



# Wesleyan University

September 2020

To: Wesleyan University Community  
From: Alison Williams, Vice President for Equity & Inclusion, Section 504/Title IX Officer  
Subject: **Annual Report on Wesleyan's Response to Sexual Violence**

## **Background:**

In the spring of 2011, the Sexual Violence Task Force (SVTF) issued recommendations to improve Wesleyan's response to sexual violence on campus. Significant and continuous progress has been made in implementing the recommendations and improving support systems for survivors of sexual violence. This report reflects institutional data and initiatives during the 2018-2019 academic year.

Internal and external data indicates sexual violence is significantly underreported on all college campuses; our continued work in is dedicated to creating a culture of safe reporting. As we listen and gain insight/input, we continue to make changes related to reporting and adjudication structures and processes. In doing so we expected the number of incidents reported to the University to increase and then remain consistent. SVTF's original recommendations were grouped into four categories and were augmented by the work of the Board of Trustees Title IX Working Group, which completed its review and reported its findings during the summer of 2014. These categories continue to guide our work; the full report as well as the checklist of the completed recommendations and related policy is available on the [OEI web site](#).

## **Clery Report Plus:**

The full Clery Report is posted on the Public Safety website each September. The following table summarizes the Clery numbers in addition to the outcomes of cases formally reported to the University since the fall of 2009. The table contains information beyond the mandated Clery numbers and includes adjudication figures and outcomes. This augmented Clery data is provided as part of our federal and state requirements as well as our commitment to transparency.

In table below, please note that the total number of cases reported may not add together cleanly. Some cases may include multiple forms of misconduct and be counted in each category. Also, the total number may differ from the number of cases adjudicated for a variety of possible reasons (e.g. the report was confidential, or the responding individual was not identified or was not a student, or the reporting individual did not wish to proceed with an investigation at the time, etc.).

Calendar Year	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019
<b>Reports</b>										
All reported sexual misconduct	6	8	1	15	37	21	24	14	19	17
Students Reporting <b>Sexual Assault/Fondling</b>	6	8	1	15	13	4	24	12	14	4
Students Reporting <b>Sexual/Gender-based Harassment</b>	*	*	*	*	0	0	0	0	0	1
Students Reporting <b>Intimate Partner Violence</b>	*	0	0	0	1	4	0	1	4	1*
Students reporting <b>Stalking</b>	*	0	0	0	2	3	0	1	1	3*
Students Reporting <b>Sexual Exploitation</b>	*	*	*	*	0	1	0	0	0	0
<b>Total Confidential Crime Reports</b>	*	*	*	5	22	17	18	8	12	12
Students Reporting <b>Retaliation</b>	*	*	*	0	1	0	0	0	0	0
<b>Other</b>										
<b>Finding</b>										
Resulting in campus investigation/adjudication	3	4	1	10	15	4	4	3	3	5
Found Responsible	2	3	1	5	9	4	3	3	2	3
Found Not Responsible	1	1	0	5	6	0	1	0	1	2
Not Investigated at Reporting Party's Request And/or non-student	3	4	0	0	0	0	2	3	4	0
<b>Sanction</b>										
Suspension	1	2	0	3	6	2	2	1	0	3
Expulsion	0	0	1	2	2	0	1	1	2	0
Probation/Other	1	1	0	0	1	2	0	1	0	0
Arrest	1	1	0	0	1	2	0	1	1	1*

\*\* *Sexual misconduct refers to* a broad spectrum of behavior encompassing sexual harassment and all forms of non-consensual sexual activity. For the purposes of this policy, the University prohibits the following specific forms of sexual misconduct: sexual assault, sexual exploitation, intimate partner violence, stalking, sexual harassment and retaliation.

\*This particular data was not available in the noted year.

### Staffing and resources:

- **Alison Williams, Vice President for Equity & Inclusion, Sec. 504/Title IX Officer**, is currently tasked with working with the team below to construct and implement a sustainable long-range organizational structure to ensure compliance with anti-discrimination state and federal laws and guidance in a manner consistent with the shared governance ethos of the University. The office has transitioned into a service-based resource whose mission, vision and values can be found on the [OEI web site](#).
- **Debbie Colucci, Assistant Vice President for Equity & Inclusion/Title IX Coordinator** oversees and ensures the University's compliance with applicable laws and guidance, including but not limited to: Title IX, VII, IV, the Violence Against Women Act (VAWA), Equal Employment Opportunity, the Americans with Disabilities Act, and Section 504 (a civil rights law). She also serves as intake for Title IX investigations and oversees a cycle of continuous education on Title IX/VII as applicable to faculty, staff, and students.
- **Johanna DeBari, Director; The Office of Support, Healing, Activism, and Prevention Education (SHAPE)** collaborates with the Title IX team and serves as the point person for Wesleyan's sexual violence prevention efforts. In this newly named office, she works closely with the director of WesWell (Sierra Fowler), the SHAPE student intern (Asiyah Herrero '22), relevant student groups and other Student Affairs staff to provide ongoing education and training for students, faculty and staff. Johanna works closely with all of the therapists in the Counseling Center at the Davison Health Center and serves as a confidential resource for any student dealing with a personal issue or just needing someone to confide in. For a summary of what to do in the event of an assault, please go [here](#). The SHAPE Office is dedicated to empowering survivors, and those connected to survivors, of sexual assault, intimate partner violence, and other forms of interpersonal violence through survivor-centered, trauma-informed advocacy services, healing workshops and retreats, trainings, and education programs within the Wesleyan University community.

### Education and prevention:

Training of the Res Life student staff continues to include skill-building in bystander intervention, especially on issues involving high-risk alcohol use and sexual violence. Res Life student staff members are trained in bystander intervention strategies that focus on sexual assault and high risk alcohol use. The RA staff receives continuous Title IX training. In 2019 the focus was on understanding the process for investigation and adjudication and, in 2018, the staff participated in conversations centered around the Climate Survey.

The mandatory Haven student orientation session on sexual violence was modified in 2015 to ensure 100% of first year students are educated on Wesleyan-specific policies and reporting avenues. "WE Speak WE Stand" featured a student cast that performed two distinct theater pieces that addressed sexual violence prevention and alcohol use and introduced bystander intervention strategies. Afterwards, new students participated in small residentially based discussions about the performances and received information about sexual assault and alcohol use. At the beginning of each semester, the Dean of Students and Deputy Title IX Officer participate in various orientation conversations.

In consultation with students, and utilizing the information from the 2017 VRLC external review\*, the University made a number of changes to its Policy Prohibiting Discriminatory Harassment and Sexual Misconduct; and the procedures for adjudicating student cases. Online reporting allows students to report policy violations and behavior that harms the campus community anonymously and in 2018 this policy was revised to include expectations regarding relationships among Wesleyan community members. In August of 2020 the procedures for investigating and adjudicating sexual misconduct involving students, faculty and staff changed again with new federal regulations. Therefore, [the Policy Prohibiting Discriminatory Harassment and Sexual Misconduct](#) has again been revised.

All new faculty, staff, and graduate students are required to participate in a two-hour Title VII/IX training session and a goal moving forward is to implement an on-line retraining for all faculty and staff.

The SHAPE Director, Director of WesWell and Title IX Officers work year-round to partner with various student groups to sponsor a wide variety of awareness campaigns, workshops and support groups, including bystander intervention training for students and athletes. Specific training is provided to those working most closely with the investigation and adjudication of cases including Public Safety officers and to all members of the administrative panels that adjudicate sexual misconduct cases. Trauma-informed service providers and adjudication panels continue to be our top priority.

### **Policy, reporting, and adjudication:**

Due to the ever-shifting legal landscape and research around prevention and support for survivors surrounding Title IX, VAWA and Clery, we continue to stay current with laws and guidance coming from the federal and state governments. Most of the policy changes outlined in the spring 2011 “Dear Colleague” letter from the Office of Civil Rights (OCR) had already been incorporated into Wesleyan’s policy prior to 2011; and recent changes fully comply with OCR’s recommendations and requirements related to reauthorization of VAWA. These changes as of 2014, include looking at sexual misconduct cases to separately track assault, harassment, dating / domestic violence, stalking and retaliation as well as providing the Title IX and Deputy Officers the latitude to make a more nuanced determinations regarding confidentiality.

As noted previously, in August of 2020 the procedures for investigating and adjudicating sexual misconduct involving students, faculty and staff changed again with new federal regulations. Therefore, [the Policy Prohibiting Discriminatory Harassment and Sexual Misconduct](#) has again been revised.

### **Community resources and collaboration:**

Wesleyan’s partnership with the Women & Families Center, New Horizons Domestic Violence Center, and the Connecticut College Consortium to End Sexual Violence (CCCESV) continues. These community organizations have provided training to various campus groups and continue to be valuable community resources for survivors. The University solidified these partnerships through an official Memorandum of Understanding. Community partners will increase their presence on campus as part of our educational campaigns and serve in an advisory role on policy reviews.

When students opt to report assaults to the Middletown Police (MPD) for criminal investigation, we’ve supported them through this process. That said, it has become apparent that we must continue strengthening our relationship with MPD and continued cross-training would benefit all parties, especially survivors. This is a priority now that a formal memorandum of understanding between the MPD and Wesleyan University was signed in the fall 2014 semester. As a result of the increased cooperation, MPD officers and attorneys from the State Attorney's Office now take part in Title IX and Clery training occurring on the Wesleyan campus.

Our Title IX policies, practices, and procedures undergo continuous review based on changes in guidance, increased training, and heartfelt listening from those individuals who experience what, at its best, is a difficult and oftentimes painful process. In February 2017, we invited the Victim Rights Law Center (VRLC) to campus. As a result, they delivered a [comprehensive assessment](#) detailing how the current Title IX policies, practices, and structure impact students, faculty, and staff. In short, the report challenged us to do better without negating the positive aspects of robust community partnerships, strong peer support networks, committed campus community, and an understanding of the intersectional aspects other institutions have not addressed as Wesleyan has.

Prior to the VRLC review, there was strong sentiment that the university should enhance trauma-informed practices. As a result, Wesleyan moved away from the model of an in-person hearing for student cases of sexual misconduct; something which has changed again under the newly implemented federal regulations.

**Commitment to continuous improvement:**

Functioning with a structure of Title IX committees (Core, Policy, Education, Student Advisory, Athletics) since 2013, we have been able to move forward a number of initiatives and changes. In 2019-2020 the Title IX Officer, Deputy Officer and SHAPE Director restructured the committees to form the Title IX Resource Network in order to capitalize on individual and group input. We will continue to review and develop trauma-informed policies and educational initiatives as transparently as possible. Our collective goal is to engage the campus community in conversations in a way that opinions are heard in a respectful and thoughtful manner. In a caring learning community, every single one of us has an obligation to intervene when we see others in trouble. Ours must be such a community. We can do better and we will.