

SEXUAL ASSAULT DISCLAIMER RATIONALE

Sexual assault is not only an individual crisis, but a systemic issue that Western Washington University has been allowing to continue throughout its history. A lack of information regarding policies, preventative measures, and resources allow for the institutional continuation of the problem. According to *Putting the system back in systems change* by Foster-Fishman, Nowell, and Yang (2007):

“When the root of the problem rests in the fundamental nature of the system, attending to second-order change is more likely to lead to more comprehensive and long-term solutions because it requires attention to the underlying root causes of a problem.” (201)

Having a sexual assault disclaimer on syllabi across campus, as well as on the WWU policy page, will change community norms throughout the university. WWU’s Strategic Plan for 2018-2025 includes the pursuit of “justice and equity in its policies, practices, and impacts,” which is stated in Goal #4. This goal includes “fostering a positive and collaborative campus climate,” remediation of “structure injustices and inequities at Western,” and pursuit of “just action by taking all appropriate steps to protect survivors and to prevent sexual and other types of violence, discrimination, harassment, and bullying” (Goal #4 A, B, I).

We strongly believe that including this sexual assault disclaimer not only fits into WWU’s Strategic Plan but will create a community on campus that provokes systems change through collective impact, which is “the commitment of a group of important actors from different sectors to a common agenda for solving a specific social problem” (Kania & Kramer, p.36).

We hope that systems change can be brought about by starting and normalizing conversation about sexual assault in classrooms, and faculty and staff are strong proponents of the systems change that we are looking to enact. Please consider the placement of a sexual assault disclaimer onto the policy page of WWU and onto syllabi across campuses.

Sources:

Foster-Fishman, P., Nowell, B., Yang, H. (2007). Putting the system back in systems change: a framework for understanding and changing organizational and community systems. *Am J Community Psychol.* 39:197-215. DOI: 10.1007/s10464-007-9109-0

Kania, J. & Kramer, M. (2011). Collective Impact. *Stanford Social Innovation Review*. Retrieved from <https://www.everychildcq.org/wp-content/uploads/2018/06/Collective-Impact-Stanford-Social-Innovation-Review-2011.pdf>

Western Washington University Office of the Provost. (2018). *Strategic Plan 2018-2025: Goal #4*. Retrieved from: <https://provost.wvu.edu/goal-4>

Syllabi Disclaimer

This institution will not tolerate any form of sexual assault or harassment, within the WWU Student Conduct Code; **WAC 516-21-180 *Sex Discrimination***: Disparate treatment or disparate impact based on an individual's sex. This includes sexual misconduct in all forms—sexual harassment, gender based harassment, and sexual violence, as well as other discrimination that treats or impacts people disparately on the basis of sex or gender identity.

Sexual Misconduct: An umbrella term for the following types of sex discrimination—sexual harassment, gender-based harassment, and sexual violence.

Sexual Harassment: Unwelcome conduct of a sexual nature. This includes unwelcome sexual advances or requests for sexual favors, or other unwelcome verbal, physical, or cyber conduct of a sexual nature and can involve persons of the same or different sexes or sexual orientations. Sexual harassment also includes sexual violence, sexual assault, rape, domestic violence, stalking, sexual misconduct, and dating violence. Regardless of your mental or physical state at the time of the misconduct.

Resources

- EOO - Vice Provost for Equal Opportunity/Title IX Coordinator
<https://policy.wvu.edu/PRO-U1600.02A-Discrimination-Complaint-Procedure.pdf>
 - 360-650-3307
- Domestic Violence & Sexual Assault Services of Whatcom County (DVSAS)
 - Contact Information: 24-hour helpline (360) 715 -1653 / <https://www.dvsas.org/>

Resource Websites

- Student Created: <https://www.againstsa.wixsite.com/wwuagainsta>
- WWU Sponsored: <https://wp.wvu.edu/sexualviolence/>