

**From:** [Student Affairs](#)  
**To:** [Kiersten Hallquist \(she/her\)](#)  
**Subject:** Sexual Misconduct Prevention and Response Action Plan Status Report  
**Date:** Tuesday, August 31, 2021 4:49:13 PM

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*The*  
**UNIVERSITY**  
*of* **VERMONT**

August 31, 2021

## **Dear UVM Community,**

We write to share our third update on actions taken in response to community concerns about sexual harassment and misconduct. Earlier updates were sent to the campus community on [May 19](#) and [July 29](#), 2021. The ongoing collaboration between students and administration has generated positive change that will have a lasting impact. Our mutual goal is that no one should experience sexual harassment or misconduct in our community. We remain committed to addressing these issues with the highest level of care and attention possible. We take seriously UVM's responsibility to offer support and avenues for reporting, and to find resolution for those who have experienced sexual harassment and misconduct. We are grateful for the efforts of members of our community who have spoken up about this important topic.

### **New Staff Position: Coordinator of Sexual Misconduct Prevention and Education**

As outlined in our last update, the University has created a new staff position within the Office of the Vice Provost and Dean of Students. The Coordinator of Sexual Misconduct Prevention and Education will be tasked with overseeing primary prevention and innovative evidence-based educational programming for students in the areas of sexual assault, relationship violence, gender-based stalking, and sexual harassment. The search began on August 3 attracting a strong applicant pool. Now that students have returned, they will provide input regarding the search through the Sexual Violence Prevention Council (described below).

### **Campus Advocacy: HOPE Works Partnership**

We are excited to announce that the Vice Provost and Dean of Students Office, in cooperation with the Center for Health and Well Being (CHWB), is partnering with [HOPE Works](#), a leading organization for sexual violence crisis counseling and advocacy in Chittenden County. As of August 16, 2021, victim's advocacy is no longer housed within the Women and Gender Equity Center (WAGE). This important service has been transitioned to CHWB in partnership with HOPE Works, for 24/7 coverage.

The decision to transition victim support services to CHWB and HOPE Works was made for three primary reasons: 1) to allow for a variety of individuals from

differing backgrounds and experiences to render advocacy service on campus and promote inclusivity; 2) to ensure the availability of 24-hour coverage; and 3) to strengthen confidentiality in rendering these services. UVM is grateful for the skilled advocacy services that the WAGE Center has historically provided, and for their continued work to advance gender equity.

HOPE Works staff members are now offering on-campus appointments and are also available to the campus community through a 24/7 hotline at 802-863-1236. As a standalone crisis response center, HOPE Works is able to provide a more complete array of services in a fully confidential manner as defined by Vermont law. More information is available from the [Center for Health and Wellbeing](#).

### **AAEO External Review**

As noted in the July 29 memorandum, UVM contracted with Grand River Solutions to conduct an independent and thorough review of the Office of Affirmative Action and Equal Opportunity. The review, requested by President Garimella, includes the investigatory process and support services. The reviewers are reviewing files and conducting personal interviews with students who have interacted with AAEO staff. Grand River Solutions has made significant progress, but the review remains ongoing. Once the review has been concluded, additional information will be shared with the community. A recent news report indicating the university already received the review of AAEO and refused to share any information was inaccurate.

### **UVM Police Services**

In addition to robust annual training and state-mandated training, we would like to highlight critical professional development for UVM Police Services that will reinforce specific themes and skills within their expertise and culture. Examples include trauma-informed response and investigations, de-escalation, and team communication. Police Services will continue to focus training on the UVM community's need for public safety services that are delivered in a culturally-competent manner that strives for equal justice and understanding of traditionally marginalized groups.

### **Additional Campus Updates**

As noted in the [July 29 memorandum](#) and previous correspondence, UVM has also taken the following action steps:

- Significant expansion of campus training and education to include annual online courses for all students at UVM. The new modules are entitled "Healthy Relationships" and "Taking Action." See implementation plan below:
  - Sexual Assault Prevention for Undergraduates (FTFY and transfer students, by August 30)
  - Sexual Assault Prevention for Graduate Students (new Graduate students, by August 30)
  - Healthy Relationships (sophomores), and Taking Action (juniors)

and seniors) by Sept. 30

- Formalization of the Sexual Misconduct Response Team (SMRT) to provide case management support to AAEO in responding to all disclosures of sexual misconduct, including ensuring awareness of support services, implementation of administrative measures, discussion of resolution options, and other services. Michelle Paavola, Director of Student Health Services, has been added to the team, which meets monthly.
- Establishing the Sexual Violence Prevention Council, a student-based group of stakeholders that will assist the Vice Provost and Dean of Students Office in refining and expanding prevention offerings, to include adoption of a four-year prevention program. This student-based group will be meeting monthly.
- Continued funding and promotion of the [LiveSafe app](#) for the UVM campus.
- Increased training and education for staff who interact with and help support students affected by gender-based violence, including residential life staff, CAPS, police services, Center for Student Conduct, and AAEO.
- Increased awareness of support services and reporting options for victims through a multi-channel communications and outreach campaign that is underway.

UVM is committed to meaningful change. Open dialogue about sexual harassment and misconduct is important, and we are aware of the impact these discussions may have on survivors in the UVM community. We recognize that some may benefit from extra support surrounding their experiences and would like to emphasize that comprehensive support is available regardless of whether individuals choose to report an incident or participate in an investigation.

Information about support services and reporting options for sexual misconduct and harassment is available [here](#). Additionally, there are a variety of confidential support services available, including [CAPS](#), [HOPE Works](#), and [Student Health Services](#). UVM strongly encourages reporting of sexual harassment and misconduct; all who report are immediately protected from retaliation.

Sincerely,

Erica Caloiero, Interim Vice Provost for Student Affairs  
Nick Stanton, Title IX Coordinator



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