

## Executive Summary

Princeton University is committed to building a campus culture in which all of its community members can learn, work, and thrive in a safe, supportive, and fair environment, free from sexual misconduct. As part of this commitment, the University seeks to strengthen the effectiveness of its policies and procedures related to sexual misconduct, in compliance with its obligations under Title IX and other applicable legal requirements, and expand the scope of its resources.

During the spring of 2019, student protesters raised concerns about aspects of the sexual misconduct policy and process, campus resources, and campus culture. As members of two standing University Committees, the [Faculty-Student Committee on Sexual Misconduct](#) and the [University Student Life Committee](#), both comprised of faculty members, administrators, graduate students, and undergraduates, the authors of this report were asked to take responsibility for reviewing the concerns raised by the students; engaging in conversations with Princeton University community members representing multiple perspectives and experiences with Title IX; and, where appropriate, making recommendations related to sexual misconduct and campus climate. The joint Committees met twenty times throughout the summer and early fall. In addition to gathering a broad range of student voices, perspectives, and needs, the joint Committees reached out to other community members through focus groups conducted by an independent interviewer, and activated an email address to facilitate community input.

The resulting report presents nineteen recommendations regarding programmatic and staffing enhancements that we believe can be considered immediately. These have been forwarded to the appropriate administrative leaders, including the Provost, Vice President for Campus Life, Vice Provost for Institutional Equity and Diversity, Dean of the Graduate School, Dean of Undergraduate Students, and directors of the SHARE and Title IX Offices.

**Support and advocacy for complainants and respondents<sup>1</sup>:** The Committees reviewed resources for support and advocacy for complainants and respondents. Based on extensive conversations with students and administrators, we believe that the University's existing resources are substantial and accessible. However, recognizing that students choose a variety of pathways for engaging with advocacy, accommodations and the investigative/adjudicative processes – and that those

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<sup>1</sup> A complainant is an individual who alleges a violation of the sexual misconduct policy. A respondent is an individual alleged to have violated the policy.

processes can be daunting or confusing – we believe that the systems would benefit from additional streamlining and navigational support. Our recommendations on this topic include expanded support resources in the Title IX Office to assist students in navigating the Title IX investigatory and appeal process, expansion of support networks for complainants and respondents, expansion of the capacity of the SHARE Office, and increased training for Title IX Advisors.

**The sexual misconduct investigation, adjudication and appeal process:** We reviewed the investigation, adjudication and appeal processes for sexual misconduct in cases involving student respondents. The processes involved are comprehensive but necessarily complex. Although information about the sexual misconduct process is described to complainants and respondents in person, provided to them via email at several points during the investigative/adjudicative process, and available on the main [www.sexualmisconduct.princeton.edu](http://www.sexualmisconduct.princeton.edu) website, we understand that it can be challenging to navigate and interpret such a large quantity of material, particularly in times of distress. During the summer, the Title IX Office developed a new website ([www.sexualmisconductinvestigations.princeton.edu](http://www.sexualmisconductinvestigations.princeton.edu)) which we believe constitutes a positive step toward ensuring that parties have transparent access to relevant material in multiple formats. Our recommendations concern communication and further improvements to transparency. We also recommend that the Title IX Office be restructured so that the Director can focus on oversight of the process without additionally needing to serve as an investigatory panel member.

**Alternative (non-disciplinary) approaches to addressing harm:** From several sources, we heard a desire for more options to assist individuals who prefer to resolve their experiences of sexual misconduct without invoking a formal disciplinary process. We agree that more alternatives to a full disciplinary process would be helpful. Students have expressed interest in the development of a restorative justice/practices program. Restorative justice is a non-adversarial approach to addressing offensive behavior that seeks to identify and repair harm and rebuild trust through facilitated dialogue. Restorative justice shows promise for addressing some types of interpersonal conflict and we believe that it should be explored further on our campus

According to the Skidmore College Campus PRISM Project (the foremost national research center working on restorative justice in higher education), restorative justice programs require intensive community preparation and facilitation. Therefore, as a preliminary step we recommend the establishment of a Restorative Practices Working Group to explore research, best practices and models

for successful use of restorative practices. We also recommend that SHARE and/or CPS offer support group(s) for those affected by sexual misconduct.

### **Campus climate and culture**

We take it as axiomatic that a healthy campus climate and culture help to prevent sexual misconduct. Every campus community member can and should assist by maintaining and encouraging positive social and workplace conduct and norms, and engaging as active bystanders in problematic situations. We heard a desire for more tools to assist the campus community in creating a healthy campus climate and responding to situations involving community conflict and/or harm. We also heard about the challenges felt by student organizations, academic departments, and other groups trying to manage group dynamics in the aftermath of bias incidents or investigations, including concerns about preventing retaliation. We agree that additional support for conflict resolution practices, training, and other community building can be helpful in addressing harms and rebuilding trust.

Accordingly, our recommendations focus on expansion of customized training for undergraduates and graduate students, continued assessment of the SHARE Peer Program, and heightened visibility for the Faculty-Student Committee on Sexual Misconduct. We further recommend that the definition of retaliation in the *Policy on Sex Discrimination and Sexual Misconduct* and the *Policy on Discrimination and Harassment* be reviewed, potentially revised, and supplemented with examples of prohibited, retaliatory conduct.

**Support for student mental health:** Students have advocated for more resources devoted to mental health, which would be available to those affected by sexual misconduct, as well as others. We agree that mental health is an important topic that deserves ongoing attention. We recommend the establishment of an Emergency Funds Review Working Group tasked with improving and streamlining the procedures around applying for mental health funding, and with understanding how mental health funds are being used and whether they are adequate to meet the need.

**International and domestic travel:** International and domestic travel involves distinctive dynamics due to the differences in cultural norms, power differentials, and challenges in responding to incidents in off-campus settings. Risks related to sexual misconduct are only a part of a larger landscape involving travel safety. We affirm the recommendations made by the Faculty-Student Committee on Sexual Misconduct pertaining to travel safety in its 2018-19 annual report (which was released before the student protests), including development of best practices relating to off-campus University-

sponsored or academically-related travel, and additional training for travel leaders and researchers/students preparing for University-sponsored or academically-related travel.

## **Conclusion**

This report is intended to constitute a meaningful step forward in creating a healthy campus climate and combatting sexual misconduct. The review process has been both a privilege and challenge for our joint Committees. We have been impressed by the seriousness and thoughtfulness of the concerns expressed, as well as inspired by the diligence and care of those committed to respond. We hope that this report provides clarification, as well as a preliminary path toward even greater community well-being. We expect to provide periodic updates regarding the implementation of these recommendations, and hope to engage community members in ongoing campus conversations.

We ask all members of the community to participate in making Princeton an environment free of sexual harassment and misconduct, and in creating a climate of respect and support. We welcome your continued feedback and suggestions ([facultystudentcommittee@princeton.edu](mailto:facultystudentcommittee@princeton.edu)) and we hope that this report is the beginning of a continued conversation.