Sexual Violence on Campus: How too many institutions of higher education are failing to protect students

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Yesterday, the office of U.S. Senator Claire McCaskill and a Senate Subcommittee released the report, Sexual Violence on Campus, an assessment of how colleges and universities report, investigate and adjudicate sexual violence. According to the report, colleges nationwide are disregarding federal rules for prevention, response and investigation of campus sexual assaults.

Based on a 2014 survey of 440 four-year institutions of higher education, a number of interviews with stakeholders and roundtable discussions, survey results indicate that many institutions are failing to comply with laws relating to sexual violence on campus. In addition, many institutions are failing to institute and comply with best practices on handling sexual violence among students.

ATIXA has prepared a summary of key survey findings below.

Summary of Key Survey Findings:

There is a lack of knowledge about the scope of the problem.
- Only 16% of the institutions in the sample conduct climate surveys.
- Roughly 20% of the nations largest public schools offer climate surveys.
- Roughly 12% of the nations largest private schools offer climate surveys.

There is a failure to encourage reporting of sexual violence.
- Roughly 51% of institutions surveyed offers a hotline to survivors as a reporting tool.
- The option to report a sexual assault online is provide by only 44% of sampled institutions. Of those who do provide this option, 88% represent the largest public universities, while 74% represent the largest private institutions.
- Only 8% of institutions allows confidential reporting.

There is a lack of training on sexual assault.
- More than 20% of institutions provide no sexual assault response training to faculty and staff.
- More than 30% do not provide training to students.
- Of those survey, 72% of for-profit private institutions do not offer any sexual assault training for students.
- Only 22% of schools in the sample provide sexual violence training to their Greek systems.
- Only 37% offer this training to student athletes.

Reported sexual violence goes without investigation.
- More than 40% of the schools surveyed have not conducted a single investigation in more than 5 years. Of these, 6% represent the nation’s largest public schools.

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• Roughly 20% of private schools in the sample conduct fewer investigations than the number of incidents they report to the Department of Education.

**There is a lack of adequate services for survivors.**
- Most schools surveyed - roughly 85% - use a team approach to respond to sexual assaults.
- Almost 90% of survey responders indicated that sexual assault survivors have access to victim assistance and advocacy programs. However, only 51% of schools indicate they offer such services.
- Most institutions fail to offer a Sexual Assault Nurse Examiner (SANE) to victims of sexual assault.

**There is a lack of trained, coordinated law enforcement.**
- Due to the widespread concerns regarding the handling of sexual assault cases by local law enforcement, many sexual assault survivors prefer to avoid reporting to police.
- Law enforcement at 30% of surveyed schools receive little to no training on sexual assault response.
- More than 70% of institutions have no protocol or requirements for how local law enforcement should work with the institutional collaboratively in responding to sexual assault.

**Adjudication fails to comply with requirements and best practices.**
- Most schools do not use processes that comply with federal law and required practices.
- While schools are required to make information in regards to the adjudication process available to students, 13% of those surveyed do not offer such information to their student population.
- The overwhelming majority of experts believe that students should not participate in adjudication processes. However, students are allowed to assist in sexual assault cases at more than 40% of institutions.
- In 20% of campuses, the athletics department provides oversight to sexual violence cases involving student athletes.

**There is a lack of coordinated oversight.**
- While institutions are required to have a Title IX Coordinator, more than 10% of the institutions do not have a person serving in this role.