

Campus Sexual Violence Prevention Task Force Notes

Meeting #1

July 31, 2015

1:00-3:00 p.m.

University of Washington

Attendees: Genessee Adkins – University of Washington, Tricia Boerger – WA State Office of the Attorney General, Laurie Connelly – Eastern Washington University, James Crandell – Senate Republican Caucus, Richard DeShields – Central Washington University, Julie Garver – Council of Presidents, Paul Francis – Council of Presidents, Sue Guenter-Schlesinger -Western Washington University, Evan Klein – Senate Higher Education Committee, Katherine Long – The Seattle Times, Bruce Marvin – Washington State Office of the Attorney General, Anne Messerly (in lieu of Maddy Thompson) – Washington Student Achievement Council, Amanda Paye – University of Washington, Eric Richey – Washington Association of Prosecuting Attorneys, Rhosetta Rhodes – Independent Colleges of Washington, Kelly Schrader - The Evergreen State College, John Vinson – Washington Association of Sheriffs and Police Chiefs, and Ana Blackstad – Bellevue College (in lieu of Joe Holliday from the State Board for Community and Technical Colleges).

Welcome and Introductions

Paul Francis welcomed the Task Force members and thanked them for serving in this capacity. He laid out a working culture for the Task Force, which would focus on openness and transparency. Each member of the Task Force and those in the audience introduced themselves as well as those attending in the audience.

Meeting Logistics

Francis informed the Task Force that the Council of Presidents (COP) will staff the group. He provided a brief summary of the 2014 conference on sexual assault prevention and the discussions that led up to the legislation that formed the Task Force (SB 5719).

COP is hosting a page on its website that will act as a central hub of information on resources around campus sexual violence prevention and response and information about the meetings and work of the Task Force. He welcomed materials from members of the group and asked if someone had a handout or link to post to the website to send it to COP to be posted. He also shared with members that if they have needs or questions to please reach out to the Council.

Decisions

- The group will meet in-person once a month and check-in via phone every two weeks as needed.
- Locations for the in-person meetings will be determined with the Chair. Location suggestions were encouraged and should be sent to COP.

- Efforts will be made to provide for a call-in option for future in-person meetings.
- An agenda and materials will be sent out in advance of the meetings. COP will work with the Chair of the Task Force to determine the agenda. All members are encouraged to contribute topics to the agenda.
- The Task Force appointed University of Washington Police Chief John Vinson as Chair.
- One remaining member has yet to be identified to the fourteen-member Task Force – the nonprofit advocacy member. Four interested resumes have been submitted via a Request for Interest process led by the Washington Student Achievement Council. The Chair will make the determination of who will serve in this capacity. Those not selected are welcome to attend meetings.

Review SB 5719 and 5518

Vinson asked the Council of Presidents to lead a discussion to review Senate Bill 5719 and Senate Bill 5518. Francis provided a broad overview of the bills and the requirements within each bill.

Senate Bill 5719 forms the Task Force and requires the group to develop a set of best practices that colleges and universities may employ to promote the awareness of campus sexual violence, reduce the occurrence of campus sexual violence, and enhance student safety; develop recommendations for improving institutional campus sexual violence policies and procedures; develop recommendations for improving collaboration amongst institutions and law enforcement; and report to the legislature and universities and colleges its goals and recommendations annually by December 31.

The Task Force briefly discussed the intention of the Legislature to receive recommendations for additional legislation, practices on campuses, or the opportunity for dialogue and collaboration. Francis provided context for the legislation and suggested all three were viable and potential goals for the Task Force.

The Task Force spent the majority of the meeting discussing key components of the legislation and work ahead of them. Among the topics discussed:

- The best practices identified in the hearing held by the U.S. Senate Committee on Health, Education, Labor, and Pensions on July 29. The opportunity exists for the work of this group to position Washington as a leader in the federal conversation and establish alignment between state and federal policies.
- The importance of recognizing the differences that exist, such as resources and structures (e.g. laws regarding due process, public records), between and within higher education sectors (e.g. two-year and four-year, private and public). It was stated that it is important that recommendations from the group are flexible and recognize these differences in efforts to create greater uniformity. In addition, it is critical to be aware of the diversity among employees and students impacted by this issue (e.g. women, men, transgender, LGBTQ, accused, and accuser). Finally, the importance of understanding the complexities of the organizations involved (e.g. colleges/universities, attorneys, police jurisdictions) is key with many of these issues.
- The need to find a way to create collaborative policies that do not lead to different processes for different groups of people on campus but that work within the different rules that guide different organizations such as athletics, Greek life, etc.
- Recommendations about how to align Title IX language around responsible employee reporting and confidential reporter, especially when a staff or faculty member may have both responsibilities. In addition the impact(s) to the discussion of public records laws for public institutions of higher education.

- The need to identify where current state and federal policies, law, and guidelines are in their respective processes and the substance of this work.
- How to respond to the question “Is Washington in compliance?” This is a dominant question from policymakers and information is needed to better respond to the questions: What does compliance mean? What does this look like at the state level and institutional level? Is there a need to find greater uniformity around the issue of compliance? Can there be multiple solutions and still meet compliance standards?
- There is a mix of surveys and institutions that conduct a current climate assessment. It is important that within this discussion recognition is given to differences in language and cultures on campus. Other issues include when the assessment should be given, e.g. fall term or winter term when students have had some experience with campus, how to choose the right questions to respond to the needs and issues in Washington, how to include questions that are inclusive and recognize differences among genders and sexual orientation, how do we create uniformity of the information collected, and would other forms of assessment other than surveys be more appropriate, such as focus groups, interviews, etc.
- There is concern about survey fatigue for students. Surveys are not the only way to do assessment. But there are other assessment tools that are useful such as a focus group. Look at what institutions already have and see what college and universities can do with existing information.
- The development of Memorandums of Understanding (MOUs) is complex. Many institutions already have a general MOU with police jurisdictions. MOUs are usually not topic specific. It will be critical to provide the space for education and collaboration with police jurisdictions and colleges and universities so that there is a shared understanding of the importance a need for MOUs with regard to sexual assault violence and prevention beyond a general MOU. There are some collaborative efforts currently happening that bring multiple stakeholders together including colleges/universities, police jurisdictions, attorneys, etc. at the local level. However, awareness of these types of effort is often learned because of relationships within the community and is not widely known. There is a need to understand the different goals and intentions depending on the lens someone brings to this topic (e.g. law enforcement, higher education, prosecution). Finally, it is expected questions will be raised as to the need for a specific MOU, jurisdiction, and legal aspects.
- Some counties (including Whatcom and Thurston) have established multi-disciplinary response teams to confidentially bring together interested stakeholders (sometimes including higher education institutions) to discuss prevention and case review and implement a coordinated system of response.
- It is important to be mindful that policies are designed and disbursed in such a way that both meets requirements and is in a format that is useful to the intended audience.
- The multiple components of Senate Bill 5518 are worth continual discussion integration into the prevention-focus work of the Task Force.

Decisions

- Tricia Boerger will compile a summary of the federal legislation and where it is in the process.
- Richard DeShields will provide COP with a link to the White House report that includes information in suggested tools for implementing a campus climate assessment.
- Paul Francis will send out a recent quote from WSU - Sciences ERC regarding a campus climate assessment.
- Everyone will share the assessment tools they have or are aware of with the Task Force.

Review Recent Relevant Federal and State Actions

The Task Force had a brief discussion of the current federal and state environment. The group discussed the complexity of the ongoing state and federal environment on this issue and recognized that, while there is tremendous opportunity given the national focus on campus sexual violence, the work of the Task Force comes in the middle of the conversation. It is important that the Task Force ensure that best practice recommendations by the group are really best practices and that recommendations meet compliance goals, are flexible and align with where the federal work is headed. This is an opportunity for Washington to get ahead of the curve.

Recap and Next Steps

The Council of Presidents will work with Chair to develop the agenda for next meeting in late August. Agenda items are welcomed and should be sent to the Chair and COP. A recommendation was made to consider establishing subcommittees to allow for work to be done on specific issues with reports and decisions to be made by the full Task Force.