

May 15, 2014

Dear fellow members of the Columbia community:

Before the academic year comes to a close, I want to provide one more brief update on our ongoing efforts to improve our capacity within the University to prevent and address issues of sexual assault and misconduct. Many people on the campus—students, faculty, and administrators—have worked diligently on this critically important matter. The work will continue. Here, then, are some additional changes.

Since my last update, I have charged the Presidential Advisory Committee on Sexual Assault (PACSA) with developing an ongoing, multi-year, comprehensive plan to address sexual assault within our community. There are, of course, many elements already identified and being developed—an annual campus climate survey, enhanced training both during orientation and on an ongoing basis, the release of annual aggregate data after the completion of the academic year, and stronger bystander training.

Over the last several weeks, we have authorized the addition of Title IX investigators and have consolidated the investigative offices to improve the adjudicatory process. The Office of Student Services for Gender-Based and Sexual Misconduct will now report directly to the Associate Provost for Equal Opportunity and Affirmative Action, Title IX Coordinator. We also have facilitated the expansion of the professional staff in the Office of Sexual Violence Response to ensure 24-hour on-call access to professional staff, while keeping fully intact existing access to peer advocates. Furthermore, we have identified an additional location for the Rape Crisis Center in Lerner Hall, which will provide an alternative to the current location in Hewitt Hall. These and other resources are detailed and will be regularly updated on the new website, [Sexual Respect](#), launched earlier this year.

A critical component of reform is the creation of the new office of Executive Vice President for Student Affairs, which, among other things, will help centralize overall responsibility and facilitate better coordination. The search for the person to take up this position is underway. I have retained the services of an executive search firm and very soon will announce the members of an advisory committee of students and other key individuals to assist in the process of identifying candidates. The EVP will then work closely with PACSA to help ensure that our campus culture does not tolerate sexual assault and that our adjudicatory process is responsive, sensitive, efficient, and fair.

Columbia is rightly known as the place of strong and deeply held core academic and community values. We have to deal with the issues of sexual assault and related misconduct consistent with those values.

Sincerely,

Lee C. Bollinger