

LISTENING SESSIONS

Many of the concerns, questions, observations and experiences that came up during the listening sessions/roundtable discussions and in anonymous comments were similar to those expressed by task force members at our earliest meetings. Below we have outlined major and repeated themes that emerged from the listening sessions, as well as particular comments relating to students and employees (faculty and staff).

General:

- A need for much more education and training so that everyone understands the university's values and policies, state and federal laws, and the definitions of sexual violence, sexual harassment and gender discrimination.
- Confusion about when an unwelcome act or series of acts crosses the boundary from being annoying or intimidating to constituting sexual harassment, a hostile work environment, sexual assault, stalking, etc., that should be reported.
- The need for a place where people can go talk to someone, and/or a way to submit questions anonymously and get answers, before deciding whether and how to report.
- The need for more ways to submit anonymous complaints: Technology is distrusted.
- Confusion about options for reporting possible violations and the review process, including which employees must report suspected violations, what information may or may not be kept confidential, and the standards for deciding that the university's policies have been violated.
- A need for greater clarity and simplicity, and less "legal-ese," in communicating the university's Title IX policies, reporting and review procedures, and possible consequences or sanctions.
- A major concern about the "power and privilege" differential between tenured faculty and non-tenured faculty, staff, and students, as well as the power differential between administrators and supervisors and lower-level staff.
- Mistrust of the reporting, review, and sanctions process, especially how status and power affects determinations of responsibility and sanctions.
- Fear of reporting, due to fear of a backlash by supervisors and/or among peers or co-workers.
- A strong desire for greater transparency in how the university responds in particular cases, coupled with a lack of understanding about the federal and state privacy laws that govern university communications about individuals.
- A need for options beyond formal reporting, especially to address microaggressions and bullying before they escalate.
- A lack of support for individuals who have gone through a Title IX reporting and review process after the process is complete.

Students

- In training and education efforts aimed at improving the campus climate and culture, certain groups should be prioritized, including student athletes. There's also a need to commit more resources to addressing and changing the culture on North Campus.
- A need to address the stigma around reporting, and retaliation for reporting.
- A need to clarify roles and improve training for graduate students and other student employees, who are both potential targets and, as employees, responsible for reporting violations.
- A desire to have outside speakers come in to talk about these issues.
- Explore using trained student advocates, such as members of CAPE (Campus Advocates for Prevention Education), as resources for other students who have questions or are considering whether to report an incident.

Faculty and Staff

- A concern that leadership is more concerned with protecting the UML "brand" than with holding violators accountable. Our brand should be: "We take care of each other."
- A concern that microaggressions, bullying and harassment – both sexual and other forms – are widely tolerated.
- A need for a strong commitment to education, prevention and cultural change, not just legal compliance.
- A concern that leadership are insulated and unaware of the reality on the ground.
- Need for leadership on these issues; also, a need for leaders at every level to be held accountable for progress.
- A need for consistent treatment and sanctions, regardless of rank or position.
- Concern and confusion about what to do when sexual harassment comes from outside partners, especially university donors and alumni, as well as employers who host or mentor students for internships, co-ops, clinical rotations, Immersive Scholarships, and other university programs.
- A lack of confidential reporting options for employees.
- LGBTQ+ faculty and staff feel especially isolated and vulnerable to both harassment and gender-based discrimination.
- Gender discrimination, sexual harassment, and sexual violence affect everyone, not just the parties involved. They hurt morale and raise issues of favoritism.
- How do we prepare students to confront these issues in the workplace?
- Inappropriate comments by some faculty in classes, as well as a quid pro quo for grades.
- Alcohol at events leads to more inappropriate behavior.