impact their daily lives.¹

Among graduate and professional students:

- **8.8% of females** and **2.2% of males** experience sexual assault²
- **Only 5-20% of student victims report sexual assault.** Common reasons for not reporting are feeling “embarrassed, ashamed,” or “thinking [nothing] would be done about it”³
- Among female graduate and professional students, **22%** of sexual assault victims reported that assaults were perpetrated by school **faculty or staff**
- **69.7% of LGBT** graduate students reported experiencing sexual harassment

Graduate Students may not report misconduct because of fear of retaliation and faculty control over their education and future careers.

**Fund Research-Driven Solutions to Prevent Harassment and Assault**

Research into sexual misconduct prevention and response highlight the effectiveness of campus- and community-wide cooperation.

- **Coordination:** Programs include involvement of campus and local law enforcement, as well as public health organizations
- **Accountability:** Schools follow due process and ensure penalties for sexual assault
- **Transparency:** Conduct and publicize campus climate surveys to understand campus-specific issues

SAGE recommends:

Support H.R.36 Combating Sexual Harassment in Science Act of 2019
- Examine and refine policies to reduce the prevalence and negative impact of harassment

Support H.R.761 CAMPUS HATE Crimes Act
- Fund the development and implementation of programs to prevent hate crimes

**Prevent Changes to Title IX Regulations that Negatively Impact Victims of Sexual Misconduct**

Recent proposed change to Title IX Regulations have negative consequences for victims. The proposed changes narrow the definition of sexual harassment so fewer respondents can make reports and also limits the investigations of harassment to on campus incidents. Most graduate students live off campus and the vast majority of sexual assaults take place in survivors’ homes (“Perpetrators of Sexual Violence,” 2011). It is critical that Title IX investigations are empowered to address all complaints under a broad definition, both on- and off-campus.

SAGE recommends:

- Use the definition of sexual harassment described by the Equal Employment Opportunity Commission (EEOC) and the White House Task Force to Protect Students from Sexual Assault as “unwelcome conduct of a sexual nature, including unwelcome sexual advances, requests for sexual favors, and other verbal, nonverbal or physical conduct of sexual nature” for Title IX regulations.
- Require schools to investigate Title IX complaints when incidents take place on and off-campus
1 The Condition of Education; “Violence Prevention,” 2016
2 Campus Sexual Violence: Statistics | RAINN, 2016)
3 “Campus Sexual Violence: Statistics | RAINN,” 2016; “President Obama Launches the ‘It’s On Us’; Campaign to End Sexual Assault on Campus | whitehouse.gov,” 2014; "AAU Climate Survey on Sexual Assault and Sexual Misconduct," 2017)