



Chaired by:

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# TASK SEXUAL FORCE VIOLENCE REPORT

March 9, 2015

## Introduction

Across the country and at The Ohio State University alike, sexual violence among college students is a problem with increasing recognition. Preventing and addressing this problem has become a priority for the Undergraduate Student Government, manifest in the **“It’s On Us” campaign**<sup>1</sup> and advocacy—at our University and nationwide—on this topic.

With this Report, we aim to inform the community and peers about the climate surrounding sexual violence at Ohio State, how we and other institutions have responded to the issue, and how we, as students, would like to see Ohio State respond in the future. The Report is three-pronged, divided into the following parts:

1. **Sexual Violence at Oho State**
2. **The University Response to Sexual Violence**
3. **Next Steps**

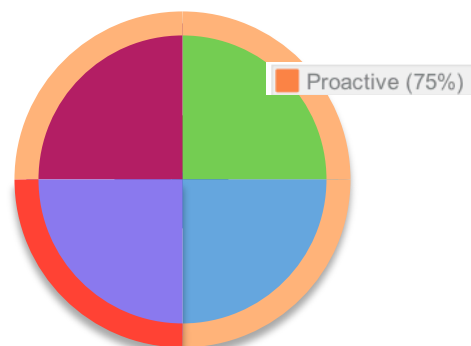
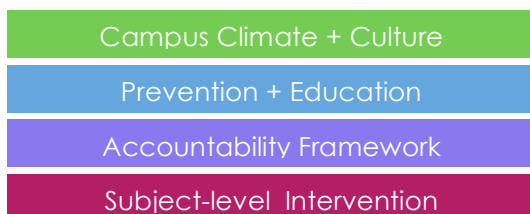
We view solutions to address sexual violence as predominately **proactive** or **reactive** in nature. We believe that, with a solid proactive approach, sexual violence may be prevented—and fewer students will require reactive support. In determining our priorities, we must consider more than the number of sexual violence survivors requiring reactive resources. Compared with the population that requires education and prevention to create a positive campus climate, the number of survivors represents just the tip of the iceberg in solving this problem.



Proactive (75%) Reactive (25%)

### Solutions Classification

In each section below, we organize our analysis and recommendations into the following categories:



Reactive (25%)

We view the first three categories as **proactive** elements that will prevent sexual violence, and Subject-level Intervention as the **reactive** component of the approach we recommend, as organized above.

## The Task Force

The following members of Undergraduate Student Government contributed greatly to this Task Force Report:

- **Celia Wright**, USG President
- **Sarah Hudacek**, Deputy Director of Academic Affairs
- **Emmy Wydman**, Deputy Director of Public Relations
- **Logan Phares**, Deputy Director of Internal Affairs
- **Rebecca Gutterman**, Public Relations Community Representative
- **Varsha Challapally**, Health and Safety Community Representative
- **Vikas Munjal**, Sustainability Community Representative
- **Zawwar Khan**, Student Affairs Community Representative

## Part One: Sexual Violence at Ohio State

To evaluate sexual violence at Ohio State and student thoughts on the topic, we disseminated a **survey**<sup>2</sup> among OSU undergraduates. In doing so, we aimed to raise awareness about sexual violence at OSU and to gauge the level of knowledge that students had on the subject of sexual violence. We detected a lack of awareness of University resources available, a perception of limited resources, and a low sense of efficacy, among students, to use the resources we have.

## Who was surveyed?

**634** students took this survey—a small sample size was intentional, to prevent “survey fatigue” among the student body in anticipation of the more comprehensive climate survey to be delivered this spring. Respondents were recruited via Greek organizations, large student organizations, international students’ organizations, and Scholars programs. The survey was also shared via social media. Admittedly, those who took the survey may have been especially passionate about sexual violence, though a gift card drawing incentivized participation. With every statistic there is a 4% margin of error, not accounting for bias.

Of those surveyed, 36% were freshmen, 31% were sophomores, 17% were juniors, and 17% were seniors. 24% of those surveyed were affiliated with Greek organization. 87% were white, 9% identify as Asian, 4% identify as black or African-American, and 3% identity as Latino.

## Prevalence of Sexual Violence

Survey results indicate that sexual violence affects our community to a profound degree. When asked how often respondents heard about individual cases of sexual violence on campus from their friends or by word of mouth,

**61% of students reported monthly or more frequently.** When asked how often respondents heard about sexual violence cases on and around Ohio State's campus from media outlets, campus safety notices, presentations or awareness campaigns, **82% of students said monthly or more frequently.**

The breadth of personal experiences with sexual violence among respondents was unsettling. **Over 38% of students** surveyed reported that someone fondled, kissed or rubbed up against the private areas of their body or removed their clothing against their wishes. **Over 10% of students** reported that someone tried to sexually penetrate them against their wishes. **8% of students** report to having been sexually penetrated against their wishes.

About 1-2% of students selected "unsure" to one or more of the options. One student explained: *"I never said out loud that I didn't want to but didn't actually want to so I don't think that it counts but I'm not sure."* Another student explained uncertainty with, *"I don't know what constitutes permission."* Many explained that they had been drugged or were too intoxicated to remember what happened, but are still unsure as to whether consent was given. Similarly, **75%** of those who reported victimization to a form of sexual violence reported that their perpetrator did the act by catching them off guard, or ignoring non-verbal cues or facial expressions, and **56%** said that their perpetrator took advantage of them when they were too drunk, high, asleep, or in a poor state of consciousness. **88%** of these acts of sexual violence were completed or attempted by a male and **11%** of these acts of sexual violence were completed or attempted by a female.

Of those who answered "yes" to having experienced an act of sexual violence, **95% of these students have never formally reported the incident.** This statistic parallels national statistics, as it is thought that over 90% of acts of sexual violence go unreported.

## Perception of the Issue + Campus Climate

*"It is an issue ever-prevalent but rarely brought to light. What might be seen as fun or flirting or teasing can lead to assault and scarred lives."*

The survey provided a wide spectrum of feedback with regard to sexual violence, the breadth of it on campus, and how the University has responded to it. Some opinions show us what we're doing right. Some show us where more education—about resources or sexual violence itself—is needed. Among notable feedback:

- "This is a huge problem but people don't take it seriously because sexual assault isn't clearly defined."*
- "Some people don't even know what constitutes rape or what consent is."*
- "It seems like guys think that 'actual sex' is the only version of sexual violence. Sexual violence can be anything from trying to force a kiss or damaging a woman's self-esteem."*
- "People need to know that they have resources available. Most listed earlier have little to no visibility on campus."*

Coercion is involved 44%

Verbal rejection is involved 19%

Physical rejection is involved 19%

Sexual Violence only happens when...

Review of many recommendations made by students itself indicates high prevalence of **rape myths**<sup>3</sup> among the student body—many students recommended better off-campus lighting, self-defense classes, and “blue light” security systems to prevent sexual violence. The preoccupation with protecting students from perpetrators on the streets may indicate lack of awareness of the fact that most cases of sexual violence occur behind closed doors, with a perpetrator known to the victim.

When asked about the climate for discussing sexual violence and seeking help, students responded with valuable feedback:

- “As a victim who didn’t come forward years ago, I wish I had had someone telling me I shouldn’t be afraid or embarrassed and should stick up for myself.”
- “It’s very easy for someone to feel like they don’t deserve help, especially after they are sexually assaulted.”

Some students cited media attention to other universities’ mishandling of sexual violence as presenting barriers to requesting help on our campus. Others connect this apprehension with a mistrust of how cases are adjudicated and how public safety notices are issued. Said one student, *“I believe the University needs to gain the trust of its students in regard to sexual violence. I would not feel comfortable trusting the University with the story of a sexual assault until I was confident that my case would not get swept under the rug.”* Others do recognize OSU’s legitimate effort to aid students, explaining, *“I think the university does a much better job of handling the issue than many other schools... but there’s always more to be done.”* Few students expressed understanding of **Clery Act**<sup>4</sup> reporting requirements, and many expressed a desire that OSU is more consistent in the type of incidents that are reported, and that we provide follow-up to students after a public safety notice has been issued. Many wished for more information about where and when sexual violence is happening on and off-campus.

*“There may be a fear that the University will not support victims, based on what has happened at other universities... the University should emphasize that there should be no fear in coming forward because of... judgment or humiliation.”*

*“I was sexually assaulted... and while the University did a great job of making sure I had care post-trauma, I still feel so ashamed to share my story because of the stigma. The collegiate environment and attitudes of this topic need to change, and the University can be doing more to help that.”*

Students cited many barriers to reporting sexual violence, including:

- *“As a male sexually assaulted by a woman, I feel firsthand the stigma against reporting sexual assault cases.”*
- *“I would be scared to report it. As a male I don’t feel like I would be taken seriously.”*
- *“We need more campaigning about stopping victim blaming. And consent isn’t sexy—it’s necessary.”*
- *“At a university with such a large population, any student can feel lonely when their situation is different than those around them. This is exacerbated when a student is from out of state, [or] doesn’t enjoy socializing... While those people aren’t more likely to be victims, the point is that there are more was to be isolated.”*
- *“Anything through campus I would feel like my parents would become aware. Already not being close with them and probably embarrassed I would not want to disclose that information with them.”*

Students aware of ongoing education and prevention campaigns provided pointed feedback. Some believe that all students should receive the **Buckeyes Got Your Back**<sup>5</sup> bystander intervention training, or that sexual violence training should be a mandatory **First Year Experience session**<sup>6</sup>. Some believe that all University employees should be trained on “these kinds of situations.” Some cited frustration with a lack of change in attitudes among peers in spite of marketing, describing, *“People see the signs, and posters, but mind sets are not changing.”* Notably, **only 13% of respondents that remembered a sexual violence education component at Orientation found it “effective” or “very effective.”**

## Perception of Resources

Survey results indicate that many students are uninformed about resources available to them. For example, when we asked about campus resources respondents would feel comfortable using as a victim of sexual violence, we included options that don't directly address sexual violence in the survey. **19%** of students reported that they would use the **Younkin Success Center** and **18%** reported that they would use the **Office of Student Life**, neither of which directly provide rehabilitation for survivors of sexual violence. On the other hand, **40%** of students reported that they would *not* use **Counseling and Consultation Services**<sup>7</sup> (**CCS**), and **79%** would *not* use the **Student Advocacy Center**<sup>8</sup>, two departments that do work directly with victims of sexual violence.



*On average, students rank OSU's response to sexual violence with 3.13 out of 5 stars.*

When asked about using these resources one student said, *“OSU seems very impersonal when it comes to these type of things. As someone who has had to use student advocacy for a different reason, it was like pulling teeth and not an easy to use resource.”* In regard to **CCS** another student cited long wait times, *“CCS is the only one I've used previously, and their wait times are ungodly long, to the point that it isn't even worth it to go.”* Similarly, students reported that if they became a victim of sexual violence **82%** of them would talk to a friend but only **58%** of them would talk to a police officer, and only **20%** of students would talk to the **Student Advocacy Center**.

Until the summer of 2014, OSU first-year orientation sessions did not include a presentation focused specifically on sexual violence for incoming freshmen. Of respondents (current freshmen) who attended orientation since the program's inception, only **31%** of students remembered a sexual violence prevention presentation at their orientation program.

Finally, we asked students about their perception of how OSU handles sexual violence. When asked if they believe that the University should devote more resources and attention to sexual violence on and off campus, **74%** of students answered “yes”. When asked if they believe that OSU handles cases of sexual violence in a way that adequately addresses the situation of the victim **36%** of students said “no.” In explaining their answers, students had much to say, with comments displayed on the next page.



"I know a decent amount about what resources are available, but when I was sexually assaulted, I didn't want to use any of them because I didn't know where to start."

"I feel like there are definitely more sexual violence cases around OSU than I hear about, and I feel like that's a violation of my rights as a student. By paying to attend school there, I think it is crucial that I be aware of what is happening around where I live. If only so I can be aware of my surroundings."

"My experience with trying to use CCS wasn't good (they seemed like they didn't really have time for me or want to talk to me) and I have no idea how to use any of the other resources listed."

"I think a lot of cases go unreported just because people don't know what resources are actually available to them if anything were to happen."

"There aren't enough counselors employed by the University for a community as large as OSU. The cost of employing additional counselors to reduce wait times for those who need counsel... is trivial relative to the psychological, emotional, and physical damage that sexual violence can cause a victim. Especially for a University like Ohio State that has so many tuition-paying students, excessive cost should not be a barrier to employing more counselors. It would be a lasting, meaningful solution to [this] problem."

"I feel both the Columbus Police Department and OSUPD are not trained enough to deal with sexual assault cases, especially when asked to cover cases beyond rape. There are other forms of sexual assault that I don't feel the police force is adequately trained to address, like stalking and domestic abuse."

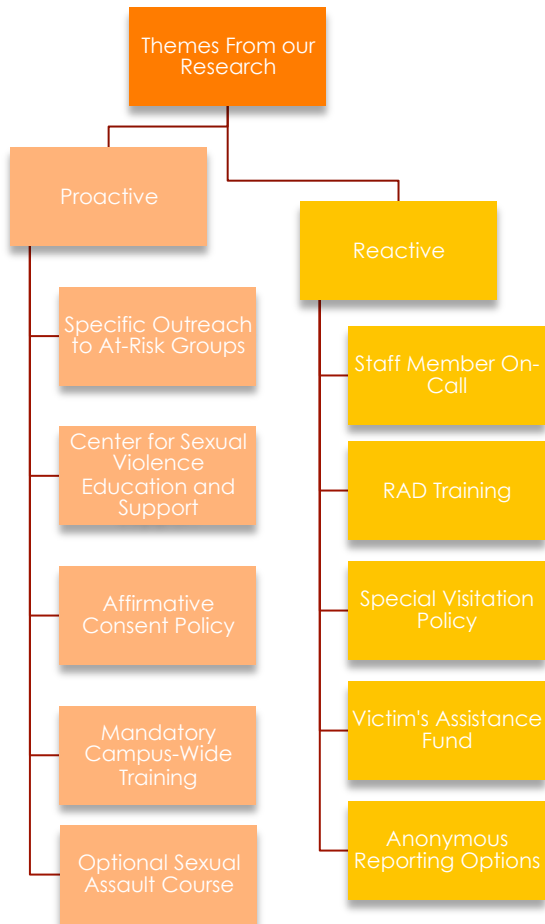
"Ignorance is not bliss when these things are continually happening."

"I know (from trying to schedule an appointment) that it is difficult to get an appointment [with CCS] and takes a long time which would probably discourage me from trying. I have seen a counselor there before but her suggestion was that I go to a group meeting which I was not comfortable doing. It felt like she wanted me to do that to free up time in her schedule, which is understandable, but instead I just never went back because I was not comfortable going to a group counseling session."

"I felt a little embarrassed at the start of this school year, because I was truly unaware of the state of sexual violence on campus because of our reporting system. Friends of mine at other schools were telling me about the case at their schools last year, and since I never heard anything about the cases happening on campus here, I assumed our campus was much safer than it is."

"CSS wait times are too long. There needs to be more than 2 people that work at the student advocacy center."

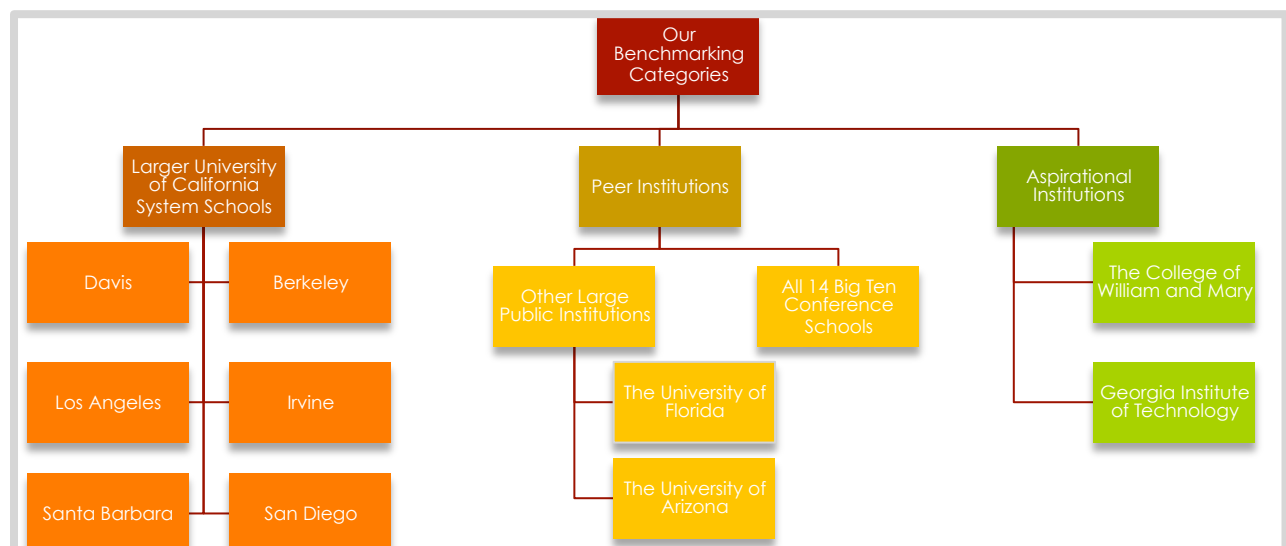
## Part Two: The University Response to Sexual Violence: Where We Lead, and Where We Can Learn



With an issue as sensitive and widespread as sexual violence, it can be difficult to comprehensively address the issue while offering diverse educational and prevention programs that students need. In many ways, OSU has already blazed the trail in addressing sexual violence proactively. The **Buckeyes Got Your Back Bystander Intervention Training (BGYB)** is a great example of this. Students enrolled in training are given knowledge and intervention techniques needed to be active bystanders in the University community. This program, supported by peer-reviewed research, demonstrates tangible outcomes for the thousands of Buckeyes that have been enrolled.

In addition to the things we do well—some of which this section will discuss—improvements can always be made to ensure that we are reaching all students and all areas of campus with the important information that will help us strengthen our fight to end sexual violence. For this reason, we have studied 23 schools from across the nation in an effort to mirror the exemplary programs of other institutions, and to learn from their mistakes.

Items noted on the left are overarching themes and programs that were found at many institutions that were researched, sometimes also at OSU, and which will be explored in-depth throughout the remainder of this report.





## Campus Climate + Culture

Establishing a healthy campus culture, where sexual violence is understood and is not accepted by the community, will be essential for putting an end to sexual violence at OSU. Two items of interest in this realm would be the establishment of a **Center for Sexual Violence Education and Support (SVES)** and an **Affirmative Consent Policy**<sup>9</sup> on campus. The former may address confusion expressed by many students on not knowing “where to start” or “which [resources] to use.” The latter may address confusion about how consent and rape is defined. Many peers, below, feature a centralized location for SVES, and several also have an Affirmative Consent Policy on their campuses.

### Center for SVES

College of William and Mary
Michigan State University
Northwestern University
Pennsylvania State University
University of California – Davis
University of California – Irvine
University of California – Los Angeles
University of California – San Diego
University of California – Santa Barbara
University of Florida
University of Illinois
University of Maryland
University of Michigan
University of Minnesota – Twin Cities
University of Nebraska - Lincoln

### Affirmative Consent Policy

University of California – Berkeley
University of California – Davis
University of California – Los Angeles
University of Florida
University of Iowa
University of Maryland
University of Wisconsin - Madison

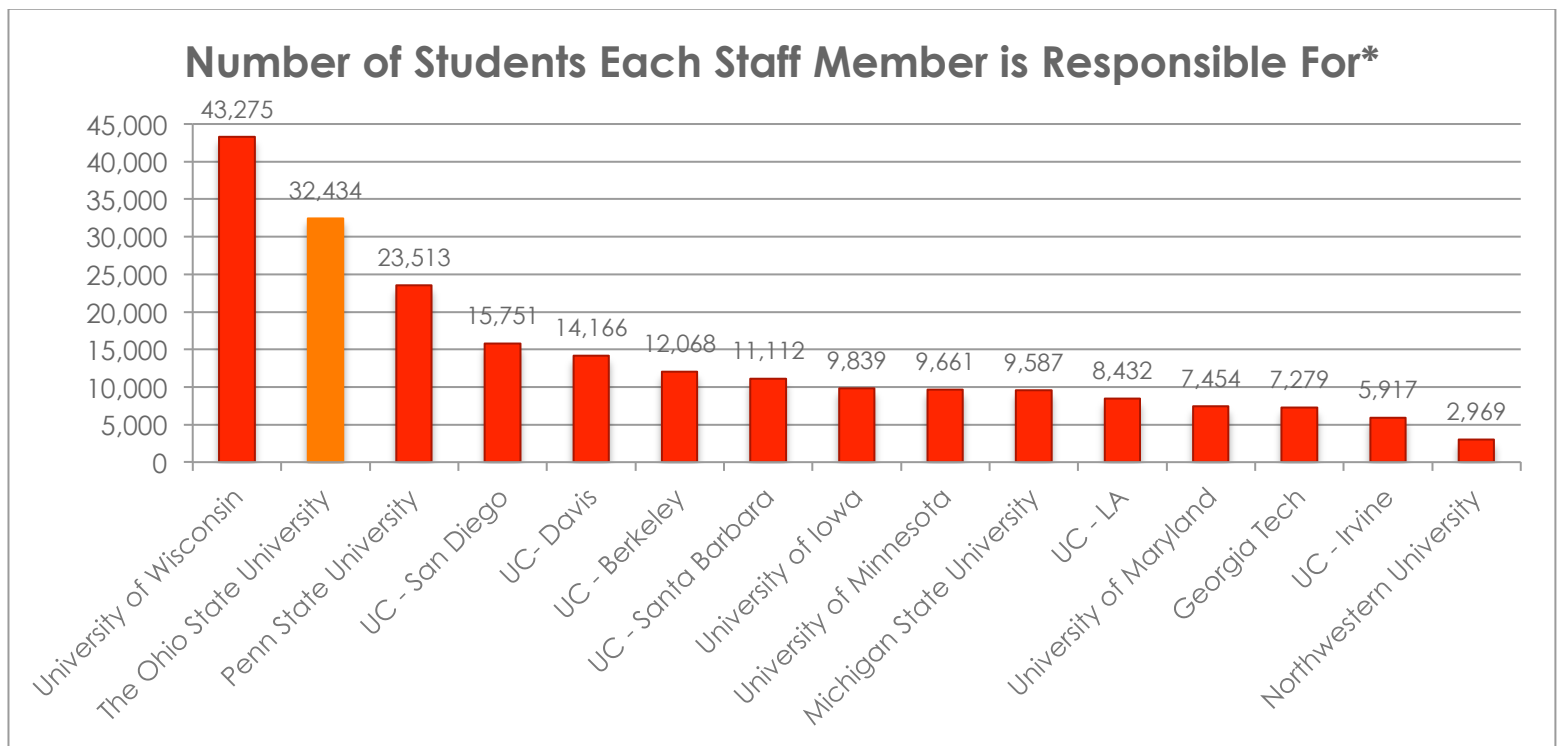
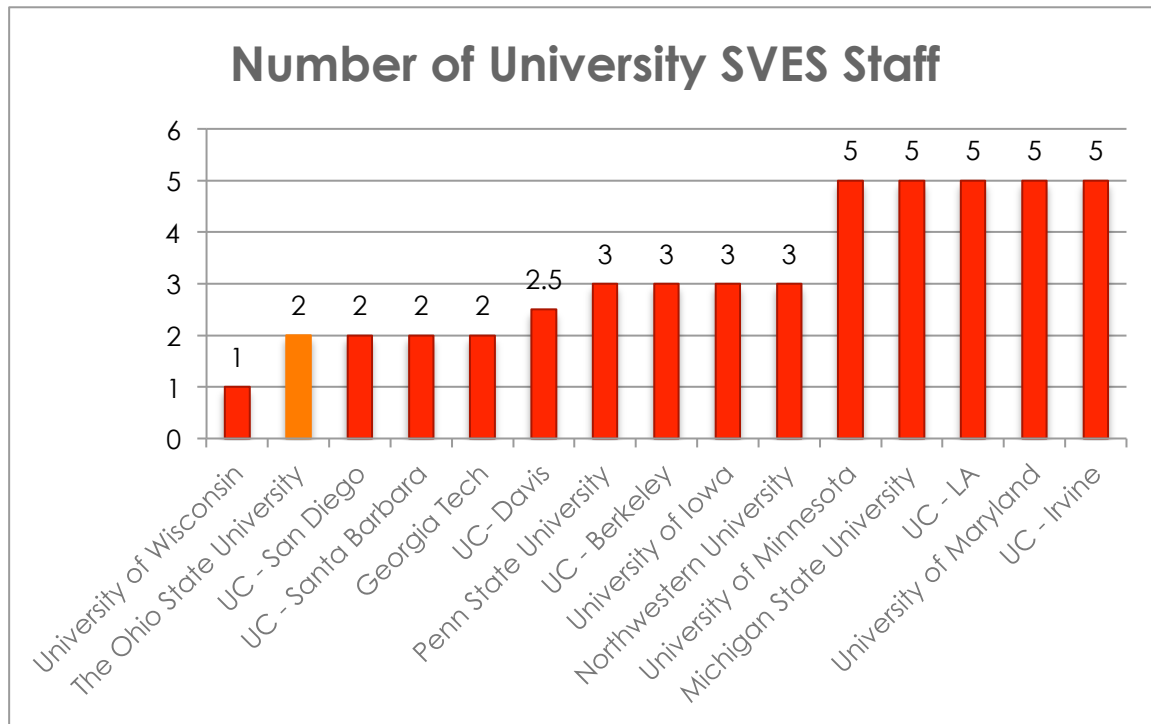
*“I think there are lots of resources... but they're too many and too separate for them to collectively and effectively work together for the main goal of a safer and more effective OSU.”*

## Staff Levels: A Priority Expressed in People

The graphs below compares the number of staff member **per capita to student body size, tasked solely with SVES** across fifteen institutions. For institutions not listed, we were unable to find a conclusive number of staff members from calls and online research. **In both groups, OSU has the second lowest staff levels per capita.**

Because Ohio State only has two staff members to address the issue of campus sexual violence, **each staff member is hypothetically responsible for 32,434 students**, including professional students and regional campus students, who are also advised to reach out to our SVES staff if victimized by sexual violence.

Considering the popular “1 in 4” statistic<sup>10</sup> of students sexually assaulted while in college, **OSU staff members are currently expected to be available for 8,109 students in need of help on campus.**



\*Data only included for those schools with accessible data that could be found online or conveyed over the phone.

## Prevention + Education

The **"It's On Us" campaign** to end sexual violence at OSU has received incredible support from many University partners, particularly in **The Office of Student Life**. We discovered, with "It's On Us," the extent to which students are uninformed about resources and programs on campus that can help with sexual violence, sexual harassment, and the emotional effects of these crimes. Students are often unaware of the definitions and procedures outlined in the **Student Code of Conduct**<sup>11</sup>, the very policy to which students are held accountable. Education is critical, and our peers demonstrate many proactive approaches to doing it well.

The SVES programs offered to students at Ohio State are well-developed, encourage creative thinking about gender roles and stereotypes, and educate students about the definitions of consent. These programs are currently expanding their reach. The **Inter-Fraternity Council (IFC)** educates all of its members with **Buckeyes Got Your Back**, all new **Pan-Hellenic Association (PHA)** members have received the training, and many **residence halls** pilot this program. Especially considering our limited staff, the breadth and success of these programs is incredible.

*"Sexual violence is an unforgivable part of too many students' college experience. It's important to be **proactive**, not only **reactive**, about these situations. I believe that more can always be done to prevent [assault] from occurring."*

Judging from student feedback, we could do a better job of engaging men outside of Greek Life, and the student body at large. Many schools below provide educational programs more broadly and celebrate student organizations that engage men in the discussion surrounding sexual violence prevention.

Mandatory Campus-Wide Training
<b>Michigan State University*</b>
Pennsylvania State University
Purdue University
<b>University of California – Berkeley*</b>
University of California – Davis
University of California – Los Angeles
<b>University of California – Irvine*</b>
<b>University of Illinois*</b>
University of Michigan
University of Wisconsin - Madison
<b>University of Iowa*</b>

\*Denotes in-person mandatory training. Lack of an asterisk denotes online training module.

Programs and Groups Specifically Designed to Involve Men
Georgia Tech
Michigan State University
Northwestern University
Pennsylvania State University
University of California – Berkeley
University of California – Irvine
University of Illinois
University of Michigan – Ann Arbor
University of Nebraska - Lincoln

The chart below provides more detail on these education programs, and for whom schools have **specifically-designed** programs to target distinct groups on campus.

Institution	Specific Outreach to Men	Outreach to Greek Life	Specific Outreach to At-Risk Groups
Georgia Institute of Technology	Yes	Yes	Yes; LGBTQ, Minorities
Michigan State University	Yes	No	No
Northwestern University	Yes	Yes	No
Pennsylvania State University	Yes	No	No
University of Arizona	Yes	Yes	Yes
UC – Berkeley	Yes	Yes	Yes; LGBTQ
UC – Irvine	Yes	Yes	Yes
University of Illinois	Yes	Yes	Yes
University of Nebraska	Yes	Yes	Yes; LGBTQ, Minorities

Out of all Big Ten schools, the **University of Iowa, the University of Illinois, the University of Wisconsin – Madison, and the University of Maryland** are the only three schools to offer **sexual violence education courses for credit**, with the University of Iowa offering extensive course options for students to learn about sexual violence, gender stereotypes, and more.

The **University of California at Irvine** has extremely comprehensive and well-targeted **prevention and support programs**, housed in the **CARE Center** on campus. Education programs are delivered to faculty, staff, Resident Advisors, orientation leaders, Greek organizations, graduate students, Residence Halls, Student Conduct Board adjudicators, and more. First-years and transfer students are required to undergo an online sexual violence prevention training. Unique awareness programs include the Clothesline Project, Take Back the Night, Denim Day California, RAINN Day, Red Flag Day, the Walk a Mile in Her Shoes program, and HopeLine. Healing yoga, partner retreats, documentary screenings, and other unique and interesting presentations are also offered.

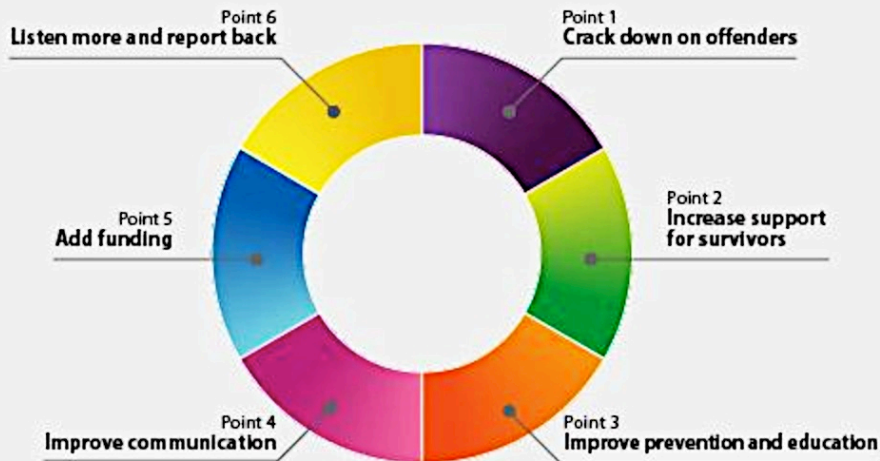
## Framework to Ensure Progress +Accountability

Beyond the changes currently in order at OSU, **we need a framework to ensure accountability and progress in this area**. While our **Sexual Violence Consultation Team (SVCT)** monitors the progress of individual cases, and the **Sexual Violence Committee (SVC)** discusses the topic more broadly, neither individually has the charge, power, transparency and responsibility for this issue that we need.

The **Georgia Institute of Technology** features an extremely comprehensive and collaborative **Presidential Task Force** consisting of community partners, campus police, deans, University stakeholders, and students. This Task Force produced a detailed report and recommendations for SVES improvement. This collaboration of all departments, University and community stakeholders, and students is truly something to strive for at Ohio State.

*"Information and access are key... we must continue to work together to encourage a welcome and open environment so that this is a continuous discussion. This is a constant priority and [should be] continuously evaluated to determine what resources should be improved, added, and revamped."*

## Six Point Plan to Combat Sexual Assault



Additionally (see graphic at left) **The University of Iowa** lists its **Six Point Plan to Combat Sexual Violence**<sup>12</sup> on the University President's website. Each point in the comprehensive plan is formulated into a check-list, so that both students and the university can hold themselves accountable for their progress in addressing the issue

## Subject-Intervention Related

Perhaps the most obvious element of SVES efforts is to **assist and empower survivors of sexual violence**. Proper assistance here can change and save our students' lives.

Ohio State students are blessed with a fantastic sexual violence advocate, currently located in Student Advocacy. As demonstrated below,

students are extremely pleased with their interactions with our advocate.

Question: What did you find most helpful from your meeting with the SV Advocate?

- "She was down-to-earth and had a comforting presence"
- "She was someone who was not judgemental, solution-focused, and I felt she really cared about my experience"
- "She is...a great listener and an amazing support system."
- "She is friendly, open, honest, and likeable in general."
- "I didn't feel like I was being judged and my problems weren't minimized."
- "I don't feel nor am I pressured into immediately telling [her my story]"



**Ohio State** is also one of few schools to offer a **Victim's Assistance Fund**, as well as an empowering **Rape Aggression Defense (RAD) class** for women through the **Ohio State Police Division**. We're delighted with both of these programs, and glad we can lead peers in these areas.

Though OSU is far ahead of the curve in these areas, we can still learn from our peers in others. **The University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill** gives students the option to attend their **first counseling appointment without calling ahead**, and other schools even offer a 24/7 resource line, in-house, for those in need of immediate counseling, in addition to holding walk-in hours to support victims in need.

## Exemplary Programs among Peers

**The University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign** features an exceptional program known as **The Emergency Dean program**. Each day, a full-time employee of the university volunteers to be on-call at home so that students experiencing any kind of emergency, whether it's sexual violence related or not, can contact the Emergency Dean for counseling assistance.

**The University of Iowa**, in addition to having a checklist of goals to complete in addressing campus sexual violence, also has a standing **President's Student Advisory Board** that is open to the entire student body.

**The University of California at San Diego**, in addition to its two staff members, also has a police officer tasked solely with **investigating and working with reports of sexual violence**.

*"We should have free therapy sessions that don't count towards the ten free sessions that every student gets. **Regular therapy and sexual violence therapy are very different things.**"*

## Part Three: Next Steps

*"Continued promotion of the It's On Us Campaign will help raise awareness, and already this semester, there are more posters and signs indicating where victims can get help. Now we need to actually vocally talk about it. That seems to be the next step."*

## USG + Sexual Violence Advocacy

Undergraduate Student Government has tackled the issue of sexual violence in many ways. One effort was the promotion of the **It's On Us campaign** on OSU's campus. This was a bystander intervention-oriented initiative that included a Letter to the Editor<sup>13</sup>, signed by **14 student organization presidents** (including both political parties), advocating for change at Ohio State. This letter was shared with University stakeholders to encourage improvement. Pledge drives and usage of credenza space helped USG spread awareness of this campaign and reach students in almost every corner of the University. More recently, we created this Sexual Violence Task Force.

We've received a positive response and support from all levels of the community – students, staff, faculty, administration, etc. Very recently, we've begun to see changes take place, which we'll describe below.

This section is meant to describe the breadth and depth of change that we hope for, in addition to initiatives just now becoming public. It is a roadmap for future USG advocacy and a creative, robust response to sexual violence from the University.

The overwhelming survey response rate and diverse group of respondents, thousands of students that have taken the "It's On Us" pledge, and student reactions since point to our underlying assumption: **the student body yearns for visible change in this area.** Be it increased accessibility of existing resources, the addition of new ones, or both, students want to see a change – their dissatisfaction and lack of knowledge demonstrates this.

We believe that this should be a proactive, reactive conversation. Much of the work relating to sexual violence and sexual violence on campus falls into more proactive realms, focusing on aspects to reduce the incidence of sexual violence, while we still need extensive subject (survivor)-level intervention, which is where the reactive element comes into play (see below).



## Steps in the Right Direction

At the time that the survey was administered and benchmarking data conducted, changes outlined below had yet to come about. Though still not visible to students and the University community more broadly, we're very pleased with recent innovation on behalf of the University with the following initiatives:

- The introduction of a pilot program for the **Sexual Incivility Program (SIP)**, designed to increase support and access to resources for students found in violation of non-violent sexual misconduct as outlined in the Student Code of Conduct. The program is designed to prevent more serious sexual misconduct incidents in the future by helping students understand consent, healthy relationships, substance abuse, and more.
- The recognition of **a cohesive identity for our SVES programs**. We're on track to having our SVES team housed in the same location, with a unified web and social media presence to eliminate confusion among students for where to seek help or learn more about sexual violence.
- The hiring of a **new member to the SVES team**, which brings us a step closer to staff levels that will adequately meet the needs of our student body.

## Campus Climate + Culture

To improve our campus climate and culture surrounding sexual violence, to reduce stigma, inform our peers, and encourage survivors to come forward, we recommend the following:

### A. Affirmative Consent Policy

**Of the 23 schools we benchmarked, 7 of them have an Affirmative Consent policy.** We believe that Ohio State should eliminate any doubt about presence of consent by codifying a “yes means yes”, explicit and ongoing consent policy, within our Student Code of Conduct. A lack of a verbal/physical “no” should not and does not equate to a mutual agreement to proceed with sexual activity—students don’t always understand this, but we can help them to.

### B. Policy of Amnesty regarding underage drinking

Along these same lines, a survivor reporting misconduct should not be penalized for underage drinking at the time of the crime – a policy of amnesty should be granted in these situations. Ohio State’s Student Conduct website states that, “**By law, a person cannot give consent, even when he or she might verbally say so, when: the person is so intoxicated or unconscious due to alcohol or drugs.**” However, many students are discouraged to report a crime without a rule put into place protecting them from charges relating to underage drinking. We should be fully supportive of a survivor seeking help, not focused on an underage drinking penalty.

### C. An increase to staff that exclusively work with SVES

OSU’s existing SVES staff<sup>14</sup>—our **Sexual Violence Support Coordinator**, and **Sexual Violence Prevention Coordinator**, perform incredible work in the realm of Support and Advocacy and Education and Outreach on campus. The addition of a new member to our SVES team will enable better subject-level intervention, in enabling recovery for survivors, and rehabilitation of non-violent offenders. SVES staff already creatively empowers student volunteers to assist in the delivery of preventive training, and empowers survivors and allies with the co-advised student organization, **SEE US** (Stand, Empower, Education, Unite, and Support).

We are not focused exclusively on the number of staff members devoted to survivors, but, instead, having more hands on deck to reduce the amount of crimes in general, through proactive means. Our University’s work, and allocation of resources, should go beyond reactive, subject-level intervention. Though we need to be adequate in that area, we need to give our campus the tools to educate students before the fact. Our student body size has outgrown the SVES staff, per capita, provided to meet our need. **2-3 professionals should not be responsible for serving 64,000 students**, regardless of subject matter, but especially not one that threatens *individuals’ equal access to education and independence as sexual assault does.*

*“I think tremendous progress has been made, but more progress can come.”*

### D. A Center for Sexual Violence Education and Support

We applaud the recent decision to centralize our efforts to provide SVES at OSU. We envision a place for survivors to easily seek help and find support, and for allies to be empowered and find peace under one comprehensive and accessible roof. While meeting our campus needs in terms of proactive and reactive work on sexual violence, the existence of a Center will yield additional benefits.

Unique benefits of a Center for Sexual Violence Education and Support:

- Would **streamline our approach and the path taken by students** to get help if assaulted. Said one survey respondent, *"I think there should be a step-by-step procedure listed [online] if you think you were sexually assaulted. Such as who to contact first... etc., and a list of resources with contact information."* A SVES Center would enable more clarity, among students, to determine where to look for help.
- Would ensure that students are always working with **expert staff** who are extremely passionate and knowledgeable about sexual violence. Said one student, *"When I called Younkin to schedule my initial appointment, they directly asked if I had been sexually assaulted which triggered a panic attack. They could have asked me in-person and not over the phone about it."* With a staff focused solely on sexual assault, we can ensure that survivors are entreated to the best, most sensitive experience possible.
- Similarly, students would be likely to sense the expertise and sensitivity of Center staff on this issue. Said a survey respondent, *"I don't feel ready to talk about it, unless I knew the counselor was super nice and young/relatable."* Posting photos and information about our SVES team online, as we currently do, should help to **reduce the intimidation factor of seeking help**.
- The existence of a Center, providing counseling and support outside the 10 free session-limit, will enable long-term follow up with survivors of sexual violence, improving **retention** and **4-year graduation rates** at OSU. Students expressed concern that *"I [wouldn't] be strong enough to seek out these resources by myself,"* and that *"You want someone to be there with and for you"* throughout the process. Enabling a team of experts to traverse the medical process, criminal justice system, student conduct process, and other steps toward justice would likely encourage reporting of sexual assault and empower survivors.
- As SVES staff already conducts peer-reviewed research with the BGYB program, recognition of a Center would foster **future innovation and research**, contributing to the knowledge pool of higher education with regard to this issue.

Though we've referred to this concept as a "Center for SVES," the actual division could go by many names. That said, we believe that a **gender-neutral approach** is essential. The name should not explicitly (e.g. "Women's Center") or implicitly (e.g. "Carnation Center," "H.E.A.R.T. Center") make men feel less at home in seeking help. We believe that it's **important to refer to this concept as a Center**, to make abundantly clear that this service serves students. Members of the SVTF agree that names like "Office," "Department," "Division," or "Program" are less welcoming and service-oriented than "Center."

**15 of our benchmarked schools have some type of SVES center**, and we'd love to join the pack.

## Prevention + Education

Listed below are our suggestions for improvement in the realm of prevention and education programs to prevent sexual violence.

### A. **Mandatory, In-Person Education, for all students**

Ohio State does have an educational component (video) through Orientation regarding sexual violence. However, among first-year OSU students, **31% answered "no" when asked about if a program along these lines was offered**, and of those who remembered, **only slightly over half of the students ranked the program as somewhat effective, effective, or very effective**. We recommend integrating sexual violence/consent training into **all Survey courses** as a solution to this problem.

## B. Mandatory, continuing education for all students

Ohio State lacks an ongoing, mandatory sexual violence awareness or prevention program outside of the orientation discussion.

**Almost half of the schools we benchmarked have some sort of continuing education program related to sexual violence**, and many are online, similar to alcohol.edu<sup>15</sup>, the online alcohol education program mandated at Ohio State when entering Greek life.

The **University of California-Irvine** even **places a hold on the students' accounts** if their "FIRST" online training program is not completed, meaning until the individual finishes, they cannot register for classes.

## C. Providing optional course credit for additional SV training

Another educational strategy is to offer **optional sexual violence courses for class credit**<sup>16</sup>. Students would not only earn more in depth knowledge about sexual violence and sexual violence but also credit hours, considering a class like this could fall under an elective type class or an open option, which is required by many degrees.

## D. More robust outreach designed for men, specifically.

While the BGYB program is delivered to athletes, members of Greek life, and some residence hall tenants in a gender-neutral format, it may be helpful to design outreach that targets men specifically. Several survey respondents cited apprehension in approaching the subject as a male. In terms of outreach to men, schools like **University of Illinois**, with their Men Against Sexual Violence group (MASV), and **University of Arizona**, with UA Men Against Sexual Violence, are ahead of the curve.

"Sisters Creating Change" is a new sexual violence training program on Ohio State's campus in which facilitators help Greek chapters develop a plan of action, prevention, and assistance for their sisters – a much needed initiative, considering, **"Women in sororities are 74% more likely to experience rape than other college women**, and those who live in the sorority house are over three times as likely to experience rape.<sup>17</sup>

The theme in almost all of these suggestions is that there are feasible programs the university can develop in order to take preventative measures, and each of these programs we aspire to have at Ohio State can be modeled after a school that we benchmarked.

# Framework to Ensure Progress + Accountability

We need to create a concrete way to ensure progress and accountability while enacting some of these solutions. Ohio State has a vast amount of resources available to students pertaining to sexual violence; however, students are often unaware of how to use or where to find them. Additionally, some students are dissatisfied with the resources they did seek out.

OSU could address some of these issues by being more transparent about goals or plans of action relating to this topic. **University of Iowa** has a very comprehensive 6-point plan, mentioned earlier, viewable by the



community, that outlines exactly what they will accomplish for SVES. The plan is updated online, live, as action is taken. Therefore, their University is held publicly accountable for each step of their sexual violence reform on campus.

The attachment of a timeline to project goals is essential—USG has received positive feedback and support on some of these potential solutions since early Autumn 2014, yet few real promises with regard to suggested changes have been made. If we have a public completion goal date, we'll know if we're making progress on this issue.

While we have a timeline for changes made in agreement with the **Office of Civil Rights (OCR)**<sup>18</sup> in Autumn of 2014, OCR agreement-related goals were established to meet the *bare minimum* expectations for a University response to sexual assault—like everything else we do at Ohio State, we expect to go above and beyond what's asked of us.

One manner to address the need accountability and transparency in pursuing our goals is an **internal review board** that evaluates OSU based on our goals, issuing a higher rating/positive review if a task was completed on time (or the opposite), to hold ourselves accountable. Opposed to the Sexual Violence Committee we currently have, which has staff/faculty representatives appointed in an inconsistent way, a review board would aptly engage Undergraduate Student Government and the Faculty Council if treated as an **Ad-Hoc University Senate Committee**.

*"Information and access are key to sexual assault. We must continue to work together to encourage a welcoming and open environment so that is a continuous discussion. This should be a constant priority and continuously evaluated to determine what resources should be improved added and revamped."*

## Subject-Intervention Related

We recommend the following solutions to strengthen our subject-level intervention, or the support given to survivors or co-survivors of sexual violence.

### 1. Establishment of a Center for Sexual Violence Education and Support

As mentioned previously, the introduction of a Center will streamline survivors' experiences in seeking help, reduce intimidation, and ensure expert response to assist survivors.

### 2. Policy of Walk-In Appointment for first Counseling Session (with CCS, CSVES)

Several Universities benchmarked offer a walk-in appointment on-demand, the first time a student seeks help with their counseling office. While Ohio State already offers this option to a student *in crisis*, we hope that the threat of self-harm won't be required to ensure prompt service for students in the future... especially students seeking help for the first time.

Enabling students to attend a brief appointment as a walk-in will address the incredible barrier that getting help for the first time presents. It may function as an in-person triage, allowing students to acquaint themselves with the Office, and allowing the Office to detect relative need. Students presenting at the Counseling and Consultation Service office (CCS) for a first appointment, they mention sexual violence victimization, can easily and quickly be referred to the Center for Sexual Violence and Support (CSVES) for help.

The current “Let’s Talk”<sup>19</sup> program at Ohio State makes strides in making first contact with a counselor approachable, but it lacks adequate funding to meet need during business hours (beyond 2 hours every Monday, from the Office of International Affairs).

### 3. Public advertisement of wait times (CCS, CSVES)

Many students cite fear of long wait times, wherever they go, as a barrier to seeking support. After years of advocacy in this area, USG has been unable to present, to students, a clear expectation of how long they must wait to secure an appointment with CCS.

While we understand that the successful triage system at Ohio State adjusts wait time by a student’s level of need, we should be able to **publicly advertise** maximum wait times students can rely upon (e.g. “Students will be seen, at most, within two weeks”). If we can’t commit to a minimum wait time due to seasonal surge periods, etc., our inability points to a deeper problem that requires immediate attention.

## Conclusion

It’s clear that Ohio State has come a long way in responding boldly to sexual violence on campus. USG strives, now and in the future, to ensure that we’re treating this issue with the seriousness it deserves. Responding both proactively and reactively to the problem will reduce the incidence of sexual violence on this campus, and ensure that survivors meet the support needed to recover fully. We advocate for the equal access to education that every Buckeye deserves, and envision a campus where sexual violence poses no obstacle to that.

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## Notes

1. For more information on the "It's On Us" national campaign, visit [www.ItsOnUs.org](http://www.ItsOnUs.org)
2. Raw data from the Sexual Violence Survey can be accessed on the USG website at [www.usg.osu.edu](http://www.usg.osu.edu)
3. For more information on what constitutes a "Rape Myth" and for examples, visit <http://www.d.umn.edu/cla/faculty/jhamlin/3925/myths.html>
4. For more information on the Clery Act and implications for campus crime reporting, visit <http://clerycenter.org/summary-jeanne-clery-act>
5. For more information on the Buckeyes Got Your Back bystander intervention program (BGYB), visit <http://swc.osu.edu/sexual-violence/buckeyes-got-your-back/>
6. For more information on the First Year Success Series that includes educational sessions for first-year students, visit <https://fye.osu.edu/successseries.html>
7. For more information about the Counseling and Consultation Service at Ohio State and resources offered for students, visit <http://www.ccs.ohio-state.edu>
8. For more information on Ohio State's Student Advocacy Center, visit <http://advocacy.osu.edu>
9. For more information on Affirmative Consent Policies adopted across the country, with some information about Ohio State's "Consent is Sexy" campaign, visit <https://www.insidehighered.com/news/2014/10/17/colleges-across-country-adopting-affirmative-consent-sexual-assault-policies>
10. "1 in 4" statistic indicates that 1 in 4 women are sexually assaulted while college students. This statistic was pulled from the It's On Us campaign.
11. For more information on Ohio State's Student Code of Conduct, visit <http://studentconduct.osu.edu/page.asp?id=1>
12. To see the University of Iowa's outstanding six-point-plan and progress checklist, visit <http://president.uiowa.edu/six-point-plan>
13. To see the Letter to the Editor co-authored by 14 student organization presidents on Ohio State's campus with regard to sexual violence and advocating for change at Ohio State, visit <http://thelantern.com/2014/10/letter-to-the-editor-ohio-state-student-leaders-propose-ideas-for-sexual-violence-education/>
14. For more information about current SVES staff, view <http://swc.osu.edu/sexual-violence/staff-for-sexual-violence-education-support/>
15. For more information about the online Alcohol EDU training module, view <http://www.everfi.com/alcoholedu-for-college>
16. For more information about courses offered at the University of Iowa about sexual violence, view <http://osmrc.uiowa.edu/intersecting-courses>
17. Statistics courtesy of Minow & Einolf, 2009; Mohler-Kuo, Dowdall, Koss, & Weschler, 2004).
18. For more information about Ohio State's Autumn agreement with the Office of Civil Rights, visit <http://www.ed.gov/news/press-releases/us-department-education-reaches-agreement-ohio-state-university-address-and-prevent-sexual-assault-and-harassment-students>
19. For more information about Ohio State's "Let's Talk" program, visit <http://www.ccs.ohio-state.edu/about-us-and-our-services/lets-talk/>