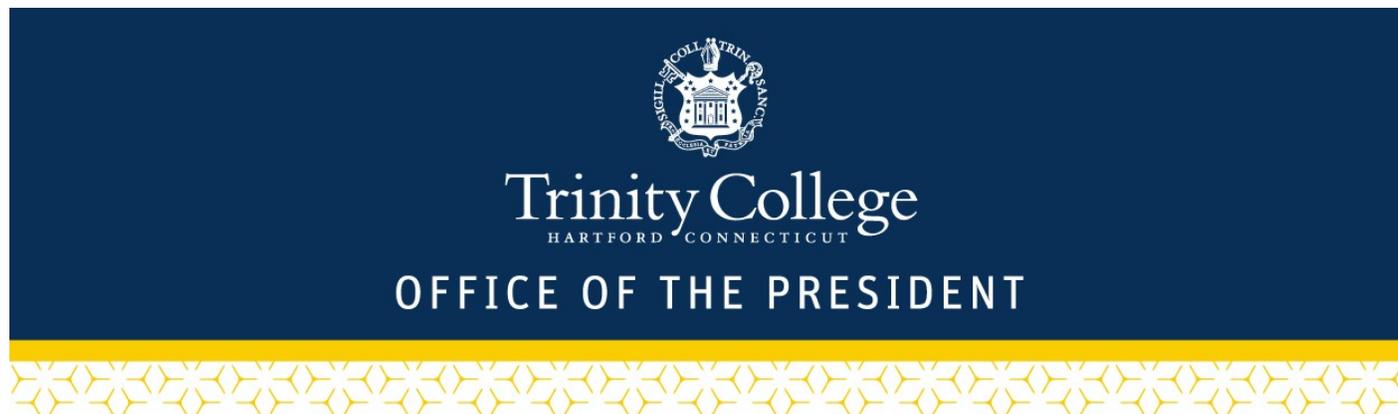


Combating Sexual Misconduct at Trinity

President Joanne Berger-Sweeney <President@trincoll.edu>

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To: President Joanne Berger-Sweeney <President@trincoll.edu>



July 8, 2020

Dear Members of the Trinity Community,

We are writing on behalf of the senior administration of Trinity College. We care deeply about our students, and it is painful to read on the @trinsurvivors Instagram account so many horrific accounts about sexual violence, harassment, intimidation, and discrimination on our campus. Taken together, these stories describe a sexually hostile environment. We respect the bravery of each and every person who has shared a story. We unequivocally stand against all forms of sexual harassment, sexual assault, dating violence, domestic violence, stalking, emotional and sexual manipulation for sex, and retaliation.

The stories told on @trinsurvivors collectively speak of persistent cultures and attitudes that make sex discrimination possible on campus. We take all of these allegations seriously, and we will review and investigate them to the fullest extent possible. We are committed to providing an educational environment in which every member of our campus community feels safe from sexual violence, a goal articulated in the report of the [Task Force on the Status of Women](#) earlier this year.

The [Trinity College Policy on Sexual Misconduct](#), the result of the president's first task force on the prevention of sexual misconduct at Trinity in 2015, underscores the college's dedication to addressing the abhorrent behaviors posted on @trinsurvivors. We encourage anyone who wishes to file a complaint against a person over whom the college has jurisdiction (i.e., current students, employees, and contractors) to contact Trinity's [Title IX Coordinator, Rita Kelley](#), who can explain the process for filing a complaint. We recognize that sexual assaults are among the most under-reported crimes in the nation. We will take all complaints seriously, ensure that everyone who contacts us is treated with respect and dignity, and afforded a process that is fair and unbiased. The college has and will continue to take disciplinary action against those found

responsible for sexual misconduct, up to and including permanent separation from the college.

The reports of sexual misconduct on @trinsurvivors indicate that we must work harder to have a culture at Trinity that respects consent, period. No one should ever be pressured to have sex for any reason, or feel powerless to resist emotional and psychological manipulation designed to coerce a person into having sex. The reports indicate also that we must work harder to have a campus where anyone who experiences any form of sexual misconduct will be listened to, and not shamed, silenced, or punished for speaking up. But this is not a job that the senior administration can take on alone. The safety and well-being of our students is the collective responsibility of all members of our community.

Currently, a working group of students, staff, faculty, and administrators is revising the college's sexual misconduct policy in light of the Department of Education's newly released Title IX regulations that take effect on August 14, 2020. In revising our policy, the working group first and foremost will ensure that Trinity's policy continues to provide a fair and equitable process for adjudicating claims of sexual misconduct, and maintains serious penalties to hold those found responsible of sexual misconduct accountable for their actions. We have received the [list of demands](#) that are posted on @trinsurvivors. The working group has begun to review this important document, and will use it to inform its discussions and recommendations. Further, members of the senior administration will closely review the list of demands and provide a response with planned action items in the coming weeks. Our response will be informed by the list of demands and the narratives. In general, the action steps will address campus culture, including the classroom, Greek life, athletics, and student social life in general, and the need to build trust in our Title IX process.

Finally, while many of the stories on @trinsurvivors have expressed sorrow, pain, anguish, or stress, some individuals also spoke about the benefits of counseling and being able to lean on others for support. Please know that the college has many resources available to all students that are described in [Your Rights, Your Options](#). These campus options include privileged individuals who will not reveal anything that is told to them in confidence: licensed staff or staff supervised by licensed psychologists in the Counseling Center (you will be contacted within 24 hours regarding an appointment) *and* the designated chaplain in the Office of Spiritual and Religious Life. Confidential resources, including non-student employees in the Women and Gender Resource Action Center, the Queer Resource Center, and the Health Center, are also available for support and guidance. Confidential resources are required to report an incident, without revealing the name of the reporter, unless there is an imminent threat of harm to a person. *Your Rights, Your Options* also includes off campus resources such as 24/7 hotlines that are staffed by trained volunteers with privileged communication. We urge any individual in need of support to contact the resources listed.

We are committed to doing the work necessary to provide our students a campus climate that is free of sexual misconduct.

Sincerely,

Joanne Berger-Sweeney, President and Trinity College Professor of Neuroscience
Anita Davis, Vice President for Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion

Joe DiChristina, Vice President for Student Success and Enrollment Management