
Columbia embraces its responsibility to be a leader in preventing sexual assault and other gender-based misconduct anywhere it may occur, with a special duty to protect the safety and well-being of our own students. Student activism plays an important role in encouraging these efforts, and the University appreciates this attention to a significant issue affecting the lives of college and university students around the nation.

We understand that reports about these cases in the media can be deeply distressing and our hearts go out to any students who feel they have been mistreated. Importantly, the University will not address reports about individual cases or experiences. This is so not only because of federal student privacy law but also—and most fundamentally—because of our commitment to help students feel as comfortable as possible accessing the many resources to support them on campus without concern that the University would ever comment publicly on them or their experiences. As a University we have made substantial new investments to further strengthen our personnel, physical resources, and policies dedicated to preventing and responding to gender-based misconduct.

We believe that the people and policies dedicated to addressing gender-based misconduct at Columbia are unsurpassed among the nation’s colleges and universities:

- The number of professional personnel staffing Columbia’s Sexual Violence Response & Rape Crisis/ Anti-Violence Support Center (9 full-time employees and one half-time position) sets the standard for other schools. Student interns supplement this critical resource.

- The corps of full-time professionals exclusively dedicated to advocating for survivors within a confidential rape crisis center (3 survivor advocates) is an exceptional asset for responding to sexual, intimate partner, and gender-based violence, one that few colleges and universities possess.

- With the recent opening of a second campus location for our Sexual Violence Response & Rape Crisis/ Anti-Violence Support Center, Columbia is one of few colleges or universities to have two rape crisis centers staffed by professionals trained to respond to sexual violence and to support student survivors.

- Columbia provides 24/7/365 access via telephone to professionally trained staff and peer advocates for anyone seeking support in connection with sexual, intimate partner, and gender-based misconduct.

- Columbia’s new Gender-Based Misconduct Policy, announced on August 15, 2014, is becoming a model policy for describing the process in a manner that is accessible and understandable to students.

- Columbia is one of very few colleges or universities that employs, within the office that administers complaints of gender-based misconduct, “case managers” (3 positions) whose sole job is to support students through the disciplinary process, including in securing accommodations for their academic work and residential arrangements.

- Columbia is a leader among colleges and universities in providing legal counsel to both complainants and respondents seeking such support in the disciplinary process—an important resource for due process.

- Columbia’s hearing panelists who review complaints of gender-based misconduct are student affairs professionals who receive comprehensive, up-to-date training to meet this responsibility.

- Mandatory consent and bystander training for incoming undergraduates has been expanded and is based on the Step Up! program recognized nationally as a model.

- A recent annual survey of university sexual health resources ranked Columbia first in New York State on a range of factors, including the accessibility of its health centers, the quality of its web resources, and the strength of its prevention programs.

For more information on the University’s full range of actions: www.sexualrespect.columbia.edu.