

[Chancellor Dirks issues an update on sexual assault prevention, response](#)

UC Berkeley | February 25, 2014

UC Berkeley Chancellor Nicholas Dirks today (Tuesday, Feb. 25) issued this statement:

Dear campus community,

I want to begin this message with a clear, unequivocal statement: sexual assault has no place on a college campus or anywhere in civilized society, and I am fully committed to ensuring that we strengthen and expand our protocols in place, and roll out improvements in a deliberative way.

Our focus will be to educate students, faculty and staff about sexual assault resources and bystander intervention; enhance our ability to quickly and effectively handle allegations and reports of sexual misconduct, and amplify our communications and support to survivors of sexual assault.

I also would like to take this opportunity to acknowledge the efforts of our students and the campus student leadership who have sought to raise awareness and catalyze necessary changes by sharing their own personal and painful stories of sexual assault. I have been deeply moved by your courage and conviction, and offer my full support for your efforts, as well as similar initiatives undertaken by students across the country, to highlight this national problem.

At Berkeley, we will do what is necessary to create and sustain a culture of prevention and reporting within our community. I also want to be clear that we will hold members of our community accountable for violating campus sexual assault policies.

Through new and ongoing efforts, we are taking meaningful steps to provide a safe, supportive and respectful environment for our students and the entire campus community.

What follows is an update on the progress we are making.

Last fall, I commissioned a Title IX Compliance Advisory Committee, comprised of faculty, staff and students, to review campus policies and educational efforts regarding sexual assault, harassment and discrimination. This group, which includes three working subcommittees, has begun its important work and will have ongoing oversight for Title IX issues on campus. I have asked the Committee to report directly to me on a regular basis about its discussions and recommendations, and I have already informed our new, incoming Executive Vice Chancellor and Provost, Claude Steele, that this will be a key priority once he takes office at the beginning of April. Together, he and I are ready to oversee the successful implementation of constructive ideas, initiatives and needed changes in our policies and practices. The Committee will approach its work with a continuous improvement mindset.

Over the past several months, campus leaders also have been reviewing our policies to help streamline our response in cases of sexual misconduct. As part of that review, we have engaged

the services of nationally renowned experts, who are assisting us with creating more effective and coordinated responses to sexual misconduct on our campus.

With that in mind, I want to highlight some of the new and ongoing steps being taken to improve access to resources and enhance the campus' response to sexual assault.

- I have allocated resources to create a new position that will assist victims in navigating the reporting process and help survivors secure emotional support and resources in the aftermath of an assault. The **Confidential Survivor Advocate** position will be a central and confidential point of contact.
- I also authorized **adding an additional investigator** to The Office for the Prevention of Harassment and Discrimination immediately. This position is in addition to a new investigator hired last fall, and will assist in expediting the investigation and resolution of sexual misconduct cases.
- At my direction, UCPD is dedicating resources toward assisting survivors who come forward to report sex crimes to the police. A **Survivor Resource Officer** will provide assistance and guidance regarding how to report an assault, obtain counseling and other resources, and will help identify administrative and legal options. While our police officers currently provide survivors with information about available resources, this dedicated role will establish a single point of contact in the campus police department, and will help connect survivors with campus and community resources.
- As we previously announced, we have established a **new Interim Sexual Misconduct Policy** that allows survivors to appeal the resolution of sexual misconduct cases. In addition, the Sexual Misconduct Response Team comprised of members of UCPD, OPHD (Title IX), Student Conduct, Counseling, Residence Life, and others, meets on a regular basis to carefully coordinate the handling of sexual assault matters on campus.
- This spring, we will be launching a **new, one-stop website** that will provide information about preventing, reporting and adjudicating sexual misconduct on campus. Members of our community will then have one place to go to learn more about support options, our policies and disciplinary procedures relating to sexual misconduct.
- We are partnering with our ASUC leadership and the Gender Equity Resource Center (GenEq) to develop concerted efforts on communications and training during April, which is Sexual Assault Awareness Month.
- Berkeley is actively involved in a systemwide initiative to ensure compliance with new changes required by the Campus SaVE Act. I have appointed several members of my staff to key working groups on this project, which is sponsored by President Napolitano.

I realize that there are many committed people on campus who are working diligently on these issues, and they deserve our full support and effective collaboration. I believe we share a common goal for a campus where sexual assault is not present, tolerated or ignored, and I am

convinced we can achieve that goal by coming together to build a culture of prevention, reporting and accountability.

There is much work to do, and we will continue to focus our resources and efforts toward ensuring a safe and respectful community for all students.

Chancellor Nicholas B. Dirks