

Sexual Assault on College and University Campuses

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Monika Johnson Hostler,⁶ and Alison Kiss⁷

Violence and Gender (Dr. Mary Ellen O'Toole): *Sexual assault on college and university campuses is in the headlines today, and there is a great deal of misinformation out there about the problem. So, I would like to ask each one of you to weigh in on what you think is happening at colleges and universities regarding acts and allegations of sexual assault. I will start off this discussion with Allison Kiss.*

Alison Kiss: In terms of college and university campuses and the problem of sexual violence that we have been seeing from our lens as a nonprofit organization that works primarily in training around Clery compliance and providing technical assistance to colleges, universities, as well as students and their families, there certainly is increased awareness that we have seen, and I think that is largely attributed to student activism as well as activism from whistleblowers on campuses and within the media.

So, there has been a lot of attention focused from the Clery lens, which is the lens I will take for looking at underreporting, also looking at response at it relates to the amendments to the Clery Act in 1992, the Campus Sexual Assault Victims Bill of Rights, which provides for certain rights to someone as soon as he or she reports a crime of sexual assault. But then also with the Violence Against Women Act amendments to the Clery Act, there has been a lot of attention about those changes that are taking place.

Some of what the VAWA amendments did was codify pieces of Title IX as civil rights law, whereas Clery is a consumer protection law. But it adds extra protections for students through the student conduct process and also adds dating violence, domestic violence, and stalking as crimes that are reportable under Clery. And there are certain policy obligations under Clery.

So I think there is a lot of attention, one, on the policy side, and that is really running in tandem with the student activism that we have seen. It has been a year in which we are hearing stories, in which students are putting their name to this. They are giving Jane Doe a face and saying, "This happened to me. I want to make my institution better. I am holding my institution accountable." So to me, those three things really stick out.

Monika Johnson Hostler: I dovetail with what Alison is saying. I think a large part of the increased visibility of the issue is because of the increased awareness that we are creating both through our policy work, and the great impact that public policy has on public perception as well as the reality for campus sexual assault.

And so for me, I would say that having done this work for the last 20 years, with the first several years directly working with college campuses, I cannot say that I would report that there is an increase in campus sexual assault. My perspective here is that we have really seen an increase in visibility and, to Alison's point, survivors willing to have their name and face attached to the issue. I think that is largely because the level of accountability, whether it is through the two pieces of legislation Alison mentioned or the Dear Colleague Letter, that really set guidance out and made it readily available to students and their families changed the discourse.

It was almost our tipping point, because information is readily available to everyone on what the response could look like for campus sexual assault and still maintain, in some cases, with the policy, keeping the victim and survivor in mind of what those steps and accommodations and accountability look like for college campuses. And so I think all of those things can most likely be pointed at this day and time back to the visibility as it relates to both the policy and the guidance attached to those policies.

V & G: *Let me ask this question, directed to Brian, Brett, and Caitlin. When many of us hear about these cases or read about them on the front page, it appears that colleges and universities want to handle these problems internally, and not as a criminal investigation. Can you comment on that? Is that true? Are colleges and universities, in fact, doing that or is it just simply we are not aware that it is being handled both criminally and administratively? Brett, would you, or Brian, or Caitlin, weigh in on that?*

Caitlin Flanagan: The number one thing I get asked over and over is, "Why is it handled by the college and not by the police and the criminal justice system? What is going on

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there?” In the first place, it really is the young woman’s decision. Does she want to take it to the police? That can be obviously a very overwhelming experience.

And quite frankly, a lot of events that we in this conversation would find abhorrent, the criminal justice system—particularly if the school is located in a big city with a high crime rate—is going to say, “This does not really rise to the level of something we are going to aggressively prosecute.”

One big positive change that I see, from the perspective of being 53 years old, is that college sexual assault is now something that young women can talk about. There’s a language for it; there’s no longer the sense that what you have to do is live in shame and guilt and silence. It’s something that young women have every right to be angry about. It is something you can bring to your college and say, “I think something needs to be done. I was very wronged by another student. I would certainly have told you if this student came in my room and stole my computer, and on the same level I am going to tell you this student did this to me.”

And I can say, having gone to college 30+ years ago in the South, where nonconsensual sex between students happened fairly regularly—to go to a dean? They were mostly men. The school had only recently gone co-ed. It would not have occurred to us to go to a dean if something like this happened. We would have been blamed for allowing ourselves to be alone with a young man.

But what I see as being almost entirely unchanged since my days as an undergraduate is that there are two very powerful almost monolithic forces on campus that seem implicated in a lot of sexual assaults and that time after time seem to get a pass for it: big-time athletics and fraternities. These outfits really know how to handle these problems for themselves and not get a lot of repercussion. And I think there is a real violation of young women’s rights in the power that is accorded to men’s sports and to the fraternities. And I do not see that having changed at all since I was a young woman 30 years ago. If anything, it seems to be worse.

V & G: If that is true, what do we do about that?

Caitlin Flanagan: I feel a real sense of frustration in terms of the fraternities. There are many great men who have come from the fraternities; I know a lot of the men who run the fraternities—often they are exceedingly decent people who are genuinely tortured about the things that take place at so many of their chapters. But still the system lacks the deep reforms that would make it less dangerous to women. They have a PAC in Washington that is the largest higher education. They always reaffirm their rights to freedom of association, which is the fundamental level from which they proceed. There are many, many chapters that are well-run and even exemplary. But on every campus in America you can ask students which fraternities have a bad record for sexual assaults—and everyone mentions the same one or two houses. The only people who aren’t in the know are the freshman women who are new to school, who haven’t heard this institutional lore, and who end up in the gravest danger. And I think this is a profound wrong—and I think the colleges and universities are deeply complicit in this wrongdoing against their female students.

Every college president in America knows where the problems are, but these people seem to be powerless, or ultimately unwilling, to make the necessary changes. As much

as I have been an advocate for reforming the fraternity system, I feel like it is like throwing a very small pebble at a very huge palace wall.

V & G: So does anyone have a sense of the fraternity culture and, maybe more specifically, how a fraternity’s culture can contribute to this problem? Brett, can you weigh in on this?

Brett A. Sokolow: Well, at the risk of overfocusing on fraternities and I think what would be a much wider-ranging conversation, I will simply say this. I think abusive men exist along a continuum, and when you have organizations like hyperathletic groups, like fraternities on a college campus, those most abusive men on the continuum tend to constellate in those groups because those groups support the norms that those men buy into, provide cover for abusive behaviors, and provide a venue where some of the most abusive behaviors can more easily play out than other venues on a college campus.

V & G: Brian, do you have thoughts on that?

Brian Van Brunt: Thanks, Mary Ellen. I do. I would agree with Brett, and I really like the way the conversation has been established, the idea that this is not a new problem, but one that is receiving increasing publicity. Given my background providing therapy for survivors of sexual assault for 20 years in a therapeutic setting, it can be a difficult choice for the young women about how to report. They sometimes struggle with the conflict of bringing charges forward in a criminal setting versus just not wanting to see that person in their class on Monday morning.

I think for many women, and this is a majority we are looking at, in terms of assault, women being assaulted, there is a choice about how they want to move it forward, really struggling with issues of being punitive versus just wanting space to work on their own emotions and process.

More to what Brett was saying, when I am looking at men on college campuses, we need to really look more specifically at the risk factors that I think are the ones that are a bit endemic. They are not only on college campuses but within our society as a whole. Risk factors such as objectification and depersonalization of women, using alcohol to obtain sex and engaging in grooming behaviors to reduce potential victims’ defenses all increase the risk of assault.

In some cases, you can observe the predation and grooming behaviors where offenders look to soften and lower the defenses of a potential sexual desire. This has been discussed in higher education during first semester, the red zone, if you will, the freshman female students coming in and the dangers there.

But I do think teaching some of these skills and engaging in prevention programming will help educate and reduce these risks. I am very excited to see the government supporting campuses and actually mandating some of this. We need to teach empathy skills, heling the colleges and universities to pay attention to patterns of escalating threat and see these behaviors moving forward. We see this commonly with fraternities and athletic teams, several high-profile cases just this past year where they are engaging in offensive and disturbing behaviors, contributing to that culture of misogynistic language and action.

So I do think it is a complicated issue, not just working with the survivors and the victims, but also programming

and educating the students who have these attitudes. I do not think, again, that this is just a college problem, but more of a societal one that is simply more observable at the college and university level.

V & G: What can we say about the people that do engage in sexual assault? Do we know a lot more about who these offenders are? For example, what are their motivations? What are their backgrounds? Have we learned anything over the years about these young men engaged in this behavior in this environment?

Brian Van Brunt: I do think what we learned is that people do these things for a variety of reasons. When we look at rampage shooting attacks on campus, we understand that it is a mistake to assume that everyone moving forward with a violent attack has either been hurt as a child, or it is revenge-oriented or is motivated by his or her mental illness. This can be a big blind spot for us. So while I think we can look at predation modeling and understand there are students moving forward with sexual assault because they are interested in preying on people and causing pain and harm, I do not think that is the whole story.

Brett and I have had some of these conversations about what exactly kind of motivates these young men to do these behaviors. Sometimes the assault can be a matter of convenience. The student is in a position where they are around people. They want to have sex and the alcohol oftentimes contributes to that environment and it is a crime of opportunity for them. Looking at other motivations, some students plan out their assault ahead of time. So I think the bigger mistake we could make is assuming that it is kind of a homogeneous group, that everyone is doing it for the same reason or motivation. I will start it off there.

Alison Kiss: I think I will piggyback off something I believe Brian said earlier, looking at the focus on prevention education. That is an area where we are seeing some changes, some particularly with Title IX and a lot of talk and focus around climate and climate surveys. I know it is in some of the bills that are floating around Congress right now.

But it is a really great practice to do a climate survey and understand your climate. I think that often the narrative around colleges and universities and sexual violence on college or university campuses is a one-size-fits-all conversation. And it really cannot be; it is so specific to your institution. We were talking about fraternities and Greek life earlier; well a campus may not have Greek life or they might not have a really large sports program. And their problems could exist somewhere else within another club or just generally within the party culture at the campus.

So the first part is really understanding what your climate is. And then from there, really looking at developing some sort of strategic plan around education. And what I think would be exceptional is if every campus really, truly built a prevention education department. I think that what we see often is one person whose job is dedicated to it.

But what we are talking about when we are talking about behaviors of perpetrators, and whether it is predatory behavior or not, most often it is, we are talking about changing behavior. And that is really challenging to do, especially when you get students who are in the 18–21-year-old age range or 18–24-year-old. But we need to really focus on looking at ways to change behavior and ways that campuses

can talk about, okay, well what is going on, so understanding our climate. And then taking that and turning around and saying: Okay, how can we be strategic? How can we aim for not the floor, which quite honestly is compliance? So there is the check the boxes of Clery and Title IX and what you have to do, but how can we make this part of our culture?

If we are really going to change the culture, which we all love to talk about, then let us actually do it. Let us put some things into action. Let us talk about how we can be really strategic about the education that we are doing, and how we can meet people where they are at because often that is what you need to do, and move on to change those behaviors. And it is not easy to do, but I think it is where the conversation has to go.

Monika Johnson Hostler: I will just add to Alison's point. Additionally, we have engaged numerous federal agencies. From the Education Department, looking at what the policy implications are, and what the accountability measures are for campuses.

The same is also happening on the public health side. The violence against women act has spent the last 20 years working with the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention and other researchers to really start to codify, if you will, sexual violence as a public health issue. And in that, to Alison's point, the difficulty around engaging practitioners and researchers around looking at methods and models that can actually create behavior change in rape culture is difficult because we all exist in it and consume it.

What does that behavior change look like and what training, preventive models do we need to develop to be able to measure behavior change? And because this a huge gap, it's just one more thing that makes it more difficult to talk about campuses, and not just college campuses but our K through 12 system as well and looking at what the role is in educating our students around prevention. We have to make sure those things are practiced informed and evidence-based. There is a gap there also, so we are still building the evidence. So we have huge visibility around an issue while we are simultaneously building the prevention model, to change rape culture.

Brett A. Sokolow: Let me just weigh in with a quick comment here. I think that one of the things I am seeing that I appreciate and am encouraged by is that while this was at one point looked at by colleges as an issue of sexual assault or issue of sexual violence, because of some of that federal effort and agency emphasis and some of the new laws that are in place, colleges are finally beginning to see this as a broader issue of not just sexual violence but sexually harassing behaviors and gender discrimination and stalking and relationship violence, and how all these behaviors are connected to each other, rather than trying to address things in a vacuum or siloing them as if they are unconnected. And I think that is going to be ultimately part of the solution as well.

Alison Kiss: There is also real value in partnering. I think when colleges and universities develop really extensive partnerships with their local centers, victim service centers, rape crisis centers, often who report or work directly with their state coalitions like the North Carolina Coalition Against Sexual Assault, it is just such a positive relationship because they are doing this work 24/7 within those state coalitions.

Building those partnerships and relationships and working together, it offers more resources for students, more

options for students. So if they want to consider the criminal justice process, they could work with that local organization to learn, whether it be through a legal advocate, whether it be to understand what it would look like what all of their options are. So there is really just such value in building those external partnerships and collaborations.

Monika Johnson Hostler: Thank you, Alison. It sounds better when it comes from someone else.

Caitlin Flanagan: I think it is hard for us to really wrap our minds around this notion that college has changed so much. Forty or fifty years ago if you sent a child to college, particularly a girl, it was more like sending a child to a boarding school. There were curfews and there were dorm mothers and there was a sense that your private behavior was something that the college was—quite specifically—called upon to monitor.

I think we have a culture now where college is no longer part of an upbringing. College is now something that we consume, we buy, we purchase. We certainly do not expect a kid to get an upbringing when he or she goes to college. And so we send kids off to college who have been oftentimes quite sheltered at home and they assume that they are being similarly sheltered at college—and they surely are not. And then they get to college and they feel safer than they are. And they feel that there are those levels of protection. It takes them awhile to adjust to the fact that nobody is waiting for them to get home to the dorm at a certain hour. Nobody is going to call if they do not show back up.

When I talk to young college women, many have gotten a series of very strong messages from their parents about how to behave when they are at college, and some of these messages are probably very helpful in reducing assault. But a lot of us in the media are loath to promote these ideas—chief among them, avoiding binge drinking—because we do not want to get involved in victim blaming. So that's a problem; there are measures that would reduce young women's vulnerability to assault, but because culturally we want to keep the focus on the perpetrators' behavior and not the victims' behavior, we may not be getting these valuable messages out.

So I think there is a very fine line that none of us know how to walk. I am not going to promote certain behaviors in an essay of mine because, again, I do not want that young woman who was assaulted to pick it up and think “here in a prominent journal I am being told the five things I should have done to protect myself, so it is my fault I got assaulted.”

Brett A. Sokolow: Let me weigh in on that a bit, if I could. I think the colleges do not do an awful job of straddling that line at all. I think that the idea of sending out what we call risk reduction and protective behaviors information happens quite frequently, perhaps far worse though than we send out primary prevention information. But I do not think as a society we ought to be plagued with guilt over how we send that message or whether we send that message because, to an extent, for both men and women, they are going to be engaged in developmental risk taking regardless of that message. And you can say certain things will reduce your risk until you are blue in the face, they are still going to do them because that is how their brains are developing.

So what I liked about some of the prevention efforts that we are undertaking now is that they are much more empirically

based than they were before. They are based on understanding how the adolescent brain develops and in providing content to—for example, with bystander engagement—those who might be around a risk-taking individual, to help them when their decision-making faculties are not operating optimally.

So it is sort of the idea of teaching others to recognize the risk situations and then how to engage those situations, I think to me, is much more developmentally creative and clever in terms of a prevention technology and methodology than a need to reiterate risk-reducing messages. Not that it is an either/or; I think it has to be both.

Of course, I also agree with you that the message has to be sent to those who are the abusers in terms of their behavioral decisions. Too, you can talk to them until they are blue in the face and if it is a predator, you are never going to talk them out of raping someone. Instead, what we can do is create an environment that is less conducive and less tolerant and more likely to engage that situation when they see the risk factor occurring so that those who would perpetrate those behaviors do not feel perhaps as able to do it, to get away with it, and to justify it as normative within their communities.

Caitlin Flanagan: There are many populations in college that are not binge drinking. In fact *most* students are not binge drinking. For example, first-generation college students have very low rates of binge drinking. African American students, again, very low percentages of extreme binge drinking. When you look at the population of extreme binge drinkers, the largest demographic group is white students of college-educated parents. They are much more likely to take that risk.

So I think that there are families and there are cultures that have done a much better job of teaching their kids. There are families who have told their kids, “This is not something you are going to do. That is not something that is going to be part of your college experience.” Some first-generation college kids have come from backgrounds in which, if you mess around with drugs, if you mess around with heavy drinking, it is not going to be a lecture from mom and a trip to the student misconduct board; it is going to be a ruined life, incarceration. Your life will be derailed.

So I think that it is possible to change the culture of binge drinking—which is so highly associated with sexual assault on campus. In the majority of events, both the perpetrator and the victim had been binge drinking, so if we could solve that problem, we would have done a lot to solve the sexual assault problem. It's possible to change public behavior—look at things like cigarette smoking, drunk driving, and using seatbelts: All of these behaviors have changed radically in the past 40 years. So we shouldn't think of college binge drinking as something that is intractable.

V & G: *You have raised such a critical point and as we begin to wind down, what I would like to pose to everyone is this: I hear your thoughts and opinions on what government and universities are doing, and the messaging that goes to the students. But do we have a message for parents before their son or daughter even gets to college? If we are talking about the culture, is there something that parents need to weigh in on regarding their kids before they go to college? In my mind, it is very hard to think about creating a solution to a problem involving young people in that critical age 18–25, without some kind of parental involvement. Monika, do you have any thoughts on that?*

Monika Johnson Hostler: I completely agree with you and I have been discussing with many of my personal friends who have older children and so this is what I tell them. I think it is a harder conversation for parents to hear, but given that we are talking about changing a culture, and I think it was Brett or someone said earlier, we are not sending our kids to college to be raised. There are certain things that we have to do before they get to college. How we engage and what behaviors we accept are a huge part of the culture that we are creating for our kids, our kids are creating for themselves.

And so what I say often is for me, at this point, looking at the little bit of empirical research that is out there, is teaching our young people about healthy behaviors and healthy relationships earlier is one of the strongest correlative factors to actually changing behavior. It is understanding what relationships look like. I cannot remember if it was Brian, but somebody also mentioned earlier, we do not have complete understanding or data on what is the motivation of perpetrators on college campuses.

So given that, we are training all of our children, male and female alike, around the same core principles: humanity and respecting people, both men and women, girls and boys, regardless of gender and race, as individuals and looking at how to be in healthy relationships. And in all relationships, not just intimate relationships, but how you interact with people and what influences decision making.

The sooner we talk about those things, the easier that transition is. Caitlin, you were talking about how you talk to your children specifically about sexual assault. And how you specifically engage in risk reduction behavior, for me, is looking at early and often prevention conversations around healthy behaviors and healthy relationships, in which parents/guardians often find difficult to have these open conversations with young people.

And it is interesting you brought up the binge drinking for African Americans. It is one of the things we have been looking at here in North Carolina because we have over a dozen historically black colleges and universities. And their numbers, not just for binge drinking, but for sexual assault, are completely different. There isn't any data to determine cause, but some assume access to alcohol is a contributor.

Privilege and resources combined have created a climate that permits male violence against women. To really create a culture of prevention has to begin before college.

Caitlin Flanagan: I am a mom of two 17-year-old sons. We have talked to them about how you treat other people. How do you treat someone? How do you want to be treated? How do you show respect? That it is an ongoing conversation.

And yet I see some young men already in my community that are allowed to binge drink constantly as teenagers in their own parents' home, allowed to be in boundary-less situations when they are far too young, at age 14, 15, no supervision, no intervention. And I just say to myself a few of these kids I worry that they are starting to develop behaviors that are going to cause a lot of suffering—to themselves and others—later down the line.

Alison Kiss: There is some going on at the policy level as well. Senator McCaskill and Senator Kaine introduced a bill that would require sexual assault education in public high schools. So I think there is movement and largely in response to some of the policy work we have seen around

higher ed. There is movement to look at because of the folks they have talked to, like some of the folks on this call. They are looking at families, starting the conversation earlier in schools, because there is certainly a lot with social learning theory. If it is happening in your home, then we know you are at a large percentage risk of perpetrating that behavior, so can we also provide education in the school. There is not an easy answer here or framework but I think it has to happen, as Monika mentioned, in the public health reference on multiple levels, to reach folks.

One more thing I will add about higher ed is with the Clery numbers, a lot of people look at reported numbers of sexual assault through Clery because, again, it is consumer protection to determine if a campus is "safe." And so I know the public awareness we have done this year, and we have seen a lot of increased attention to this, in October when those reports come out, is that if a campus is reporting higher numbers it does not definitely mean it is unsafe; what it means is students are reporting.

So we have been doing a lot to say the intent was you want to look deeper and look at the policies the campus has. They are probably talking about it. When I see a campus with higher reported numbers, it means that people are coming forward. And what are they doing to encourage people to come forward and report the most underreported crime across society, so not just in higher education? So I think using that tool to really get a summary of what the policies are, what services there are. And to also look beyond just with sexual violence, also look at alcohol, look at housing, look at security.

Brian Van Brunt: When talking to parents, I would stress the importance of developing critical thinking skills. We cannot put a bubble around our kids as we send them off to college to protect them from any situation. To me, this is the evolution from where we have been in sexual assault prevention: moving beyond police only teaching RAD training with teaching people how to defend themselves versus thinking about how you interact with your environment, and moving beyond teaching women to travel in packs and to watch their drinks to situational awareness and bystander intervention that better addresses the entire community culture. We are teaching critical thinking skills and harm reduction skills, helping students wrestle with the choices they make. For example, if they are going to make a risky decision, like Brett was saying, as many teenagers and young adults engage in as part of their developmental growth, that they think about it in a harm reduction model. That they have supports and caring mentors they can talk to and bounce ideas off of to help them make more informed decisions.

So that tends to be two things that I try to teach both the parents and students really staying focused on both critical thinking skills as they approach things, as well as harm reduction. Even if they cannot get to a safe place, find a place where they can make better decisions.

V & G: *On that note let me throw this out as my final question. What advice would you give to parents or to young women and young men who are beginning their college career, or what final observations or recommendations would you make on this whole issue? Let's start with you, Brett?*

Brett A. Sokolow: If it is advice for parents, my suggestion would be that as early as you start teaching your children

good touch/bad touch in terms of abuse, I think you can begin to teach the sexual ethics of consent. It is one of the things we have not done to institutionalize in our society: this idea of everyone's sexual autonomy, the right to not be impacted upon bodily by somebody else until and unless we give our permission.

And I think that sometimes the first time students are hearing about consent is when they get to college at orientation. And by then I think some of the patterns are, needing reversing, letting alone socializing. And so I think that for parents, if they can start to incorporate the idea that good touch is consensual touch, as early as it is appropriate developmentally to begin talking with kids about that, they will grow up thinking consent is the norm.

And when that socialization becomes how everybody in our society sees this, then you lose all these debates about California choosing Affirmative Consent Standard being so radical because everybody recognizes of course that is how we operate. If I want to touch somebody else, I get their permission and here is how I have got the skills. So that would be my way in on that concept.

Alison Kiss: I would agree with that. We often hear from parents of students after the fact, so after something has happened. And it quite often appears they are not aware of what resources existed or things of that nature. So I also think it is important when you get to a campus, when you explore a campus, to have the ongoing conversations that I think we are all in agreement on from K up, start to have some conversations about what services are available, where to get help, where the counseling center is.

There has been so much conversation about having resources that are confidential for students and I think that in counseling centers, there is still a stigma about mental health. I think it is going away a little bit, but making sure that students know it is okay to seek help and where they can get that help throughout. I think particularly as we talk about dating violence, domestic violence, and stalking—crimes that typically escalate—if you have someone who is in an unhealthy relationship, making sure that the person knows where to get help.

And as a parent, knowing there is an open line of communication. I have often talked to parents in my career before working at the Clery Center and when I worked out of a service agency. And we know parents want the best for their children, but sometimes that does not translate well. And it translates into taking their control or not providing options. So I think it is really important as a parent to educate yourself and, to also, when you take your students to campus, to look at the services that exist so that they can seek help throughout their career, not just if they are sexually assaulted but for the many things that may come across their path while in college.

V & G: Thank you for that. Monika, your final thoughts, ideas?

Monika Johnson Hostler: I completely agree with everything that has been said, and I think I would just wrap up, with this: we just have to remember that while all these things are important to actually see the shift in culture, we also have to be clear that students are also coming to campus with previous experiences.

There is research with data regarding previous child sexual abuse and being sexually assaulted while in college. I think it is important for our campuses to recognize the need

to address intervention for some of our students, and to include that as part of the overall prevention programming, which seems like a lot to ask of campuses.

But unfortunately we are not at a place where we can say every parent is going to have the individual capacity to do what Caitlin is talking about in terms of how you parent your child. So they are going to still come to college without the information, without the capacity to make good decisions for themselves. And we are going to have to build programming and infrastructure at all levels, including campuses if we really are talking about the true shift to ending campus sexual assault.

V & G: Excellent. Caitlin, final thoughts?

Caitlin Flanagan: The single best thing I have heard recently is from the attorney Susan Estrich out here at USC, who has made the point that in that moment when a young woman is with a man and is suddenly realizing it is going beyond consent and she is saying “no” and he is not hearing it, she should clearly and loudly use the word “rape.” At least that is a practical thing, a useful thing, and an empowering thing to give a young woman as a tool. Is it always going to work? Absolutely not. But is it something, again, that we can educate young women about? I think so.

V & G: Thank you. Brian, how about being the person to wrap it up for us?

Brian Van Brunt: I think we have learned some things. Again, we talked about the government programs out there, the Just Say No programs and such. And I think one of the things we have learned is the need to be smarter and more effective in our prevention or discussions. I love the idea of consent. I love the idea of affirmative consent, of continuous consent, that we are really teaching people that sexual relationships are ones that are based on and most enjoyable when there are two people involved making those decisions together and being together. And that it is a continuous process; it is not a one-time thing and then once you get permission you are good, do whatever you want. But it really is a continuous process for the students involved.

And while this can come off a little pollyannaish, I want to stress the idea of positive consent has also struggled with some marketing challenges. Like a www.collegehumor.com skit where at every stage someone has to ask, “Is this next thing okay?” Or the condom packaging that allows for thumb prints to be secured. Or the iPhone App that has both sexual partners click “yes” on each new sexual act. Teaching consent, both affirmative and continuous, should be about connecting with the other person and respecting who he or she is as an individual. Sex is best when it is with a willing partner who matches your enthusiasm, and done in a way that encourages communication about what each person enjoys and, ultimately, with an awareness and respect for what your partner may not be comfortable with at a given time.

V & G: All of you have provided tremendous insights, opinions, and observations. You have been an amazing panel and very generous in sharing your experience and expertise on such an important issue.

I cannot thank you enough for agreeing to participate. Your messages were strong and powerful, and they are going to resonate well with our readers. So thank you all very much.

PARTICIPANT BIOGRAPHIES



Caitlin Flanagan is a contributing editor for *The Atlantic* and a former staff writer for *The New Yorker*; her writing has also appeared in the *New York Times*, the *Los Angeles Times*, the *Wall Street Journal*, *The Washington Post*, and a wide variety of magazines. She is a winner of a National Magazine Award for Reviews and Criticism, and her essays have been widely anthologized, including in the Best American Essays, Best American Travel Writing, and Best American Magazine Writing series. She is the author of two books, *To Hell with All That* and *Girl Land*. Her subjects have included domestic life, fame, adolescence, and education. She is currently at work on a series of essays about the private lives of American college students. Flanagan grew up in Berkeley, attended the University of Virginia, and now lives in Los Angeles. Before becoming a writer, she was a high school English teacher and college counselor.

Monika Johnson Hostler is the executive director of the North Carolina Coalition Against Sexual Assault (NCCASA). NCCASA is the sole statewide alliance working to end sexual violence through education, advocacy, and legislation. NCCASA represents 125 members, including local rape crisis centers. Prior to coming to NCCASA, Monika worked at the local rape crisis center in Scotland County as the Crisis Intervention Coordinator. Monika has been an activist in the social justice movement for over 15 years. In that time she has presented on the issue of sexual violence to numerous communities, including the Joint Task for the Sexual Assault Prevention and Response Military Academy subcommittee. In addition to working on behalf of 90 rape crisis centers in North Carolina, Monika is a pivotal asset to the national sexual assault movement. She also serves as the president of the National Alliance to End Sexual Violence (NAESV), one of the policy entities responsible for the passing of the Violence Against Women Act and securing over \$420 million for violence against women work across the country. Monika was appointed by the Obama administration to serve on the National Advisory Committee on Violence Against Women.



Alison Kiss is the executive director of the Clery Center for Security on Campus, Inc., and formerly served as director of programs at the Clery Center. Ms. Kiss previously served as the director of Wellness, Alcohol, & Drug Education at Saint Joseph's University in Philadelphia. Prior to her work in higher education, she served as the outreach and education program manager at the Domestic Abuse Project of Delaware County, Inc. She currently serves as an adjunct instructor teaching in criminal justice and sociology programs throughout the Delaware Valley, PA. Ms. Kiss recently published a chapter on college campus safety in the recently published anthology, *Victims of Sexual Assault and Abuse: Resources and Responses for Individuals and Families*, edited by Dr. Michele Paludi, and a chapter on campus safety policy for the 3rd edition of *Campus Crime*, edited by Dr. Bonnie Fisher and Dr. John Sloan. She recently co-authored an article on community collaboration for the prevention of nonmedical prescription drug use in higher education featured in the *Journal of Social Work Practice in the Addictions*. Most recently, she coauthored a chapter on federal campus safety regulations and sexual assault and presented on her work as part of the president's panel for the Association for the Study of Higher Education Conference in Washington, DC. Ms. Kiss served on the U.S. Department of Education's negotiated rulemaking committee for the VAWA amendments to the Clery Act. She has provided services as an expert witness in campus sexual assault civil cases and is affiliated with many professional organizations, including Rapid Response Expert Network, Violence Against Women Online Resources (VAWNET), Expanded Partners Group, "Vision 21: Transforming Victims Services," Department of Justice: OVC-Sponsored Project, and the National Association of Student Personnel Administrators. Ms. Kiss earned a bachelor of arts in psychology and a minor in Spanish from The Catholic University of America and a master of science in criminal justice from Saint Joseph's University. She is currently enrolled in the EdD program in Higher Education Administration and Policy at Northeastern University, with her dissertation focusing on a qualitative study of relational leadership and sexual assault prevention in higher education.





Brett A. Sokolow, JD, is a higher education attorney who specializes in high-risk campus health and safety issues. He is recognized as a national leader on campus sexual violence prevention, response, and remediation. He is the president and CEO of The NCHERM Group, LLC, which serves as legal counsel to 70 colleges and universities. He is also the executive director of ATIXA (www.atixa.org). He frequently serves as an expert witness on sexual assault and harassment cases, and he has authored 12 books and more than 50 articles on campus safety and sexual assault. The NCHERM Group, LLC, has provided services to more than 3,000 college and university clients. He has authored the conduct codes of more than 80 colleges and universities. The ATIXA Model Sexual Misconduct Policy serves as the basis for policies at hundreds of colleges and universities across the country. NCHERM has trained the members of more than 700 conduct hearing boards at colleges and universities in North America. He serves as the executive director of the National Behavioral Intervention Team Association (NaBITA; www.nabita.org). He is a graduate of the College of William & Mary and the Villanova University School of Law. He is a member of the advisory boards of the National Hazing Prevention Collaborative, the NASPA Enough Is Enough Campaign, the School and College Organization for Prevention Educators (SCOPE; www.wearescope.org), and the Student Affairs Community College Association (SACCA).

Brian Van Brunt, EdD, joined The NCHERM Group as senior executive vice president for Professional Program Development in January 2013. He is past-president of the American College Counseling Association (ACCA), the president of the NaBITA, and the managing editor for Student Affairs eNews (SAeN). Brian is a regular speaker for academic conferences around the world. He has presented dozens of workshops with the ACCA, Association of Student Conduct Administrators (ASCA), National Association of Forensic Counselors (NAFC), American College Personal Association (ACPA), Association of University College Counseling Center Directors (AUCCCD), Student Affairs Administrators in Higher Education (NASPA), and the European Congress on Violence in Clinical Psychiatry (OUD). Dr. Van Brunt has taught at several universities and colleges over his career. He has offered classes in counseling theory, ethics, program evaluation, statistics, and sociology topics for both graduate and undergraduate students. Brian has served as the director of counseling in New England College and Western Kentucky University. He is the author of several books, including *Harm to Others: The Assessment and Management of Dangerousness*; *A Faculty Guide to Addressing Disruptive and Dangerous Behavior in the Classroom*; and *Ending Campus Violence: New Approaches in Prevention*.



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