



Professor Jean Morrison, University Provost and Chief Academic Officer

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**TO:** Boston University Students

**FROM:** Jean Morrison, University Provost and Chief Academic Officer *JM*

**DATE:** May 21, 2021

**SUBJECT:** Commitments to Respond to Concerns About Sexual Assault and Harassment

Throughout this past semester, I have engaged in a number of conversations with a group of undergraduate students regarding how BU might better prevent, address, and respond to sexual assault and harassment on our campus. I am deeply appreciative of this group of students, as well as the many others who have shared their thoughts and concerns over the past year, for their passionate advocacy around this important issue. Boston University should be a place where all feel safe and welcome, and we are committed to doing the work to achieve this goal.

I write today to share some of the initial commitments that BU is making to better respond to issues of sexual assault and harassment on our campuses.

- Over the summer, I will form a standing University-wide committee focused on sexual assault and harassment prevention. This committee, which will report to me, will be made up of faculty, staff, and students and will ensure the continuation of this important work going forward.
- We will provide increased funding to the [Sexual Assault & Prevention Center \(SARP\)](#), which will allow the office to hire eight additional graduate student employees as prevention educators.
- Several efforts to increase and improve training are underway including: quarterly training for resident assistants; additional training for student leaders of student organizations; an effort to ensure that trainings include culture change in addition to the emphasis on bystander intervention; and “lunch and learn” events to encourage more faculty, staff, and students to participate in trainings.
- SARP has created a [flyer](#) that succinctly summarizes the range of resources and reporting options available to survivors.
- With support from the Dean of Students, a concerted effort will be made to ensure that as staff are added to the Office of Judicial Affairs, particular attention is paid to hiring diverse staff (e.g. race, ethnicity, gender identity, etc.). We will also work to reduce the time required to complete investigations and better support students throughout the investigation process.

- Both Title IX and non-Title IX policies and processes are under review with the goals of clarifying and simplifying the language generally, including what sanctions (including for violations of interim restrictions) are available. In addition, we anticipate adding to the processes a right of appeal for complainants in non-Title IX cases. (Complainants already have a right of appeal in Title IX cases as a result of regulatory changes effective last year.)
- The EVERFI Steering Committee, which oversees our required online sexual misconduct prevention training for faculty, staff, and new students, is in the process of reviewing the required training and discussing what refresher trainings at what intervals should be required of those who have completed the original training.
- In partnership with the Office of Disability & Access Services, we will establish a new process to ensure expedited support and accommodations for survivors where needed.

While we will continue to discuss opportunities for improvement, I am hopeful that these initial commitments will be meaningful steps in the right direction in ensuring a safe and healthy environment for all members of our community. We look forward to continued partnership with students on this important effort.

Cc: Robert A. Brown  
Council of Deans  
Provost's Cabinet