

From: [LCOM Office of the Dean](#)
To: [Gilwee, Vicki M](#)
Subject: On Behalf of Deans Page, Zehle, Cote, Sanders, Tracy, Carney Tandoh and Dr. Dougherty ~ In Recognition of Sexual Assault Awareness Month
Date: Tuesday, April 25, 2023 9:35:13 AM

Dear Larner College of Medicine Community,

The University and our College have remained engaged in efforts and discussions to address sexual and gender-based violence, harassment, and discrimination at UVM. In recognition of Sexual Assault Awareness Month (April) we would like to take this opportunity to provide updates on these efforts within our Larner College of Medicine (LCOM) community. Please also reference the Friday, March 31, 2023 communication from Provost Prelock and Vice Provost Caloiero regarding the University's shared planning and action in preventing sexual violence.

As leaders of the LCOM, we emphasize our core value of professionalism, as demonstrated by cultural humility, kindness, and respect. We do not tolerate sexual violence, harassment, or discrimination and are actively working to address, and eliminate, such behavior. We remain engaged in ongoing conversations about sexual and gender-based violence, especially with student leaders represented by the organizations below. We agree that prevention of sexual violence is preferred over response.

UVM Larner College of Medicine Student Leadership Groups

- Social Justice Coalition
- Student Council
- Student Education Group
- Wellness Committee

UVM Larner College of Medicine Affinity Groups

- Organization of Student Representative
- Latino Medical Student Association
- Student National Medical Association
- Asian Pacific American Medical Student Association
- Gender and Sexuality Alliance
- American Medical Women's Association

Below are our 2023 updates to previous commitments and responses to additional requests made by student members of our community to counter the risk of sexual and gender-based violence, harassment, and discrimination at LCOM.

1. A Thematic Working Group was established to review the curricular location (horizontal and vertical integration), quantity, and quality of thematic content and report findings and recommendations to the Medical Curriculum Committee (MCC). The Thematic Working Group first met in September 2021 and includes members of MCC, as well as additional faculty and students. The first curricular theme reviewed was sexual violence and trauma-informed care. In early 2022, the group mapped the curriculum, identified gaps, and created action items for this topic. The group meets monthly to review progress on action items and identify additional opportunities. Updates were presented to MCC at the April 2023 meeting.
2. We are exploring a medical student-specific policy regarding exams under anesthesia (EUA), including pelvic or perineal exams. As part of this process EUA policies from the UVM Health Network, Nuvance Health Network, and other institutions have been reviewed. While we believe the current clinical policies are appropriate, we will continue to monitor their sufficiency.
3. The Fitness Committee reviewed and revised [Policy 690.20 Fitness Committee Meeting: Review of Professional Performance](#), to include language of potential dismissal of medical students, following appropriate and independent institutional investigation, for any prohibited acts (listed in the University Policy 2.8.9 Code of Student Conduct), upon conclusion of independent investigation(s). These revisions were approved by the Medical Curriculum

Committee in July 2021 and became effective immediately.

4. Since Spring 2021, the Office of Medical Education has increased communication around sexual violence prevention and support including local reporting structures. Training that occurs during first year orientation was enhanced and is comprised of both online modules and an in-person debrief. In addition, a medical student now serves on the UVM Sexual Violence Prevention Council, the student-based group assisting the Vice Provost and the UVM Dean of Students Office in refining and expanding prevention offerings. This Council is exploring the utilization of a toolkit to examine how space influences behaviors and identify opportunities for mitigating occurrences of sexual violence. The Council held a retreat in February 2023. The LCOM student representative to this Council is also engaged in a longitudinal research study on Trauma Informed Care curriculum pertaining to sexual and gender-based violence for nursing and medical students. Two LCOM medical students serve on the UVM Board of Trustees, which also addresses sexual and gender-based violence issues.
5. LCOM has leveraged UVM resources which include specialized professionals in our local trainings. These offerings will continue to expand as UVM has hired a Sexual Violence Prevention and Education Coordinator, within the Vice Provost and Dean of Students Office. The Sexual Violence Prevention and Education Coordinator and the Affirmative Action and Equal Opportunity (AAEO) Intake and Outreach Coordinator participated in our Class of 2026 Orientation Session. The class of 2026 participated in a session during orientation titled "Introduction to Gender-Based Violence Prevention and Response". Students were provided with materials including a "Toolkit for Responding to Verbal Sexual Harassment" and LCOM/UVMMC resources for further dialogue and support.
6. The Office of Medical Education continues to explore ways to increase our current resources to ensure community members are aware of avenues for reporting sexual violence and seeking support. Trainings for medical students will align with relevant curriculum content that is reinforced during in-person sessions that provide resources and reporting methods. We will ensure that faculty and staff continue to follow university policies regarding training and reporting.
7. We understand that smaller groups can create safe spaces for discussing sensitive topics. We will continue to examine the curriculum for opportunities to leverage group spaces such as our course "Professionalism, Communication, and Reflection" (PCR) for such discussion. The Thematic Working Group, mentioned previously, is exploring our content warnings, and has provided recommendations to the curriculum team. We also feel it is important to provide resources for students to help them cope with potentially sensitive or difficult experiences without warning as this may occur in the clinical setting. These resources were provided to students during the class of 2026 orientation session, referenced above.
8. Student misconduct is referred to the appropriate office per institutional policies. Inappropriate behaviors are referred to the Center for Student Conduct and, if behaviors involve sexual misconduct, they are also referred to the Affirmative Action and Equal Opportunities (AAEO) Office. AAEO helps facilitate support services for community members, regardless of whether there is a formal investigation. UVM-wide reporting procedures are summarized [here](#), and information specific to sexual misconduct support services and reporting options can be found [here](#). Please note that UVM will be launching a new Campus Unified Reporting Page effective July 1, 2023.
9. At the LCOM, we have an additional anonymous learning environment reporting system in place that is overseen by the Director of the Learning Environment and adjudicated by the Learning Environment and Professionalism (LEAP) Committee. The LEAP Committee is responsible for reviewing and recommending initiatives and policies to support professional behavior across the academic medical center and its affiliate training sites. Reports of sexual harassment or violence are referred to the UVM AAEO office. If the Title IX Office determines that the complaint does not constitute a Title IX violation or cannot be investigated due to lack of information, the complaint is still addressed by the LEAP Committee. In the case of behavior that indicates risk for perpetrating sexual harassment, and the identity of the student respondent is known, the student may undergo additional training, counseling and/or

be referred to the LCOM Fitness Committee as deemed appropriate. It is important to note that our administration can only act if they have sufficient information related to the behavior being reported as well as the respondent and/or reporter's name. The LCOM system for [reporting a violation](#) and the adjudication of complaints has been strengthened since 2021 with additional avenues for reporting.

10. All complaints that are formally reviewed by the Center for Student Conduct are also referred to the LCOM Fitness Committee. In 2014, LCOM aligned its processes to address violations of UVM's sexual misconduct and sexual harassment policies with that of the university. This is in addition to and independent of the LCOM's Fitness Committee process, to ensure a more comprehensive review of violations by medical students of the Discrimination, Harassment, and Sexual Misconduct policies.
11. We believe that transparency is important and have provided this feedback to the LEAP Committee. Deidentified referrals to AAOE are now included in the annual LEAP Committee report.
12. We agree that ongoing communication is critically important and welcome any input on how to improve communication between our administration and our community. Currently Dean Page meets quarterly, and Dean Zehle meets monthly with affinity group leaders. The Office of Medical Education leaders serve as faculty advisors for Student Council (Associate Dean for Students), the Student Education Committee (Senior Associate Dean for Medical Education) and the Wellness Committee (Director of Student Well-being). LCOM faculty also serve as faculty advisors for the Social Justice Coalition. Students are represented on most LCOM medical education standing committees and subcommittees and a medical student representative serves on the UVM Sexual Violence Prevention Council.
13. Inclusion of diverse voices in this conversation is essential and LCOM remains committed to examining sexual violence prevention and support through multiple lenses. Diversity, equity, and inclusion are core values at LCOM. We are working to improve our recruitment and retention efforts to create a diverse community in which all voices are heard, and to honor the equity and inclusion work done by our faculty in promotion decisions.

As we strive to create an inclusive and supportive community for all members, we will remain vigilant about sexual and gender-based violence prevention, education, and support resources. We look forward to future discussions with our student leaders and the community on these important issues.

Respectfully,

Richard Page, M.D., Dean

Christa Zehle, M.D., Senior Associate Dean for Medical Education

Brian Cote, M.B.A., Senior Associate Dean for Finance and Administration

Jason Sanders, M.D., M.B.A., President, UVM Medical Group; Senior Associate Dean for Clinical Affairs

Kate Tracy, Ph.D., Senior Associate Dean for Research

Jan Carney, M.D., M.P.H., Associate Dean for Public Health and Health Policy; Senior Advisor to the Dean

Margaret Tandoh, M.D., Associate Dean for Diversity, Equity and Inclusion

Anne Dougherty, M.D., Director for Gender Equity