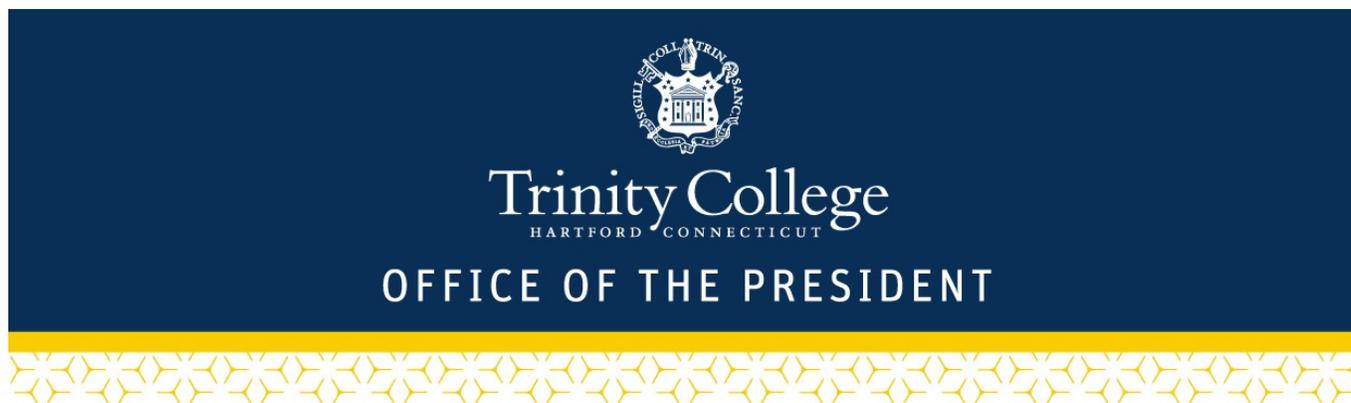


An Update on Our Work to End Sexual Misconduct at Trinity

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

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



January 28, 2021

Dear Students, Faculty, and Staff,

As you'll recall, over the summer and into the fall, the college made numerous commitments to address racism and sexual misconduct at Trinity. We aspire to a community that's truly inclusive, welcoming, and safe for all. This work is urgent but unending, and it requires the commitment of every one of us if we are to achieve for our campus something that has so far eluded broader society. We take this aspiration seriously; ultimately, at Trinity and at every college, no amount of racism or sexual misconduct is acceptable.

[In November, we updated you](#) on our progress toward the commitments the college made in July to address systemic racism at Trinity. Today, we write to share progress and next steps regarding [our work to end sexual misconduct](#). Specifically, we retained a law firm with expertise in these areas to review and assess issues raised on the @trinsurvivors Instagram account over the summer; that firm has completed its work and provided us with a set of recommendations that will inform and help shape our work in this area. The firm also investigated the @blackattrin Instagram account and an update about those recommendations and our response will be provided in the near future.

As a reminder, the firm was not asked to investigate specific allegations, but rather to review them as a whole, as well as relevant college policies and procedures. We're pleased to share with you today the firm's chief recommendations and takeaways and our responses to them.

1. **Recommendation:** Trinity's Title IX coordinator should be a full-time role.

We concur, and we are restructuring the roles in the Office of Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion (DEI) to meet this need. Indeed, the search that we conducted in the fall for the combined role of assistant vice president for DEI and Title IX coordinator was unsuccessful; it became clear that the scope of work was too much for a single position. This is consistent with the concerns raised by @trinsurvivors, and we want to acknowledge their advocacy for this change.

In turn, we will separate those two demanding roles into two full-time positions: an assistant vice president for DEI and compliance, and a Title IX coordinator. The search for the AVP is under way; the search for the second position, whom the AVP will supervise, will begin after the AVP is hired.

2. **Recommendation:** Trinity should hire additional staff people within the Title IX office to assist with complaint intake, community training and outreach, and other related work.

We will appoint and train four existing staff members (in academic affairs, student life, athletics, and human resources) to serve in deputy Title IX coordinator roles. We expect to have this new structure in place by July 2021. In the meantime, our interim Title IX coordinator will continue to serve in her role and is receiving additional training (see below). We also will continue our practice of hiring outside investigators for Title IX cases as needed.

3. **Recommendation:** Trinity should create a comprehensive complaint management system for Title IX and bias incidents, one that helps to coordinate related work among the Title IX office, Campus Safety, the Dean of Student and Community Life Office, the Dean of Faculty Office, and Human Resources. Further, students should not serve on any student conduct hearing panels that involve sexual misconduct or sensitive interpersonal issues.

The new AVP for DEI and compliance will be charged with addressing some of these needs comprehensively. In the near term, we will work to expand the use of the online reporting system that Campus Safety and Student Life offices currently uses for non-Title IX incidents. Our interim Title IX coordinator has now received training on this system, so that we may use it to better track and manage Title IX incidents. Simultaneously, we will look to improve our systems and coordination among offices and constituent groups, with enhancements identified and implemented by March 1.

Also, the college will shortly issue formal procedures for investigating and adjudicating complaints under Trinity's non-discrimination policy. A multi-constituent group will convene to review these procedures over time to address any issues that might arise in their implementation, including the creation of a centralized complaint management system.

4. **Recommendation:** Trinity should establish mandatory annual training for all students on such topics as Title IX, bystander intervention, and drug and alcohol abuse.

Our education and training efforts are ongoing and have expanded significantly in recent years. With regard to alcohol and drug education, we now have a full-time alcohol and drug education coordinator through our partnership with Hartford HealthCare. This work has focused especially on all new students. Over the past three years, students involved with Greek Life have participated in workshops on Title IX, alcohol and drug education, and bystander intervention. Further, all student-athletes, coaches, and athletic staff complete mandatory NCAA training on Title IX, as well as training on bystander intervention, drug and alcohol education, and enhanced work on DEI initiatives. That will continue as students return to campus this spring.

As detailed in [DEI's action plan for 2020-21](#), all first-year students and sophomores are required to participate in sexual harassment prevention and education training, and we are implementing required Green Dot Sexual Violence Prevention and Education Overview Training for all juniors and seniors. Additionally, all employees are required to complete training in sexual harassment prevention.

With regard to Campus Safety, the law firm examined the department's policies, procedures, and training programs and recommended a regular (scheduled) review of policies, and that the policies incorporate relevant college-wide policies, including Trinity's non-discrimination policy. The firm also recommended areas in which additional policy development or training would enhance operations. Throughout the last three years, personnel in Campus Safety have participated in trainings and workshops that cover the following important topics: Safe Zone, Green Dot instructor, trauma-informed investigations, and DEI programs. During the spring semester, Campus Safety will update and develop new policies as recommended, and the staff will continue to attend additional trainings as recommended.

The law firm's recommendations and observations provide a helpful guide for some of the specific steps we need to take. Those steps are just part of institutional efforts that have been ongoing for several years and have taken on greater urgency and focus this year. We are grateful for the importance with which this work is viewed by students, faculty, staff, administrators, and trustees alike. We know that Trinity alumni and families care deeply about these issues, as well, and that they are just as eager for us to make significant progress. Thank you all for your ongoing partnership.

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