

January 23, 2017

Sent via email to e.aboussou@dailyutahchronicle.com, jess.esplin@gmail.com, mahaliagl@gmail.com, and u0873842@utah.edu (Mira Reynolds)

Esther Aboussou
Jess Esplin
Mahalia Lotz
Mira Reynolds

Dear Esther, Jess, Mahalia, and Mira:

I appreciated the candid conversation we had when Barb and I met with you in December. At that time, you presented me with a letter that more formally outlined your concerns with campus safety and the University's handling of and messaging related to sexual assault investigations. We have or are in the process of addressing many of those concerns, and I have summarized those efforts below.

I would first like to update you on the progress of the Presidential Task Force on Campus Safety. We appreciate Mahalia's willingness to serve as a student representative for this important initiative. The Women's Resource Center, Center for Student Wellness (victim advocates), Office of Equal Opportunity and Affirmative Action/Title IX, and University Counseling Center also are represented on the task force.

The group held its first meeting on January 11 and has set up subcommittees to work on four key areas: prevention; physical safety on campus; support personnel inventory; and mandatory training for students, faculty, and staff. The task force will make recommendations on how the University can improve in each of these areas this spring. I am confident that this task force will help the U make great strides in its approach to campus safety.

In the meantime, our efforts to provide a safe and responsive campus continue. In November, the S.J. Quinney College of Law provided a forum for *The Salt Lake Tribune's* well-attended panel discussion on campus rape. During fall semester, the Office of the Dean of Students, with support from the Title IX Office, hosted four Campus Sexual Assault Resources & Information Sessions. At these sessions, students had the opportunity to hear from and converse with representatives from the Department of Public Safety, the Counseling Center and victim advocates. We are continuing these listening sessions this semester as follows: Feb. 7 from 10:30 to 11:30 a.m. (Panorama East, Union Building); Feb. 9 from 3 to 4 p.m. (Parlor A, Union Building); and Feb. 13 from 12 to 1 p.m. (Parlor A, Union Building).

We are reviewing best practices, legal issues, and privacy rights related to public disclosures when an individual is found responsible for a violation of U policy but not charged with or found

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guilty of a crime, with heavy consideration being given to the implications such disclosures might have for victims.

The Office for Equal Opportunity and Affirmative Action/Title IX is at the forefront of the U's efforts to provide training and information to faculty, staff, and students. Its work with faculty and staff focuses on mandatory reporting responsibilities and best practices for responding to students who disclose they have been victims of sexual misconduct. As part of that effort, the office is preparing a new resource guide for our employees. The office also is working with our Human Resources Department to implement an online training module on sexual misconduct that will be in addition to information provided in our existing new-hire orientation training.

The Academic Senate has approved new nondiscrimination policies (pending approval from the Board of Trustees) that direct the Office of Equal Opportunity and Affirmative Action/Title IX to complete sexual assault investigations within 60 calendar days. The office is currently reviewing and modifying procedures to streamline its processes, an effort that includes adopting a new case management system.

One other initiative being undertaken by the Office for Equal Opportunity and Affirmative Action/Title IX that deserves mention is aimed at providing more transparency and easier access to nondiscrimination policies, including those regarding sexual misconduct. This includes creating a central website for policies, information about investigation processes, report forms, general information, and resources related to sexual assault that can be linked to and shared by all other university divisions.

I also am pleased to share that, as of January 12, all officers in the Department of Public Safety have received trauma-informed sexual assault investigation training. That said, it is worth noting that in the past, the department relied on five detectives with thisp specialized training to serve as first responders to sexual assault incidents.

On Friday, the Utah Board of Regents approved a policy that requires all colleges and universities in the state to work together to address sexual assault, a collaboration we welcome.

By no means is our effort to improve our response and enhance campus safety complete. As I mentioned above, the Presidential Task Force on Campus Safety is just beginning its work and, beyond that effort, we are continually reviewing and refining our practices and messaging on this very critical issue. With that in mind, I welcome your continued engagement in our education and prevention efforts.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "David W. Pershing", with a long horizontal flourish extending to the right.

David W. Pershing, PhD
President

DWP:jj