

September 4, 2018

To our Washington University students:

As we begin the new academic year, we are filled with determination and hope as we think about the many opportunities that lie ahead for our university community. Among these opportunities, a top priority is advancing our efforts to address sexual assault and misconduct on our campuses. It is deeply troubling that any of our students would experience incidents like this and our ultimate goal should be preventing sexual assault and misconduct. However, even as we work toward that goal, there is much we have to do to improve the way in which we respond when sexual assault and misconduct do occur.

Many of you have rightly raised important questions about our Title IX process and the support we provide for our students. During the spring semester last academic year, we watched and listened as many of you intensified your voices and shared deeply personal experiences in many ways, including at a rally on campus that was organized by the student-led Title Mine group. It was heart-wrenching to hear your stories and at that time, we made a commitment to you that we would use the summer to develop an action plan that responds, directly, to the priorities articulated by our students. We write to you today to share the outcome of that work.

As you will recall, following the rally, we identified four key areas of focus:

- Reducing stress on students involved in the Title IX process; reducing timelines; and increasing sensitivity.
- Enhancing resources for mental health services and survivor support; Title IX investigative staff; and training, especially to make the process and those who support our students more trauma-informed and more sensitive to all identities.
- Providing a channel for peer advocacy to assist students going through the Title IX process and provide advice to the Title IX Office.
- Establishing accountability measures with opportunities for student feedback.

[Via this link](#) you will find a report from our working group that outlines a plan to improve our processes, add resources and further open lines of communication. We invite you to read the report, share your feedback, and find opportunities to engage in the process of implementing important next steps. Ultimately, success will depend on a very close working relationship with our students. We commit to you that we will listen, keep an open mind, and work very hard to be responsive. Hopefully, the action items we are taking now reflect that commitment. You also can be sure that we will continually learn from our efforts and strive to improve.

You will see in the report a substantial and necessary investment in staffing and other resources to deepen our investigative staff, counseling, training and operations of the various programs involved in addressing sexual assault and sexual misconduct. You also will see a commitment to heightened transparency with the university community – especially our students – and the creation of two very important groups to better coordinate, better communicate and hold ourselves accountable: first, an Advisory Committee on Title IX Policies and Practices made up of students, faculty and staff. Second, a Concern for Students Team that will regularly bring together administrators with responsibility for all of the various aspects of our response to sexual assault and sexual misconduct.

Finally, you will see specific target dates for completion of some of the key tasks and investments called for in the report. Our intention is to follow through with the entire set of recommendations, as quickly as possible.

There is a lot here to digest and lots more to discuss as a community. To help any of you who are interested in learning more and/or sharing feedback, Vice Chancellor White and Provost Holden Thorp will moderate a special listening session on **Wednesday, September 12 at 8 p.m. in Umrath Lounge**. (Note corrected time.) Please be on the lookout for further details, soon. We also will be providing options for sharing anonymous feedback directly to the administration or confidential counselors.

Sexual assault and misconduct are difficult topics, but we must acknowledge that they are a reality on college campuses, including ours, and work very hard to address these issues. We have heard you, we will continue to listen, and we are in this, together, for the long haul.

In closing, if you or a friend need help or support, we urge you to reach out. Listed below are university resources that are available for you. You also can contact either of us directly, any time.

Sincerely,

Mark S. Wrighton  
Chancellor

Lori S. White  
Vice Chancellor for Student Affairs

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**Confidential support offices on campus:**

[Relationship and Sexual Violence Prevention \(RSVP\) Center](#): 314-935-3445

[Habif Health and Wellness Center](#): 314-935-6695

**Confidential peer support organizations on campus:**

[Sexual Assault and Rape Anonymous Helpline \(SARAH\)](#): 314-935-8080

[Uncle Joe's Peer Counseling](#): 314-935-5099

**Non-confidential resources on campus:**

[Title IX Office](#): 314-935-3118

[Residential Life Staff](#)

[Assistant Director for LGBTQIA Involvement](#): 314-935-3443

[The Office of the Vice Chancellor for Students Affairs](#): 314-935-4526

[WUPD](#): 314-935-5555

**Confidential support organizations off campus:**

[YWCA Women's Resource Center](#): 314-726-6665

[Safe Connections](#): 314-531-2003

[TransLifeLine](#): 877-565-8860

[Metro Trans Umbrella Group](#): 314-270-2155