

Title IX Response & Prevention

2016-17 Annual
Report



Office for Equity and Accessibility



Office for Equity and Accessibility

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Dear Virginia Tech Students, Faculty, and Staff,

In January of 2017, it was my honor to join Virginia Tech as the university's Title IX Coordinator. Near the end of the academic year, Title IX staff serving both students and employees came together under the Office for Equity and Accessibility. After six years of service, Dr. Frank Shushok stepped away from his role as Deputy Title IX Coordinator. We are so grateful to him for his leadership in championing this difficult work, and for his work building this Title IX team.

As Title IX Coordinator, my goal is to foster a campus environment free from discrimination, harassment, and gender based violence; one where all members of our community can thrive. The report below outlines Virginia Tech's work responding to gender based harassment and violence experienced by our students, as well as our prevention efforts. My office is dedicated to ensuring that our process is both fair and compassionate, and that every student involved in these difficult cases is afforded the respect and care they deserve.

This report includes data and trends regarding gender based violence on our campus. Notably, it describes an increase in the rate of reports by students to our office, year after year. Behind this data are our students—each with their personal story and place in our community.

Laid out is our calling, and our challenge. We must work together to build a campus that is truly safe and inclusive.

Sincerely,

Kelly Oaks, PhD

Assistant Vice President for Equity & Accessibility

Title IX Coordinator

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THE STUDENT TITLE IX TEAM

In 2016, Virginia Tech hired a new Title IX Coordinator for the university, Dr. Kelly Oaks, who serves as the Assistant Vice President for Equity and Accessibility. The Title IX team for student-on-student sexual harassment and sexual violence saw transition during the 2016-17 academic year. Senior Associate Vice President for Student Affairs and Deputy Title IX Coordinator Dr. Frank Shushok, who led the team since 2011, stepped down from his Title IX role in August of 2017, as Katie Polidoro, formerly a Title IX investigator, assumed the Deputy Title IX Coordinator role. The university's Title IX work was consolidated in the Office of Equity and Accessibility. Though no longer housed in the Division of Student Affairs, the student Title IX team maintains close ties to our partners and leadership in the division. Together, Katie Polidoro and full time Title IX Investigator Dr. Sharrika Adams work on case management and investigations, with the goal of providing responsive, timely, and equitable assistance to all students. They also provide leadership on prevention initiatives in collaboration with other departments and organizations across campus.

Title IX Advisory Group

The Title IX Coordinator and investigators meet regularly with the Title IX Advisory Group, a multidisciplinary team that includes representatives from the Women's Center, Student Advocacy, University Legal Counsel, Equity and Accessibility, Student Conduct, and the Virginia Tech Police Department. This group reviews cases to ensure that all students engaged in the process are treated fairly and that individual and community obligations are considered and appropriately balanced.

Team Training and Professional Development

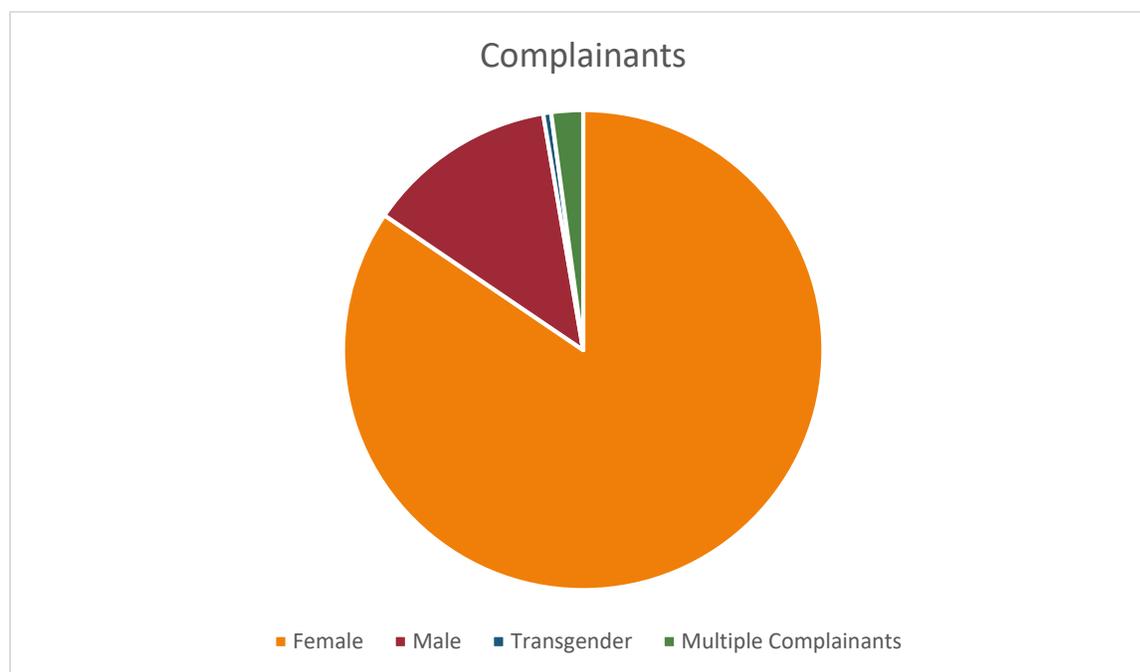
The team engages in ongoing training and professional development to ensure that the university's policies and procedures are informed by best practices and that students are supported and served well in and by the process. The Title IX coordinators and investigators have each received investigator certifications from the Association of Title IX Administrators (ATIXA). In addition, they have participated in trainings on trauma-informed investigations; lethality assessments; and the intersections between domestic violence, sexual assault, and stalking. Over the coming year, the team will bring expert trainers to address issues of inclusiveness and outreach to help our team better serve student's populations who are underserved or face barriers to reporting. Because a team approach is foundational to Title IX work at Virginia Tech, most of these training opportunities have included partners from across campus and the community, including Student Conduct, the Women's Center, Student Advocacy, Equity and Accessibility, and university and local police departments.

2016-2017 TITLE IX REPORTS: STUDENT-ON-STUDENT SEXUAL VIOLENCE

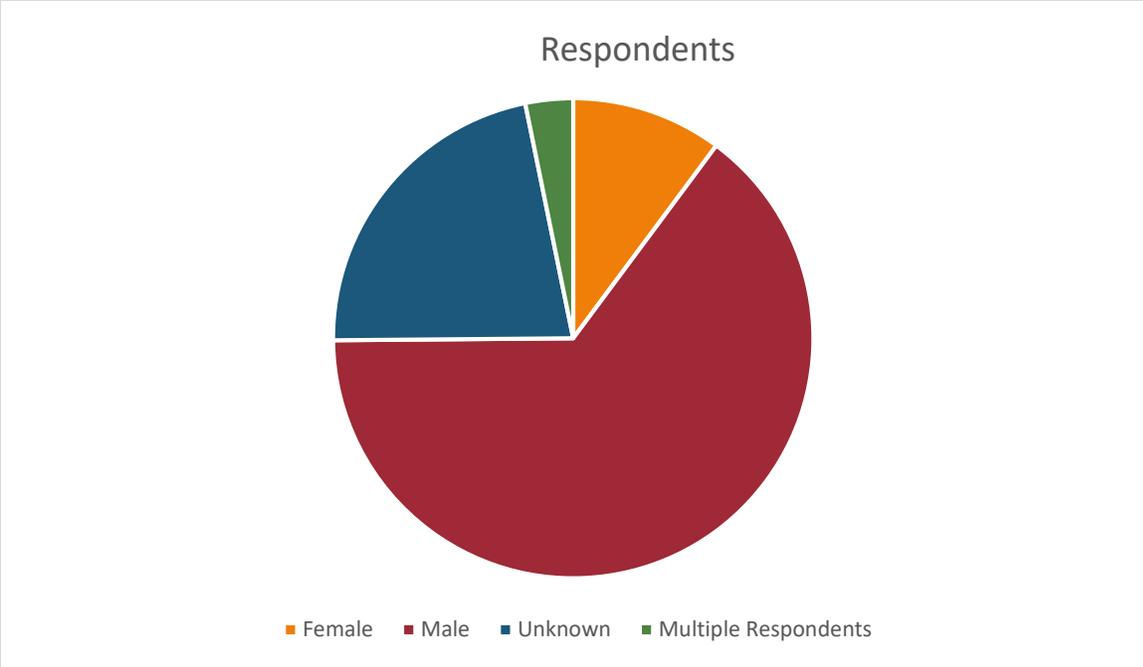
The student Title IX team responds to reports of gender based harassment and violence experienced by students. While some reports come directly from students, the majority reports come from third-party *responsible employees*. These faculty and staff members are required by university policy to report disclosures made to them by students to the Title IX Coordinator. No matter how reports are received, Title IX Investigators act quickly to provide resources and information to students. The safety and wellbeing of students is our first concern.

Reported Incidents

Overall, 187 reports were received during the 2016-2017 academic year. Sexual assault accounted for 88 of those reports, harassment 47, intimate partner violence 35, stalking 14, and sexual exploitation 3. Sixty three of the incidents reported occurred on campus, either in residence halls or on university property. In 160 cases, the complaints identified as female. Men accounted for 12% (24) of complainants.



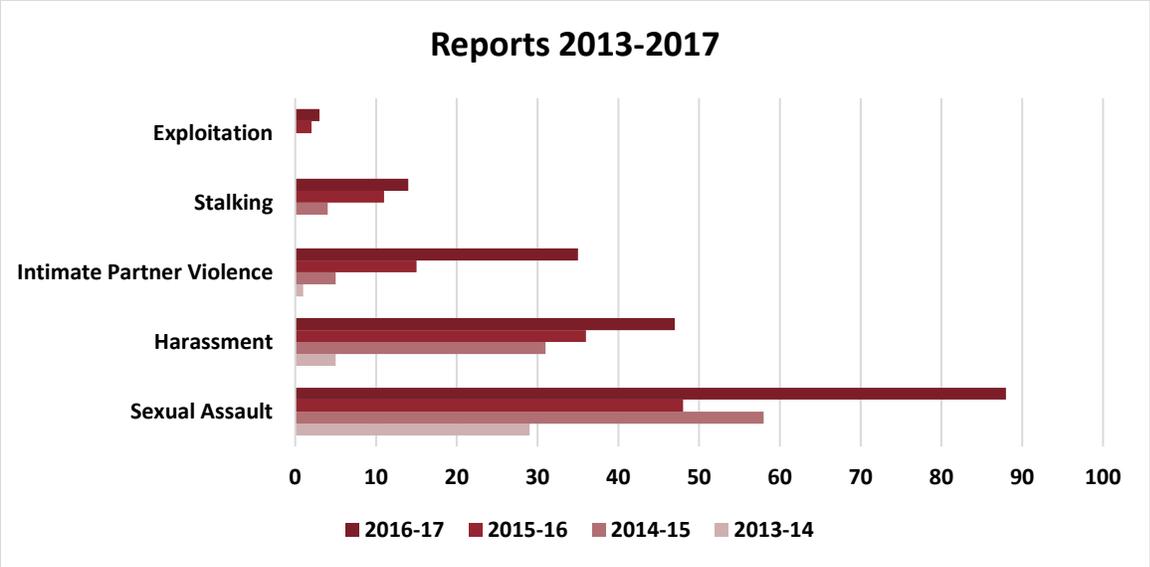
In the cases where the gender of the respondent was known to the university, women accounted for 10% of respondents (19) and male respondents represented 64% of all respondents (121).



As in previous years, sexual assaults made up the majority of reports.

The 2016-17 academic year saw an overall increase in reports from previous years. Reports increased by 64% in comparison to the 2015-16 academic year. There are likely several reasons for this increase. Since the university established positions for full time investigators and prevention specialists in 2015, training, education, and outreach have expanded, as have the collaborative working relationships between Title IX staff and partners across the university. We have made progress in educating students on how to report and where they can go for help.





Resolution

Title IX staff took action on every report received during the academic year. We completed full investigations for 52 reports. In the majority of those cases, complainants actively participated in an investigation. In a small number of cases, when balancing the safety of our community with a complainant’s desire to not participate in an investigation, the university made difficult decisions to proceed with an investigation without a complainant’s participation. In cases where reports come to our office through third party mandatory reporters, we often encounter students who do not want to share details about their personal experience. When we are able, we respect the privacy and decisions of our students. While we offer resources and support, we do not proceed with an investigation.

At the completion of the academic year, 43 of the cases that were fully investigated were referred to the office for Student Conduct. The remaining nine cases were either resolved by other means (the implementation of no contact orders, educational conversations, or closure) or will be adjudicated during the 2017-18 academic year.

At the conclusion of the 2016-17 academic year, the office for student conduct had completed the adjudication of 35 Title IX related cases. According to that office, they found 25 students responsible for violations of the student code of conduct policies regarding gender based violence. That accounts for 64% of cases. In just over half of those cases, students were sanctioned with suspension from the university. In 20% of cases, students were dismissed.

Prevention and Education

Virginia Tech is committed to providing comprehensive prevention and education initiatives for students on issues of sexual harassment, sexual assault, stalking, and intimate-partner violence. In addition, the university offers a variety of training opportunities for faculty and staff on Title IX and the Violence Against Women Act in order to help foster an inclusive and supportive environment. Our efforts reflect the university's approach to primary prevention, bystander intervention, and risk reduction. Programs and initiatives are provided through the collaborative efforts of departments within the Division of

Student Affairs, the Virginia Tech Women's Center, and the Office for Equity and Accessibility. For the purposes of this report, initiatives are presented under the division or department providing leadership; however, the efforts were coordinated and communicated across functional areas.

DIVISION OF STUDENT AFFAIRS

The Division of Student Affairs (DSA) created various positions and initiatives in previous years in order to manage investigations and incident response and engage in prevention & education efforts. DSA contributed significantly to prevention and education across campus. Title IX Investigators also served as gender based violence prevention specialists leading initiatives and trainings throughout the year.

Efforts led within the DSA in 2016-2017 included:

Orientation Resource Fairs and Trainings

In an effort to educate incoming students about their rights under Title IX and to increase transparency and build relationships across campus, Title IX staff participated in orientation resource fairs during summers 2016 & 2017 for incoming first-year and transfer students. In addition, the team collaborated with the Women's Center to provide training for Transfer Orientation Guides and Orientation Leaders covering the topics of Title IX and sexual violence.

“Haven: Understanding Sexual Assault” Online Education Initiative

Haven is an interactive, online program that educates students about sexual violence that provides strategies on how to be an active bystander to help prevent sexual violence, the concept and role of consent as it relates to healthy sexual relationships, and information on resources for victims of violence and their friends and family members. First-year and transfer students are asked to take this program. New graduate students also take a version of Haven, called Haven Plus, which is designed specifically for graduate populations.

Stop Abuse Website

The *Stop Abuse Website*, which can be found at <http://stopabuse.vt.edu/>, is designed to help students understand their rights regarding sexual violence and to have a basic understanding of Title IX. The main tenet of the site is to encourage and explain how to: get help, get educated, and get involved. The website clearly and concisely helps students understand how to make a report, provides supporting resources, educates students on consent and the different forms of abuse, and encourages students to take an active role in preventing abuse within the Virginia Tech community.

WOMEN'S CENTER

The Women's Center at Virginia Tech regularly works to raise awareness regarding a variety of sex and gender related issues. To that end, the Women's Center engages students, faculty, and staff through education, programs, and activities. The Center serves as an on-campus resource for victims and family members that have been impacted by sexual assault, relationship violence, and stalking; rounding out a comprehensive approach to the University's Title IX sexual harassment and sexual violence training and outreach efforts. A primary point of contact for these efforts is Gender-Based Violence Prevention Coordinator (GBVPC), Katie Mey.

Efforts led by the Women's Center in 2016-2017 included:

Mentors in Violence Prevention (MVP) Workshops

The Women's Center regularly collaborates with DSA, including the Corps of Cadets, and the Athletics Department, to provide Mentors in Violence Prevention (MVP) training to educate and train students to be active bystanders specifically around gender based violence, including sexual harassment. This year 21 workshops were facilitated to 611 participants. There are currently 64 trained facilitators and assistant facilitators on campus and in the community, of which only a core group participates actively in the program. This year's attempts at increasing facilitator engagement and evaluation completion rates took the form of a monthly meeting in the fall called "MVP Monday's." Though initially received with great enthusiasm, these sessions were attended by an average of 5 or fewer persons. The program was eliminated in the spring, given the low attendance. Other forms of engagement and Assistant Facilitator trainings for the upcoming year are being planned.

Through Feminist Eyes

Through Feminist Eyes, in collaboration with the Women's and Gender Studies Program in the Department of Sociology, is intended to provide additional opportunities for undergraduate WGS students to engage feminist scholarship, specifically the breadth of feminist scholarship taking place at Virginia Tech. This program is offered in the fall of each year. The program included three different lectures during the fall of 2016, one of which explicitly had to do with sexual and interpersonal violence: "Labeling and Reporting Rape on College Campuses: Interactional, Institutional Barriers and Feminist Solutions," led by Kaitlin Boyle, Assistant Professor of Sociology.

Red Flag Campaign

For the tenth year, the Women's Center and other groups on campus participated in the statewide Red Flag Campaign (RFC), which promotes outreach and awareness around relationship violence. Group participation was 25, which is down from previous years. Additionally, this year continued the idea of designating a specific week "Red Flag Week" and recognizing "Wear Red Day" (sponsored and supported by SAVES) during that week. The RFC team offered opportunities to engage deeply during October,

including a Safe Zone training session on safe dating and healthy relationships in non-heterosexual relationships. The #Healthyrelationships project continued, and saw low entries despite consistent marketing and pushes at tabling, as well as a larger prize. RFC team began a successful partnership with Alpha Chi Omega to expand outreach to the Greek community, and hope to build on this in the future.

It's On Us

This year, in partnership with Title IX staff, the It's On Us campaign was launched as a new staple of the awareness element of prevention. There was a "campus kick off" event in October that garnered more than 200 attendees. A campus video was created for the campaign, and the Women's Center staff partnered with many offices, student organizations, and other campus and community entities to host informational and educational tables. This effort was continued into the spring, when the Women's Center Program Coordinator and a Title IX intern developed a pledge drive kit to allow students and others on campus to do their own awareness event with accurate information and resources as well as free swag and giveaways. This project was then tested with the Echo Company's It's On Us effort, discussed below.

It's On Us (Echo)

Successful partnership with Echo Company continues to raise awareness of gender-based violence. However, this year we switched from messaging of the White Ribbon Campaign to that of the It's On Us campaign. This campaign not only provides more encompassing messaging, but also a more substantial tool kit. Additionally, this campaign is widely done across campus creating a level of visibility for VT branded materials. This allowed us to rely on pre-existing materials for giveaways, and provide the cadets with a solid script and substantial materials to use in staffing the pledge drive tables. This year, Echo Company received 60 minutes of training and supported the campaign by tabling for 17 hours, gathering 760 signatures.

The Hunting Ground Screening

As part of Women's Month, the Women's Center organized a screening of the documentary film *The Hunting Ground*, which was shown in the West AJ Senior Commons. The screening also included a film discussion.

Sexual Assault Awareness Month (SAAM)

Women's Center coordinated awareness and outreach events during April- sexual assault awareness month -for the second year in a row. Army ROTC and Hokie Wellness' IMPACT peer team collaborated to support the campaign. WC staff, interns, and volunteers tabled for 45 hours for this campaign, and partners dedicated an additional 7 hours to SAAM messaging, adding up to 52 hours of visible presence in dining and high traffic walking locations. Additionally, passive campaign materials including survivor resources, posters, and bystander literature were distributed to RA's and to partners in on and off

campus cultural, faith, and community centers. At least 15 campus and community partners received these materials for display and distribution.

SAVES (Sexual Assault and Violence Education by Students)

SAVES, or Sexual Assault and Violence Education by Students, provides peer education on gender-based violence. Peer educators are trained to educate on sexual assault, domestic and dating violence, and stalking as well as basic theory and application of bystander intervention. The mission of SAVES is to be a peer education group that strives to raise awareness of sexual assault and violence through outreach and education, with a goal of creating a safe and accepting environment throughout the Blacksburg and Virginia Tech communities.

The group had approximately 9 members at the start of the year and approximately 5 active members by the end of it. Through processes revised over the last year, and on a new, modified timeline, SAVES was able to recruit 15+ new members to be trained in the fall of 2017. The group will also be offering “quick app” applications to first and second year students at Gobblerfest this fall, in the hopes of bringing that group size up to 20. The group assisted with the Red Flag Campaign via provision of presentations, assistance with photo project, and staffing at awareness tables. SAVES also planned, developed original content for, and piloted a new version of a workshop called “Hokies for Healthy Relationships” (H4HR). SAVES (sometimes with interns) facilitated 31 presentation to 161 participants this semester, additionally, several individual members contributed to the facilitation of new member training, creating new content or developing new ways to present old content.

Trainings

This year 11 trainings related to gender based violence prevention were provided to the Virginia Tech Corps of Cadets (VTCC) and the Women’s Center assisted with a Behind Closed Doors training specifically for company commanders (RA equivalents) both semesters. They also hosted a screening of *The Invisible War* with the Cadre each semester. Additionally, Women’s Center staff provided MVP training to all first year cadets in the spring and all Cadre members present for training in the fall. In the spring, the It’s On Us pledge drive training with Echo Company was repeated. Additionally, trainings were held for Residence Life (7 trainings), Get Connected (1 training), peer educators/student groups (3 trainings), VTCC (11 trainings), and other campus groups (5 trainings).

OFFICE FOR EQUITY AND ACCESSIBILITY

Virginia Tech faculty and staff play an important role in reporting and responding to sexual violence on campus. The Office for Equity and Accessibility offers a workshop entitled “Compliance Workshop: University Policy 1025, Title IX, Violence Against Women Act, and Minors,” which is required for all new Virginia Tech employees. The workshop is to be completed within ninety (90) days of the beginning employment date. There are three options for completing this workshop: in-person, attending via

WebEx, or by using an on-demand learning module. Employees can register for any of these three options using Coursewhere.

Learning objectives are the following:

- The definitions associated with University Policy 1025: Policy on Harassment, Discrimination, and Sexual Assault;
- The resources available to assist members of the Virginia Tech community, including our students, in dealing with difficult, sometimes traumatic, situations;
- Individual responsibilities in receiving and reporting a disclosure of sexual harassment, sexual assault, stalking, and domestic or dating violence;
- What behavioral signs may indicate someone is being subjected to inappropriate behavior;
- What to do about "consensual relationships";
- Why doing what seems obvious can cost the university millions of dollars and possibly subject you to disciplinary action;
- The resources and processes for initiating a complaint;
- What acts and behaviors can be determined to be retaliation; and
- Learning about reporting child sexual abuse and neglect.

DEPARTMENT OF ATHLETICS

The Department of Athletics at Virginia Tech is an important collaborator in gender-based-violence-prevention work, as reflected in its extensive work with student athletes, coaching staff, and department staff on sexual harassment and sexual violence through a variety of means.

Efforts led by the Department of Athletics in 2016-2017 included the following:

- Sexual discrimination focus group with athletics staff to examine internal processes and to discuss the athletics Sexual Discrimination Response Plan (SDRP) to affirm compliance with federal and institutional guidelines
- Departmental meetings, led by Director of Athletics Whit Babcock, to discuss SDRP and responsible employee obligation
- Departmental memo from Director of Athletics Whit Babcock and distributed via email by Senior Director of Compliance and Athletics Title IX to the department, reiterating responsible employee obligations and distributing the SDRP and University policy 1025

- Student Conduct meeting with the football team to review conduct policy and procedure, including Title IX
- Address to the football team by former football player accused of sexual assault about healthy behaviors and choices
- Title IX orientation presentation for new student athletes on definitions and resources
- Title IX presentation to all student athletes by sports attorney Janet Judge to review definitions, statistics, and federal law
- Title IX presentation to Athletics department by sports attorney Janet Judge to review definitions, statistics, and federal law
- Mentors in Violence Prevention (MVP) bystander training facilitated by the Women's Center with new student athletes on alcohol and consent
- Title IX Investigator training for some staff
- MVP facilitator training for some staff
- Title IX meeting with Women's Center and Athletics to discuss support services and advocacy, as well as how to work collaboratively to comply with university policy and processes
- Video production of "It's On Us" campaign from VT Athletics
- Title IX and Clery presentation for departmental staff by HR, the Women's Center, and Virginia Tech Police
- Title IX and non-retaliation meeting with football coaches and staff
- MVP bystander training with junior student athletes
- Student athlete handbook distributed to all student athletes, which includes Title IX resource information
- Law-enforcement programming initiative with Blacksburg and Virginia Tech police chiefs, which included meetings with each VT sports team to discuss conduct, safety, and sexual discrimination

In Closing

Our hope is that with the cohesion of our Title IX office, will come a strong team that will help meet Virginia Tech's goal of having a campus free from discrimination, harassment, and gender based violence. While this report is provided by the Office for Equity and Accessibility, it should be evident throughout the report that we work side by side with colleagues across the university. The important work of responding to and preventing gender based violence is all of ours. In the coming year, we will continue to find ways to improve and to serve this community.

