

President's Advisory Committee on Sexual Assault (PACSA) Annual Report 2013-2014

This report briefly describes our activities during the 2013-2014 year.

Activities

There has been a long, comprehensive and collective dialogue across our community on the subject of sexual violence. Given this dialogue, the President's Advisory Committee on Sexual Assault ("PACSA") held two committee meetings and one subcommittee meeting to discuss these issues.

Matters considered and matters pending

Columbia University College Democrats ("CU Dems") Letter

In a letter dated November 18, 2013, the CU Dems informed PACSA of concerns regarding information about the policies and procedures for adjudicating claims of gender-based misconduct (including sexual harassment, gender-based harassment, intimate partner violence, stalking and sexual assault). In the letter, the CU Dems asked that Columbia University and Barnard College make publicly available anonymous aggregated information related to the adjudication process.

During PACSA's first meeting of the year, this letter was read to the PACSA membership and discussion ensued surrounding the issues raised.

Recognizing the vital importance and complexity of the issues raised in the letter, PACSA determined that it was necessary for our community to have candid discussions about these matters and continually review processes in order to address concerns about safety, fairness, transparency, and privacy.

Therefore, PACSA convened a subcommittee of the membership to meet with student leaders (including the CU Dems) to better understand the concerns related to the adjudication process and the information requested.

Subcommittee Meeting

The PACSA subcommittee met with student leaders in December 2013 in order to learn more directly about student concerns, share perspectives, and explore possible next steps. The students present said foremost that they wanted to assure the community that the egregious failures occurring at other universities are not happening at Columbia. Specifically, the students believed that the Columbia process is not transparent and therefore want specific details to be published about the process and aggregate data, although not information that could be traced back to the parties involved.

The students felt that the release of data would reinforce aspects of the process and would educate and encourage students to report cases and feel more supported in doing so. The students added that publishing numbers holds the University accountable and demonstrates that a procedure is being followed.

The information from the subcommittee meeting was relayed to the PACSA membership as a whole.

Form and Format

At PACSA's second meeting of the term, PACSA invited Matthew Chou and Akshay Shah, Co-Chairs of the Student Affairs Committee (SAC) to discuss the SAC Proposal for Data Release.

Matt and Akshay stressed the student interest in anonymous aggregate data, concern for privacy but also the need for transparency. The PACSA membership and the student leaders discussed the various forms and format in which the University could present the data. Also discussed was the importance of contextual information to accompany the data and how (if at all) this data folds into a sexual assault prevention framework.

Matters Pending

PACSA is currently drafting a recommendation to President Bollinger on how this data from the 2013-14 academic year should be released based on the membership's collective experience, concern for all parties involved in the adjudication process and the student concerns for transparency. This recommendation will be delivered to President Bollinger on Monday, May 5, 2014.

2014-15

The University Senate has adopted a Resolution to Amend PACSA, regarding size and composition, public and accessible membership, public website regarding PACSA activities, and submission of an annual report to the President and University Senate.

PACSA Membership 2013-2014

Melinda Aquino, Associate Dean of Multicultural Affairs, CC/SEAS

Peter Awn, Dean, School of General Studies

Jewelnel Davis, University Chaplain

Rachel Efron, Clinical Psychologist/Trauma Specialist

Donna Fenn, Associate General Counsel

Jessica Fenton, Associate General Counsel

Jennifer Friedman, Director, Public Interest Law Center, Pace University School of Law

Susan Glancy, Chief of Staff, Office of the President

Darrice Griffin, Assistant Director of Intercollegiate Athletics

Jeri Henry, Associate Dean of Judicial Affairs & Community Standards

Victor Kagan, Student, College of Dental Medicine (Senator)

Edith Lerner, Student, Barnard College

Jim McShane, Vice President, Public Safety

MJ Murphy, Executive Director, Barnard Student Health
Dianna Pennetti, Director, Barnard Public Safety
La'Shawn Rivera, Director, Sexual Violence Response
Janice Robinson, Title IX Coordinator, Teachers College
Melissa Rooker, Title IX Coordinator, Columbia University – Co-Chair
Karen Singleton, Associate Dean of Students, GSAS
Samuel Seward, Associate Vice President, Columbia Health
Carole Vance, Assistant Clinical Professor, Sociomedical Sciences (CUMC)
Ovita Williams, Associate Director of Field Education, CUSSW
Scott Wright, Vice President, Campus Services
Susan Xenarios, Director, Crime Victims Treatment Center, St. Luke's
Amy Zavadil, Title IX Coordinator, Barnard College