

Presidential Advisory Committee on Sexual Assault Annual Report (2021-2022)

The Presidential Advisory Committee on Sexual Assault (PACSA) is one of several Columbia University initiatives to address gender-based misconduct and is charged with advising the president on issues related to the prevention of and response to gender-based misconduct, including sexual assault. The Committee continually works with partners and experts across the University to evaluate policies and procedures and solicit feedback from the Columbia community with the goal of eliminating sexual assault and other forms of gender-based misconduct from our community.

Membership

The Committee comprises faculty, staff, and students from across Columbia's campuses. President Bollinger appointed a new co-chair, Claude Ann Mellins, to join Dennis A. Mitchell, as well as four new committee members.

Committee Members:

- Alden Bush
- Jeanine D'Armiento
- Richard J. Eichler
- Marcy Ferdschneider
- Marjory D. Fisher
- Elizabeth Gillette
- Elliot Hueske
- Ian Rottenberg
- Yasmin Safdié
- Donna Fenn
- Joseph Greenwell
- La'Shawn Rivera

Discussions

During the 2021-22 academic year, partners across the University briefed the Committee on updates to the Title IX Regulations, services and programs that support gender-based misconduct prevention, and the University's process for addressing incidents of gender-based misconduct. Specifically, the Committee discussed the following topics in the 2021-2022 academic year:

- **Title IX regulation changes** from the Trump to the Biden administrations, many of which are still forthcoming.
- **Metrics on Title IX incident reports and Sexual Violence Response direct services utilization**, both of which saw an increase as students returned to campus.
- **Educational programming**, including concerns of declining participation, perhaps due to Zoom fatigue or lack of consideration for specific identity areas.
- **Behavioral trends**, including student groups and organizations expelling members without due process based on word of mouth and rumors on social media, and a growing number of students being unwilling to participate in mediation after filing complaints. Additionally, in Spring 2022, the Committee heard a presentation from

Sexual Violence Response about an increase in technology-facilitated gender based misconduct among students.

- **Sexual Assault Awareness Month:** Sexual Violence Response presented on a range of programming and awareness-raising events being organized in coordination with Columbia Health and other partners, to raise awareness about sexual assault during the month of April.

Recommendations

The Committee recommends continuing to explore evidence-based interventions around reporting and preventing gender-based misconduct. Measures discussed included targeted surveying of the community and exploring the perpetrator's perspective in order to prevent harm from happening rather than responding afterwards. The Committee recommended looking at means to enhance the coordination across the campuses and university Community to gender based misconduct.

Additionally, the Committee discussed inviting outside speakers to present evidence based, interventions emerging from research on prevention of sexual assault and treatment for survivors, in addition to SVR's efforts.