

**Violence Free Communities (VFC) Annual Report
2017-2018
Michigan State University
May 1, 2018**

Violence Free Communities (VFC) is made up of representatives from campus units engaged in efforts to support a campus culture free of relationship violence and sexual misconduct. The committee hosts one open meeting per year inviting members of the campus community. VFC coordinates with the Sexual Violence Advisory Committee to obtain input and feedback from the campus community relating to the campus climate.

Summary of Accomplishments from 2017-2018:

- Completed the implementation and reporting phase of the Bystander Network Grant Project, which funded Bystander training for upperclassmen
- VFC hosted an open meeting on Thursday, October 10, 2017 and invited Campus and Community members to attend.
- Violence Free Communities assisted with the creation of an Expert Advisory Workgroup, consisting of trusted leaders at MSU with significant expertise relevant to relationship violence and sexual misconduct. The group advised the President on policies and programs related to RVSM, to ensure decisions moving forward are based on best practice evidence.
- VFC was instrumental in advocating for the creation of the Sexual Assault Program's Survivors Lounge which ensures a safe space is available for survivors.
- VFC members were instrumental in the creating of the new office for Prevention, Outreach, and Education, housed in the newly created Office of Civil Rights & Title IX Education and Compliance.
- VFC met with Husch Blackwell for the Phase I external Title IX review, and provided input for Phase II of the review.
- VFC developed and implemented consistent messaging among our respective websites and print materials related to relationship violence and sexual assault.
- VFC worked with campus partners to develop content as well as event programming to launch the MSU "It's On Us" Campaign for the second year.
 - Fall Week of Action October 23-27th, 2017
 - Spring Week of Action April 2-6th, 2018
- VFC wrote and submitted a grant proposal to the Governor's Campus Sexual Assault Grant Program.
 - Greeks Take the Lead- this program received funding to redesign current prevention programming. This new design was multi-tiered, multi-dosed, and specifically designed to engage fraternity and sorority leaders.
- VFC representatives served on numerous panels in community outreach and events sponsored by student organizations, including multiple Reflect and Connect events across campus.

Violence Free Communities (VFC) Recommendations for 2018-2019

Communication

- Develop media protocol related to RVSM issues for publications and statements from the University and University units, with input and review of proposed protocol from VFC and/or RVSM Workgroup. This protocol will also outline guidelines for University response on matters related to lawsuits, Title IX investigations, and pending litigations. Guidelines should also provide direction related to Health Insurance Portability and Accountability Act (HIPAA) and Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA) regulations.
- MSU administration to participate in trauma-informed leadership training. To aid in consistent messages and to uphold MSU's commitment to continuing education, the President, President's Council/Staff and Attorneys, Board of Trustees, General Council, Provost, Vice Presidents, Communication and Brand Strategy employees, University Spokesperson and employees, and Counseling and Psychiatric Services administration should participate in trauma-informed training program on-campus. VFC recommends Russell Strand, a nationally recognized expert and consultant, for this leadership education program.
 - Given Russell Strand's broader expertise in Forensic Experiential Trauma Interview (FETI) training, this would be an opportunity MSU Office for Institutional Equity (OIE) staff, external/contract OIE staff, and MSUPD, as well as other local law enforcement agencies to be trained in this specialized trauma-informed interview method as part of the engagement.

Campus Climate

- The University should examine its current relationship with Greek Life. In this review VFC recommends the University give special consideration to the evaluation and exploration of harm and safety for Greek identified students, and consider possible adjustments in current staff ratio and university relationship with Greeks, based on best-practices for universities of comparable size and comparable Greek-life programs. This may entail a needs assessment of Greek culture and review of the current structure and design of Greek Life on MSU's campus. Based on the MSU National College Health Assessment (NCHA), members of a fraternity or sorority were three times as likely to experience harm and sexual violence as compared to their non-Greek counterparts at MSU (NCHA, 2016).
- Reconsider the need for gender-based services on campus. Consistent with the Husch Blackwell Report and SVAC's recommendations, there is a need for provision of gender-based services on MSU's campus. VFC recommends gathering specific needs data through the upcoming climate survey, evaluate current efforts currently at MSU, as well as examining current literature related to gender-based violence supports and the impact that has on climate and rates of RVSM
- Ensure that the development of the upcoming Title IX campus climate survey examines traditionally marginalized populations, international students, students with disabilities, and other populations identified as at-risk or having unique needs, to ascertain where gaps in reporting, educational programs, and support services exist.
- Consistent with the Husch Blackweel recommendation, VFC recommends that MSU explore the creation of a mandatory freshman seminar/life skills course. VFC feels that it is imperative to

balance academic rigor with the breadth and experience support staff bring to course instruction. Such a course could address a number of topics critical to student success and transition to university-life, many of which intersect with issues of relationship violence and sexual misconduct.

- VFC recommends the provision of annual training to the many units that serve the community as confidential and private resources to assure consistency in the provision of information relating to rights and reporting options across campus.

Service Stability

- Recognize the need to start planning now for a future facility for MSU Safe Place. VFC supports the identification of a permanent, confidential location for Safe Place. Commitment to a permanent space will require advanced fund raising and architectural design to allow for ADA compliance. There is only a commitment from MSU to maintain current confidential housing and office space through 2020. Planning will take at least two years so there needs to be administrative involvement in planning efforts of Safe Place staff and their selected advisory group. Once a plan is in place, a campaign for fundraising can occur, if needed.
- Fund all three Safe Place staff. Currently 2.5 of their 3 FTE staff are paid for by the university. Much of their time is spent pursuing small grants to pay for the additional 0.5% of on APA position, time that could be spent doing more outreach and service delivery.