

From: [Student Affairs](#)
To: [Kiersten Tavares \(she/her\)](#)
Subject: Sexual Misconduct and Response Action Plan Status Report – October 14, 2021
Date: Thursday, October 14, 2021 10:06:21 AM



October 14, 2021

Dear Members of the UVM Community,

We are writing to provide important updates about university actions related to sexual misconduct since our [previous update at the end of August](#). The collaboration between students, faculty, staff and UVM leadership has resulted in several new or expanded initiatives to support our mutual goal of a safe and healthy campus for all. The university continues to make progress on commitments made last spring to address students' concerns, and we will continue to place prevention of sexual misconduct at the top of UVM's priorities.

Office of Affirmative Action and Equal Opportunity External Review

UVM contracted with Grand River Solutions to conduct an independent, external review of our Office of Affirmative Action and Equal Opportunity ("AAEO"), which is responsible for conducting investigations under the [Discrimination, Harassment, and Sexual Misconduct policy](#). The review is expected to be delivered to President Garimella before the end of the month. Grand River Solutions reviewed the university's sexual misconduct investigatory process and individual investigation files; interviewed students who interacted with AAEO in recent years; interviewed staff; and reviewed our outreach and support services.

As noted in our [August update](#), a local news report indicating the university already received the external review of AAEO and refused to share information was inaccurate. The university is committed to sharing key findings and recommendations with the campus community.

HOPE Works Partnership

As announced in our [August update](#), UVM has engaged HOPE Works to provide confidential advocacy and counseling relating to sexual misconduct. HOPE Works offers a diverse team of advocates and staff who are available to assist students on short notice with a range of supportive services. Students, faculty, and staff are utilizing these services. We are grateful to HOPE Works for providing education and training initiatives on campus, including training for staff of Residential Life and AAEO. HOPE Works is also conducting ongoing meetings with UVM Athletics teams. HOPE Works and UVM staff have already established excellent working relationships across our campus, especially in AAEO and the Center for Health and Wellbeing. In addition to their on-campus availability, HOPE Works provides a 24-hour hotline at 802-863-1236 and online services at www.hopeworksvt.org.

Professional Development for Staff

UVM staff members who interact with those impacted by sexual misconduct as part of their work responsibilities have completed additional training and will continue to engage regularly in professional development. The teams participating include Counseling and Psychiatry Services (CAPS), Athletics, Residential Life, the Center for Student Conduct (CSC), UVM Police Services, and AAEO. Professional development sessions are tailored to the specific roles of each team and reinforce a universal theme of providing trauma-informed support to all members of our community who are impacted by sexual misconduct. Additionally, all UVM faculty and staff are required to complete [Harassment and Discrimination Prevention Training](#), including an annual refresher.

Sexual Misconduct Response Team

UVM has formalized a multi-disciplinary group of staff to serve on the Sexual Misconduct Response Team. The group met on June 16, July 21, August 18, and September 15 to review each report of sexual misconduct within the UVM community. They have formulated action steps to address issues illuminated by those reports. For example, the group has facilitated multi-disciplinary support for students impacted by sexual misconduct, and members have offered their expertise in advising UVM staff on complex issues involving medical care, the initiation of an investigation, law enforcement, and other topics relating to sexual misconduct.

Recruiting for Sexual Violence Prevention and Education Coordinator

The search committee for UVM's new position of sexual violence prevention coordinator was given its charge on September 22. The search is co-chaired by Assistant Dean of Students Joe Russell and Director of Sport Psychology Dr. Kelly Thorne. Additionally, the committee includes Assistant Professor Genell Mikkalson of the College of Nursing and Health Sciences and three students from undergraduate and graduate programs. The student, faculty and staff search committee is engaging additional campus stakeholders in the interview process as the search progresses.

Sexual Violence Prevention Council

The Interim Vice Provost of Student Affairs convened the Sexual Violence Prevention Council (SVPC) on September 17. The SVPC's work focuses on sexual violence prevention and education. Participation of students, faculty and staff stems from membership in formal and informal UVM groups and communities. The SVPC is represented on the sexual violence prevention and education coordinator search committee and will interview candidates. The SVPC will be led by the sexual violence prevention coordinator, once that person begins their new role, anticipated to be later this semester.

Sexual Misconduct Prevention and Education Training for Students

Since our [August update](#), our students have made commendable progress in completing Everfi training programs. If you are a student and

have not yet completed these training programs, [please begin by logging in here](#). We are eager to increase these numbers further.

Blue Lights and LiveSafe®

Currently, all but 7 of the 160 blue light locations are functioning properly. The university is working to restore the 7 locations as quickly as possible. Unfortunately, the blue light system relies on legacy technology that is difficult to repair due to scarcity of replacement parts. Even when available, parts have been delayed over the past year and a half by worldwide supply chain disruptions. To address these challenges, Vice President for Operations and Public Safety Gary Derr is forming a team of students and staff to recommend and implement updates to the blue light system that are based on current technology and, therefore, easier to maintain. The university is committed to identifying solutions quickly.

Additionally, the university is planning a communications campaign to promote and encourage use of [LiveSafe®](#), a free app which offers our community the ability to share information about real-time safety and security concerns. We encourage all students, faculty, and staff to [download the app](#).

The shared goal of all these efforts spanning multiple offices, departments, and divisions and which include students, faculty, and staff—is to make our campus as safe and healthy as possible. Our students, faculty and staff deserve nothing less. We realize that our work must continue, and we will provide progress reports throughout the academic year.

Finally, please remember that incidents of sexual violence are never the victim's fault. We encourage anyone impacted by sexual misconduct to reach out to [HOPE Works](#) for confidential assistance or the [many resources available on the AAEO webpage](#). AAEO's resources are available regardless of whether an investigation is initiated.

Sincerely,

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

Related Links:

[Follow-up to Student Concerns Regarding the University's Response to Sexual Assault and Misconduct –May 3, 2021](#)

[Next Steps Regarding Sexual Assault and Misconduct Prevention, Reporting,](#)

and Services – May 4, 2021

Sexual Misconduct Prevention and Response Action Plan Status Report – July 29, 2021

Sexual Misconduct Prevention and Response Action Plan Status Report – August 31, 2021



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