



President's Initiative to Prevent Sexual Misconduct



University of Minnesota
President Joan T.A. Gabel

Moving Forward Together in 2019-20

“Every member of our community should expect to feel safe and respected at the University of Minnesota, free from sexual harassment and intimidation. This commitment to our students, faculty and staff is cornerstone to our values and to the advancement of the University’s land-grant mission of discovery, learning and outreach.”

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Values Statement

The University of Minnesota is committed to learning what we can do to change ourselves and the culture of the academy to prevent and respond to sexual misconduct. Responsibility for long-term culture change to prevent sexual misconduct belongs to all members of our University community: faculty, staff, students and alumni. The President’s Initiative to Prevent Sexual Misconduct (PIPSM) is a University engaged endeavor and will continue to rely on the entire community for active involvement. The University of Minnesota community chooses to change, lead and thrive in this crucial area.

Community engagement, investment, and ownership are what drive the short and long-term actions we seek to facilitate, and the resulting outcomes we seek to achieve. Key guiding principles promote the values that drive this work. We must:

- eliminate sexual misconduct in order to uphold academic freedom and responsibility, that is, the freedom of all members of the campus community to learn and to inquire;
- create an atmosphere of mutual respect, free from racism, sexism, and other forms of prejudice, discrimination, and intolerance; and,
- inspire, set high expectations for, and empower all of the individuals within this community to fully experience a healthy, safe, welcoming, supportive, and inclusive culture.

Why a public health approach?

Public health crises, like a disease outbreak or the lack of clean drinking water, rely on a disciplined approach that combines system thinking from multiple perspectives to solve the issue. Considerations that informed the PIPSM intervention planning model fall into five action areas:



Comprehensive Prevention: Strategies and approaches that complement and reinforce one another across the social ecological model.



Partnerships and Sustainability: Development of healthy working relationships with partners and community stakeholders can strengthen, coordinate, and align prevention efforts to make them more sustainable over time.



Infrastructure: The basic organizational systems and structures needed to effectively implement sexual violence prevention strategies on a college or university campus.



Evaluation: Essential public health practice that identifies what is working and what is not working with the programs, policies or practices.



Audience: Broadly refers to the targeted audience. This includes recipients and observers of the prevention messages, campaigns, or strategies.



How has the U of M approached this public health crisis?

Launched in May 2017, the ongoing initiative will create a University of Minnesota community whose members act to prevent sexual misconduct, including harassment or sexual violence of any kind.

A core team, led by the dean of the School of Public Health, gathered national data on sexual misconduct. The data covered everything from why individuals commit acts of sexual misconduct to best practices in educating and monitoring compliance. The team examined the student conduct code and employment policies for staff and faculty to determine what actions can and should be taken when violations occur.

The “It ends here” faculty, staff, and student-focused marketing campaigns promote bystander intervention and provide direct guidance on how bystanders can have a positive impact on sexual misconduct. Student government leaders worked with University staff to craft the student campaign. “It ends here”, which first launched in fall of 2018, began as a Minnesota Student Association campaign and was adopted by the University. Post-marketing surveys revealed that 79% of students are aware of the University’s efforts to prevent sexual misconduct. The faculty staff campaign launches fall, 2019.

A comprehensive, online student training course is required for all incoming students. We achieved the highest completion rates to date with the Fall 2018-19 course: 94.7% of incoming first-year undergraduates and 84.9% of all incoming graduate and professional students completed the course.

A required online training program for all staff and faculty was designed, tested, and implemented. In the initial launch of the program 99.2% of all employees (22,399) completed the training. The training is ongoing for all new employees and is refreshed with new content modules for all employees on a two-year basis, with the next training implemented in the fall of 2020.

UMN is actively engaging in the national conversation on sexual misconduct prevention in the academy. We are a participating member of The National Academies of Sciences, Engineering, and Medicine Action Collaborative with over 40 other Institutions of Higher Education. Over the next four years (2019-23) our subcommittee will focus on climate, practice and policy as they relate to retaliation, remediation, reintegration, and prevention.

Comprehensive programming and other strategies to increase students’ bystander intervention behavior have begun within Athletics and Greek Life. These dynamic offerings complement online student training and will continue to be implemented within other student communities.

In order to continue moving this work forward, it is key that we engage staff and faculty to build and maintain respectful unit cultures. This organizational climate grassroots work builds capacity from within departments to promote healthy norms, expectations, procedures and policy.

The PIPSM Initiative will:

- Continue to meet regularly with senior leadership to report on results, challenges, and opportunities to move the work forward together
- Review and adjust techniques in response to continued assessment of national best practices
- Review and discuss metrics that inform our progress and allow for measurement of long-term results
- Support accountability, all the way to the President, with our results
- Increase confidence that reporting will result in appropriate support and action, and decrease the fear of retaliation



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For more information

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