This report provides information about the creation, implementation and work of the University’s Sexual Assault Response Team (SART).

Institutions of higher education have addressed matters related to sexual misconduct—which include sexual assault—since well before the 2001 Office of Civil Rights’ (OCR) clarification to the 1972 Title IX law.

Title IX, enacted in 1972, as a gender equity/anti-gender-discrimination law, was most commonly thought of as addressing matters related to equalizing the playing field for girls and women in high schools and university athletics and other organizations. In 2001, the Department of Education’s Office of Civil Rights, the entity responsible for enforcing Title IX, issued a clarification to ensure that the law was understood and being followed as it was intended—to prohibit discrimination on the basis of sex in all educational programs, activities, and employment. At its core, Title IX applies to all forms of sexual discrimination (sexual harassment, sexual misconduct, sexual violence), as well as gender-based harassment. It also applies equally to all students, faculty and staff.

On April 4, 2011 OCR issued correspondence, now commonly referred to as the “Dear Colleague Letter (DCL)”, to all institutions receiving federal funding that, in essence, served as a call to action to university and college campuses across the country. On April 23, 2013, OCR issued a new “Dear Colleague Letter” urging campuses to ensure they meet compliance with Title IX and offered that an institution’s federal funding would be at risk for failure to do so, and to look for ways to implement strategies and effective holistic practices and approaches for handling these issues. Title IX requires that institutions of higher education begin to educate, address, and respond to sexual discrimination and have outcomes programs and grievance procedures in place, in addition to providing necessary training for campus members.

At The University of Akron, formalized programs and services have been in place in one form or another since 1996 to address delivery of services related to sexual assault and misconduct. In that year, the Sexual Assault Services Team was created to determine ways to improve delivery of services, develop uniform procedures to address sexual assault and sexual harassment, determine training and educational programs, and to develop a proactive stance on campus to prevent sexual assault and harassment.

The Sexual Assault Services Team continued to operate since 1996. However, as the University’s financial belt has tightened over the years, several key positions responsible for
education and services were not filled, and funding had not necessarily been earmarked for training and educational endeavors related to Title IX.

With significant focus from the Obama White House, it became clear to campuses across the country, The University of Akron included, that a concerted effort was necessary to ensure compliance with Title IX. Thus, it became imperative that the University examine its approach to training, education, prevention, and support regarding sexual misconduct, sexual assault, sexual harassment, and gender-based discrimination. As a result, a new committee, the Sexual Assault Response Team (SART), was formed and convened in May 2014.

The full charge is included in this report. Key points include:

- **Identify what the University is currently doing** to ensure a safe and aware campus climate for students and employees as it relates to sexual violence/sexual misconduct.

- **Identify what the University is required to do** under federal, state and University mandates and guidelines (e.g., Title IX, Violence Against Women’s Act (VAWA) and the Campus Sexual Violence Elimination (SaVE) Act, the University’s sexual harassment policy and protocol for investigating sex-based offenses).

- **Make recommendations** for a campus-wide model for implementation of programs and services to ensure support for the campus community-at-large and compliance with federal, state and University mandates.

In order to meet the expectations of the Charge, a variety of University, federal and state documents were reviewed by team members. Various presentations regarding laws, policies, protocols and guidelines have been or will be made to the entire group to ensure all members have the information needed to fulfill their roles.

August 13, 2014 has been identified as a review point for SART. On this date the team will review resources and projects implemented or in progress, evaluate the Team’s progress and determine the focus of its ongoing work to ensure recommendations are thorough and complete.
Charge of the Sexual Assault Response Team

The creation of the Team’s charge was guided by Becky Hoover (Title IX Coordinator at the
time the SART was convened) and approved by Vice President Campbell Jackson, in
consultation with the Safety and Security Priority Group.

On May 7, 2014, SART convened and the following charge was given:

Consistent with the recommendations of the Ohio Board of Regents’ Task Force on Ohio
College Campus Safety and Security\(^1\), the University will establish a Sexual Assault Response
Team (SART).

The SART will regularly review/evaluate campus policies and protocols in regard to sexual
violence/misconduct, coordinate with campus threat assessment teams, including the CARE team
and Workplace Violence team, to respond to identified threats of sexual violence/misconduct,
ensure compliance with federal and state mandates, facilitate collaboration with community
partners, and support preparation of the Annual Security Report components related to the team
(such as Clery).

The SART will receive ongoing training on all aspects of sexual violence and sexual misconduct,
including intimate partner violence and stalking, access to confidential care, and federal and state
statutes. Finally, the SART will provide a system to ensure oversight and quality assurance for
the rights of victims and perpetrators. In addition, the SART will review the current state of
affairs of The University of Akron’s approach to the training, education, prevention, and support
regarding sexual misconduct, sexual assault, sexual harassment and gender-based discrimination
and make recommendations for a campus-wide model for implementation of programs and
services to ensure support for students and the campus community-at-large and compliance with
federal mandates, state and University mandates.

To ensure that all members are operating from the same knowledge base, a review of the
following will occur:

1. **Federal Review** - A review of federally mandated provisions will be conducted for the
benefit of the SART to ensure that all are aware of the breadth and depth of compliance
requirements. A review of the following will be conducted:
   - Title IX
   - The Jeanne Clery Disclosure of Campus Security Policy and Campus Crime Statistics

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\(^1\) Ohio Board of Regents (2014). *A safer campus: A guidebook on prevention and response to sexual and intimate
partner violence and stalking for Ohio campuses*. Retrieved from
http://regents.ohio.gov/safetyandsecurity/index.php
• Campus Sexual Violence Elimination Act (Campus SaVE Act)
• Violence Against Women Act (VOWA)

2. **State of Ohio Review** - A review of state resources, best practices and recommendations for State System of Ohio Higher Education Institutions will be conducted to include:
   • The State of Ohio Board of Regents Recommendations for Best Practices and Sexual Assault Services State-wide Task Force

3. **Campus Review** - A review of current campus policies, protocols, training, programs and services will also be conducted.
   • Sexual harassment policy
   • Protocol for reporting sex-based offenses
   • Title IX reporting and investigations
   • Code of Student Conduct
   • Community relationships and partnerships
   • Department and student organization training, programs and services

The work of the SART will be thorough, swift, and ongoing. Deadlines will be imposed for recommendations including but not limited to:

1. Identify a University “home” and oversight responsibility for issues of sexual violence and sexual misconduct
2. Identify a chair or co-chairs of the SART
3. Identify the scope of duties and responsibilities of the SART

SART members include students, faculty, employees and members of the community to ensure its composition includes a broad cross-section of constituents and key stakeholders. SART members and leadership are identified in Exhibit A.

**The Work of the Sexual Assault Response Team**

The committee began its work on May 7, 2014 and continues to meet biweekly to meet an ambitious deadline of August 13, 2014. On this date, the Team intends to review its work and identify “tangible outcomes” created. Additionally, the Team will determine its continued scope and focus and re-evaluate its ongoing purpose in alignment with its initial charge.

To date, the work of SART has included the following:

• A Sharepoint site has been created. The site includes University, state and federal documents and resources pertinent to the group’s work

• Numerous presentations have been made including 1) a University-wide review of programs, services and information; 2) a presentation from the Rape Crisis Center of Summit and Medina Counties; 3) Title IX; and 4) Clery Act
• Task Teams have been created. Task teams include:
  
  o **Training and Education** – Responsible for reviewing current and ongoing training and education initiatives
    ▪ Includes the implementation and integration of an online education program called “Think About It” for all new incoming first-year students. July 21, 2014 is the targeted roll out date. The program will meet obligations of federal mandates. It is a sponsored by Campus Clarity – an award-winning, federally recognized program from the company LawRoom.
  
  o **Communication** – Responsible for communicating information about the work of SART
    ▪ Team members work with constituency groups (e.g., students, University Police Department, Title IX Coordinator) to develop videos, websites, and print materials as recommended.
  
  o **Compliance** – Responsible for identifying the Department of Education’s Office of Civil Rights mandates and recommendations of the White House Task Force on Sexual Assault to ensure compliance.
  
  o **Assessment** – Currently working on creating a campus climate survey with a planned October 2014 roll out
    ▪ This will meet a 2015 anticipated federal mandate.
  
  o **MOU** – Efforts are underway to create a memorandum of understanding between The University and the Rape Crisis Center of Medina and Summit Counties.

• Task Team Leaders meet during the off weeks of scheduled SART meetings to ensure integration of work and direction of SART.

• Written recommendations are in progress to address the initiative of a campus-wide model for leadership and implementation of programs and services to ensure support for students and the campus community-at-large and compliance with federal, state and University mandates.

**Summary**

As institutions of higher education across the country continue to come under scrutiny by the federal government, alumni and other constituency groups regarding how sexual assault, sexual misconduct and gender equity on campus is being addressed. The SART team will work to operationalize federal priorities, and more importantly, develop a framework of education and support for our students and campus.
References


EXHIBIT A

Sexual Assault Response Team (SART) Members
May 2014

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name</th>
<th>Title</th>
<th>Division/College/Organization</th>
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<tbody>
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<td>Paul Henry</td>
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<td>Becky Hoover</td>
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<tr>
<td>Justin Bradley</td>
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Note: Others not on core team may participate on task teams or as needed.

| John Reilly       | Assoc. VP and Assoc. General Counsel; Counsel to SART                 | Office of General Counsel                        |