

Presidential Advisory Committee on Sexual Assault Annual Report (2024-2025)

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 was created in 2006 through a Senate resolution and 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 President appoints all members of the committee. The 2024-2025 Committee comprises faculty, staff, and students from across Columbia's campuses. Committee members are appointed to two-year terms, which may be extended by the President. Ex-officio members have no terms limits.

Committee Members:

Chairs

- Claude Ann Mellins (Professor of Medical Psychology (in Psychiatry and Sociomedical Sciences) at CUIMC))
- Melanie Bernitz (Interim Executive Vice President, University Life, Senior Vice President Columbia Health, Associate Clinical Professor of Medicine (in the Center for Family and Community Medicine))

Term-limited Members

- Jeanine D'Armiento (Chair, University Senate; Professor of Medicine (in Anesthesiology and Physiology and Cellular Biophysics))
- Richard J. Eichler (Associate Vice President, Counseling and Psychological Services, Columbia Health)
- Marcy Ferdschneider (Assistant Vice President, Student Health on Haven; Assistant Professor of Medicine at CUIMC)
- Helen Han Wei Luo (Student, Graduate School of Arts and Sciences)
- Taania Khan (Student, Graduate School of Business)
- Marni Sommer (Professor of Sociomedical Sciences, Mailman School of Public Health, CUIMC)
- Susan Witte (Professor of Social Work, School of Social Work)
- Kavika Krishnan (Student, Fu Foundation School of Engineering and Applied Science)

Ex-officio Members

- Donna Fenn (Deputy General Counsel)
- Marjory D. Fisher (Associate Vice President & Title IX Coordinator, Office of Institutional Equity)
- Laura Kirschstein (Vice Provost, Office of Intuitional Equity)

- La'Shawn Rivera (Senior Executive Director, Sexual Violence Response, Columbia Health)
- Colleen Walsh (Senior Director of Title IX Investigations, Office of Institutional Equity)

Discussions

During the 2024-25 academic year, the committee met twice, and partners across the University briefed the Committee on the transition of Title IX to the Office of Institutional Equity in Summer of 2024, 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. Additionally, the Committee had presentations on the following topics in the 2024-2025 academic year:

- Navigating Stalking and Technology-Facilitated Abuse
- The Lived Experiences and Needs of Students (LENS) Survey Data Review

Recommendations

The Committee recommends the following related to the discussions and work from the 2024-2025 academic year:

1. To consider impacts on federal changes to transgender students as it relates to Title IX.
2. To track impacts of technology on stalking cases and reporting.
3. To consider training options for students as preventative measures to online stalking and harassment.
4. To continue exploring evidence-based interventions around reporting and preventing gender-based misconduct utilizing the LENS survey data.