

Chancellor's Task Force on Sexual and Relationship Violence

October 5, 2016

8:30 – 10:30 am

Attendees:

Rebecca Reed Kantrowitz, co-chair  
Joanna Masingila, co-chair  
Randi Bregman  
Katelyn Cowen  
Rebecca Dayton  
Linda Stone Fish  
Herman Frazier  
Andy Gordon  
Daria Grineva  
Huey Hsiao  
Rachel Johnson

Sheila Johnson-Willis  
Joyce LaLonde  
Bobby Maldonado  
Jeffrey Pauline  
Abby Perer  
Pam Peter  
Amy Quichiz  
Sarah Scalese  
Tia Thevenin  
Samantha Skaller by phone

Rebecca Reed Kantrowitz, co-chair and Joanna Masingila, co-chair, welcomed the group.

Minutes from the May meeting were approved.

Reed Kantrowitz and Masingila welcomed new members and said that members are selected and appointed to the Task Force based on their deep caring, commitment, and involvement in the work of combating sexual and relationship violence.

The co-chairs outlined the expectations of the group:

Be honest.

Feel comfortable about speaking up and speak openly.

Convey concerns and request discussion topics.

Maintain confidentiality and do not share information received in the meetings.

If contacted by the press about the Task Force, refer them to the two co-chairs.

Be respectful of and courteous to each other.

There was discussion about the desire for transparency and letting the campus know about the work of the Task Force. The group will identify what is private and what isn't, within the framework of legal and privacy considerations.

Members are encouraged to let Sarah Scalese know about any events so that she can help with communication and outreach.

Abby Perer, Associate General Counsel, gave an update on the Office of Civil Rights (OCR) case filed against Syracuse University. She explained the process.

- A complainant submits a written complaint, which must meet minimum basic criteria to prompt OCR to open an investigation.
- Once an investigation is open, OCR talks with the complainant, the content of which is not shared with the school.

- The school is contacted with a request for information and documentation.
- After review of the documentation, OCR representatives spend time on campus interviewing students, faculty, staff, anyone relevant to the case.

In the case of Syracuse University, the complainant said that SU did not address her sexual assault. The OCR has asked for records on that specific case and is looking at how we handle all sexual complaints.

We are working with outside council with experience in OCR defense. We are still in the process of providing information to OCR.

Our legal counsel feels that we handled the case appropriately and we feel confident in our processes, especially improvements we've made over the last three years.

The investigation can take 6 mos. to 3 or 4 years, after which OCR can close the case or impose settlement requirements, i.e., training or additional reporting.

The OCR website shows typical case resolution.

Proactively, we are evaluating our investigation, response and law compliance related to sexual assault.

A Task Force member suggested that we get ahead of the situation by commenting now about the case and our confidence that our policies and practices are solid. There is a statement about the case going to the campus later this day.

Pam Peter reported that she is working to bring an expert on OCR compliance to campus for professional development in the near future.

Samantha Skaller reported on numerous "It's On Us" advancements including establishing a student advisory committee and becoming part of a regional committee. Syracuse University is ahead of the curve and a role model for other schools in the regional group.

Skaller was in Washington DC to attend an event with Vice President Joe Biden, who will continue his work on the project after the end of his term.

Skaller also reviewed the Week of Action events.

Skaller's goal is to speak with various student groups and to recruit students for "It's On Us", especially for next year when she will have graduated. Another student will be officially appointed by the national "It's On Us" campaign organization to take her place.

The Task Force posed for a picture with "It's On Us" posters to put on the website.

Pam Peter reviewed statistics on reported cases of sexual and relationship violence at SU over the last three years. These figures will be posted publicly as part of Enough Is Enough requirements. Peter stated that we want students to report and to know that we have supports in place for them.

A question arose about reporting faculty-to-student sexual harassment on the faculty evaluation. Dean Masingila said that it's not a good way to report as it would likely be overlooked by the department chair reviewing the documents. Students should report that behavior to the Title IX office. Katelyn Cowen said she will make sure that Enough Is Enough trainers address this in future training of students.

Meeting adjourned at 10:30 am