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## Violence Against College Women

*Unfortunately, It Is Not a New Problem*

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The context for this book is the recent “discovery” of violence against women on college campuses. While researchers have long noted that violence against women on college campuses remained underreported and largely unaddressed by campus and local law enforcement, as well as by campus administrators, the April 4, 2011, “Dear Colleague Letter” from the U.S. Department of Education and its Office for Civil Rights (OCR) was a game changer. The 2011 Dear Colleague Letter has served as an articulation of campus responsibilities to address sexual violence under Title IX. In Chapter 7, Michelle Hughes Miller provides a detailed outline and analysis. The obligations under the Dear Colleague Letter have altered the way college campuses must address, investigate, and adjudicate disclosures and complaints of sexual violence (along with intimate partner violence and stalking). The letter also put in place a number of requirements for campuses to act to prevent violence against women and ensure that the campus community understands its role in the process of reporting. In doing so, it reinforced a system of accountability for campuses to comply with these requirements or face sanctions from the OCR. This theme of accountability runs throughout the chapters of this book. The shift to making universities responsible and accountable in cases of sexual violence places a heavy burden on universities to ensure the protection of victims and the safety of their campuses. Many campuses do not have the administrative capabilities and are not financially prepared for such an unfunded mandate. At the same time, in

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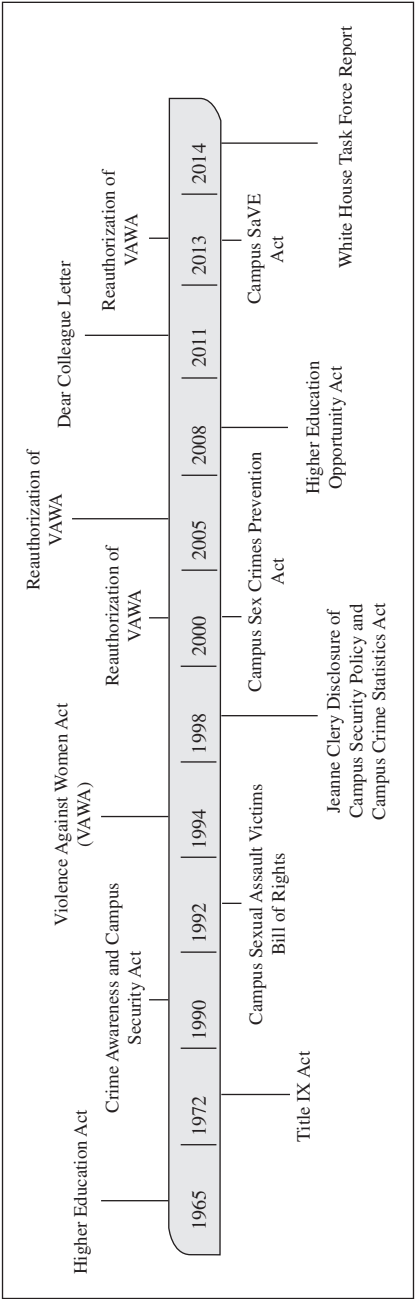
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ensuring compliance with the newest interpretations and policy requirements of Title IX, some campuses may have lost sight of the very goal of the Dear Colleague Letter: the protection of our student victims. As schools shifted to formal legal compliance they may have lost sight of their need to protect and serve their student victims and to prevent future victimizations. We believe that if institutions protect their student victims and ensure they are not further victimized by the process, they will more than likely also be in compliance with Title IX. See Figure 1.1 for a timeline of federal legislation that has affected the response of institutions of higher education to sexual violence and violence against women.

The guidance provided by the 2011 Dear Colleague Letter has been followed by additional interpretations of Title IX that also have implications for how campuses comply with the Clery Act, legislation requiring campuses to both keep and publicly disclose information about crime, including sexual assaults, intimate partner violence, and stalking, on and near their respective campuses. The passage of the Campus SaVE Act (along with the broader Violence Against Women Act), the White House Task Force to Protect Students from Sexual Assault, the “It’s on Us” campaign, the adoption by many campuses of the “No More” campaign, and the 2014 Campus Accountability and Safety Act (which remains pending in the U.S. Senate as of this writing) bring still more obligations. Together these new legislative requirements and task force directives describe how college campuses need to engage in prevention efforts to reduce the incidence of violence, respond to their student victims in terms of interim measures, investigations, adjudications, and sanctions, and make clear to faculty, staff, and students (bystanders, victims, and accused individuals) their responsibilities, obligations, and rights with respect to dating violence, domestic violence, sexual assault, and stalking. With these directives comes potential sanctions if institutions fail to adhere to these new legislative mandates. It is clear that many institutions of higher education are not prepared to address these mandates or have the resources to do so. Ultimately the question is this: Given the growing number of unfunded mandates placed on colleges and universities, how can campuses and their administrators handle their investigative responsibilities while also ensuring the safety of the campuses and the victims of these crimes?

While the problem of violence against women on college campuses is not new, the shift to making campus personnel responsible to redress the victimizations experienced by their students is a relatively new perspective and one slow to be adopted by administrators. At the same time, many campuses have for decades had allies and advocates committed to prevention efforts and victim assistance, recognizing the impact of violence against women. Academic research, feminist advocacy, and victim service provision have addressed campus-based violence against women since the late 1960s and 1970s. For example, research by E. J. Kanin (1967) on a sample of college men



**FIGURE 1.1** Timeline of Federal Legislation Impacting Institutions of Higher Education Response to Sexual Violence (and Violence Against Women)

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showed that the incidence of exploitive sexual behavior was high among both aggressive and nonaggressive college men. As many as 80 percent of aggressive college men and 27 percent of nonaggressive college men indicated that they had used at least one exploitive tactic to gain access to sexual intercourse (e.g., attempting to get a young woman intoxicated or threatening to terminate a relationship). His research also demonstrated that sexually aggressive men were able to justify their behavior in terms of their perceptions of women as “teasers,” “golddiggers,” or “loose women”—perceptions that both stigmatize women and legitimate targeting them for any type of sexual approach.

The research on dating violence had its advent in 1981 (Makepeace, 1981). In the 1980s research had begun to estimate the extent and correlates of sexual violence against college women (Berkowitz 1992; Muehlenhard and Cook 1988; Muehlenhard and Linton 1987). Alan Berkowitz’s (1992) summary of the literature from the 1980s notes efforts to identify *perpetrator* characteristics, situations associated with *sexual assault*, and *men’s misperception of women’s sexual intent*. Research in the 1980s focused attention on the relationships between justifications for sexual aggression, sex-role stereotyping, adversarial sexual beliefs, acceptance of interpersonal violence, and belief in rape myths (Burt 1980; Muehlenhard, Friedman, and Thomas 1985). Throughout the 1980s and 1990s campus-based interventions focused on the strategies that women could implement to reduce their risk, including practicing self-defense and changing routine activities, along with other victim-centered approaches. Today, campus efforts continue these emphases, but they also focus on offender accountability and a host of bystander programs, student activism initiatives, and widespread mandatory reporter training, all of which are designed to impact the cultural and community contexts within which violence against college women takes place.

The research today also includes large-scale climate surveys, as well as evaluations of prevention and intervention efforts (McMahon and Banyard 2011), which have recently been identified as a new means for addressing the problem of sexual violence on campuses. Along with federal legislative initiatives, the Association of American Universities (AAU) has encouraged its member schools to commit to new campus climate surveys in order to measure the extent and impact of sexual violence across campuses using comparable measures. These types of data are largely already available from previous data collections, including data collected by the authors, albeit from individual campuses which limits the generalizability to all campuses. The limitations of previous data collections have also been that they were collected as one-time, cross-sectional research projects and not part of an on-going effort to explore the climate of campuses. At the same time, there are significant questions about the purpose and publication of this new climate survey, and the effect such a survey would have on existing campus data

collections. Louise Fitzgerald, a professor emerita of psychology at the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign, had this to say about the planned AAU climate survey: “To ignore the combined experience of the country’s most prominent and experienced researchers and attempt to reinvent the wheel is intellectual arrogance of the worst sort. Worse, it risks compromising the validity and thus policy usefulness of the project” (quoted in Bonine 2014). While many scholars, researchers, and advocates have led the charge to address violence against women on college campuses, it may be that ownership of this social and public health problem is shifting to the federal government and campus administrators without the input of those who initiated the charge. The question is whether federal legislation and campus administrations will address the long-term problem, providing remedies for the victims of crime and ensuring safety to all students on our college and university campuses, or merely engage in a series of prescribed measures to ensure that they follow the letter of the law and are in compliance with Title IX requirements, rather than its spirit.

The editors and authors of this volume highlight research on the extent, nature, and dynamic of both interpersonal and sexual violence against women and examine the contexts in which violence against women occurs on college campuses. Opening chapters cover such topics as the pervasiveness of drinking and rape culture, victim blaming, and problematic masculine identities and behaviors that have led to campus crimes against women persisting, with little variation, for the past twenty to thirty years. The book then shifts to an extensive discussion of the ways in which college and university campuses and the federal government have attempted to prevent victimization, attend to victims of crime, and hold offenders accountable, as well as the implications of these attempts for higher education actors, including campus administrators, victim advocates, and student activists. The book also highlights the work done to provide accurate estimates of the problem of violence against women along with challenges to the collection of accurate climate survey data from college campuses. The chapters explore the importance of campus efforts that focus on educating young men and women on the nature of sexual and dating violence; attempting to make men accountable and to empower bystanders to act; conducting outreach and awareness that meets students where they are; and changing cultural norms by both including men as allies in preventing violence against women and making violence prevention an integral part of the student experience.

This book lays out a number of goals that may facilitate an ongoing discussion of violence against college women and point to how to best prevent, investigate, and intervene to assist victims; reduce the impact of these crimes; and hold perpetrators accountable to ensure safety on our college and university campuses. Outlining the extent of violence against women on college campuses and analyzing the data used for these estimates, the book

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also explores the various explanations for our problem of violence against women on college campuses and the strategies and prevention efforts that will best address the problem. The current legislative landscape and federal mandates, including where they came from and how they are changing campuses' responses to violence against women, are also addressed. This discussion identifies resistance to, or, more accurately, a backlash against, the identification of problems and the search for and enactment of solutions. This backlash includes a denial of the often cited "1 in 4 women" statistic (proportion of women who are victims of sexual violence), and a push to shift responsibility for adjudication and victim services to criminal justice agencies off campus.

The contributing authors and the editors of this book bring diverse perspectives to the issues of violence against college women and the prevention of violence on college campuses. Researchers, administrators, victim advocates, and Title IX experts can all help address this important social problem and suggest how colleges and universities should best approach solving it.

In Part I we provide a historical and contemporary overview of the extent, nature, and dynamics of violence against women on college campuses. Starting with what we know about these issues, the chapter authors go on to consider how we got to where we are in terms of policies, practices, and campus-based interventions. They also examine the risk factors for violence against women, as well as protective measures, and highlight research into the causes of the pervasiveness of rape culture, victim blaming, and unhealthy masculinities. Paying special attention to the role of alcohol in sexual conduct on college campuses, Part I further considers the relationship between drinking and violence in campus cultures, its effects on women, and ways that reporting victimization can be effective.

When looking at the extent and nature of sexual violence, intimate partner violence (IPV), and stalking of college women, it is important to recognize that developing instruments to measure these phenomena is a challenge, especially across academic disciplines. The first estimates of campus sexual violence came from data gathered between 1993 and 1994 from a large, nationally representative sample of students enrolled in four-year colleges. Since that time, estimates of the percentage of women who were the victims of a completed rape and/or completed sexual assault (e.g., forced kissing or unwanted groping of sexual body parts) have ranged from 3 to 20 percent. It is also crucial to note that for almost every measure of sexual violence considered, college women were victimized at higher rates off campus than they were on campus—a finding that has implications for how campuses address the problem of sexual violence against college women and how to make perpetrators who commit their offenses off campus accountable. Moreover, as Callie Marie Rennison, Catherine Kaukinen, and Caitlyn Meade note in Chapter 2, research of on-campus sexual violence against college women is

limited, and what is known must be pieced together from multiple sources. In this chapter, they also examine estimates of college women's experience of sexual violence, which suggest that roughly one in five senior college women were victims of a completed rape and/or completed sexual assault, while also pointing to a number of challenges to studying sexual violence, including failure to report and underreporting of victimizations, nonresponse in data gathering, limitations of samples used, variable attention to contextual factors, and mixed interpretations of results.

In Chapter 3, Ráchael A. Powers and Catherine Kaukinen turn to IPV and estimates of dating violence that range from 10 percent to 50 percent, including both physical and psychological abuse of women. Studies consistently find that emotional and psychological abuse are more frequent than physical abuse, and several studies find that the majority of male and female college students have experienced psychological abuse within a dating relationship. Strikingly—and this has implications for prevention and intervention—both women and men are more likely to be victims and perpetrators of violence within a mutually violent relationship. As the authors further note, while much of what is known regarding dating violence comes from quantitative surveys that may be valid and reliable, it is difficult to ascertain how young adults, particularly young women, understand their relationships and the use of violence in them. Likewise, they suggest that identifying the primary motivations for violence and determining whether motivations for, severity of, and reactions to dating violence differ in casual and serious relationships are both important.

In Chapter 4, which focuses on stalking, Matt R. Nobles and Kate Fox point to the paucity of research in the area. What we know, in general, are some basic characteristics of victims, including demographics, and some facts, such as how many acknowledge their own victimization, how many report it to the police, and under what circumstances they may be more likely to do so. Nobles's and Fox's extensive work on stalking among college students has led them to conclude that stalking victimization and perpetration often share important similarities and that self-reported history of intimate partner violence and sexual assault are strongly associated with stalking outcomes. Yet they also point out that much of the research on stalking at present can speak only to such issues as acknowledgment of victim status, decisions to report to police, and self-protective behaviors. Victim-coping strategies, including counseling and advocacy, have typically been a focus. In their work, however, Nobles and Fox find that stalkers score significantly higher on the insecure-anxious scale of attachment and lower on the insecure-avoidant scale. They also note that other psychological variables, ranging from major to minor psychiatrically diagnosed problems and including depression and a history of anger-related diagnosis or treatment, are positively and significantly associated with stalking perpetration.

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Observing that no study has systematically evaluated a prevention or intervention that targets stalking offenders, Nobles and Fox point to the challenges posed by disparate definitions of stalking and different approaches to measuring it, which have important implications for the validity, reliability, and generalizability of knowledge about stalking victimization and perpetration among college students.

Part I of the book also includes an exploration of the broader context in which violence against women occurs. Thus, in Chapter 5, Walter S. DeKeseredy considers reasons for violence against women by drawing on male peer support theory and feminist routine activities theory. Broadly, male peer support theory suggests that individual and cultural factors give rise to conditions wherein men (and women) are socialized to accept male dominance. This translates into an environment that is conducive to violence against women, especially when factors such as alcohol consumption are involved. Feminist routine activities theory also acknowledges the larger role of culture in shaping risk of violence by reintroducing the motivated offender into the theory and considering how alcohol use contributes to creating suitable targets. Taken together, these theories aim to explain how campuses that are generally non-criminogenic become high-risk environments for women.

In Chapter 6 Antonia Abbey focuses more closely on the role of alcohol in violence against women, a factor that has recently received considerable attention from academics and the media. On the basis of her own extensive work in this area, she provides a conceptual model for understanding its role in acquaintance sexual assaults. This model explains the mechanisms by which alcohol consumption increases the risk of a victimization occurring. Alcohol has both psychological and pharmacological effects, which, combined with preexisting beliefs and attitudes about women and relationships, interact with personality characteristics of perpetrators. Abbey thus explains not only why alcohol is a factor in so many sexual assaults of college women, but also how alcohol impacts how we respond to such crimes, including mitigating responsibility of the offender and blaming the victim.

Part II of this book moves on to focus on recent legislative changes associated with Title IX, the Clery Act, and the SaVE Act. It begins with Michelle Hughes Miller's examination of the evolution of Title IX and of the legal, political, and social conditions that gave rise to the 2011 Dear Colleague Letter (DCL). While the letter is generally thought to be a turning point in how violence against college women is addressed, Hughes Miller argues that the DCL represents a shift in emphasis, but not understanding, as the OCR had recognized, albeit subtly, institutions' obligations to address sexual violence under Title IX since at least 1997. However, what the 2011 DCL did articulate was how institutions are to respond to violence against college women.



Chapter 8 considers the Campus SaVE Act, contextualizing the act within the histories of the reauthorized Violence Against Women Act (VAWA) and the Clery Act, which expand a campus's responsibilities to address intimate partner violence and stalking. Identifying the major elements of this legislation as they relate to prevention of and response to violence against women on college campuses, Michelle Hughes Miller and Sarah L. Cook discuss the explicit transparency and compliance requirements. They also consider the ongoing debates about the scope and mandate of the SaVE Act: Who is included in the SaVE Act? What elements of the act are requirements and what elements are just suggestions? Most important, how do universities demonstrate compliance?

In Chapter 9, Catherine Kaukinen reviews the political context for current efforts to address campus violence against women, including recommendations stemming from the 2014 White House Task Force to Protect Students from Sexual Assault, which also focuses on improving the safety of American college and university campuses and helping them meet their obligations in compliance with federal regulations in this area. The chapter also explores the White House Task Force's "It's on Us" program, which encourages college and university campuses to initiate violence prevention campaigns that engage students in campus-based events and programming as allies in addressing violence against women, and to use student leaders who take "The Pledge" to serve as role models.

In Chapter 10, Carmen Suarez returns to the topic of Title IX to discuss its organizational prevention and response dimensions. On the basis of her own experiences as vice president for global diversity and inclusion at Portland State University and interviews with other Title IX coordinators, Suarez discusses balancing the needs/rights of complainants and respondents and the struggle to apply a victim-centered approach to investigations and adjudication. She also explains the role of the Title IX coordinator in this process and demonstrates how coordinators have met both institutional support and interference. Although compliance is often the metric used to evaluate the effectiveness of responses to Title IX cases, Suarez emphasizes that the ultimate goal is cultural change and that compliance is the means, not the end.

In Chapter 11, Helen Eigenberg and Joanne Belknap present an in-depth discussion of mandatory reporting, a controversial aspect of Title IX. Proponents of mandatory reporting argue that it puts the needs of students above the university's reputation and that it will ultimately make campuses safer as more perpetrators are removed and victims receive needed services that they would not have received without disclosure. Opponents, on the other hand, argue that mandatory reporting takes agency away from the victim, that it may additionally traumatize victims, and that it may discourage victim reporting to nonconfidential personnel, such as professors. From this point of view, mandatory reporting may actually have the opposite effect

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than intended. In addition, Eigenberg and Belknap note that regulations do not give much guidance to Title IX coordinators, who must balance the student's desire for confidentiality with the safety of the university with little guidance from the regulations. Moving on to evaluate recent legislative efforts to mandate reporting beyond campus walls to local law enforcement and prosecutors' offices, Eigenberg and Belknap conclude the chapter with recommendations for increasing transparency and improving confidence in the system.

The degree to which college campuses are equipped to provide victim services and advocacy for victims and the crucial role such services play in preventing and responding to violence against women are the focus of Chapter 12. While federal policy clearly indicates that institutions should address the needs of victims, currently there is tremendous variability in the availability and breadth of victim advocacy across different institutions, as Ráchael A. Powers, Alesha Cameron, and Christine Mouton point out. Smaller community colleges and universities may lack the resources and/or the caseload to support a dedicated office on the campus, and rural universities may not have local victim services available at all. In addition, there are also institutional and cultural barriers to providing services on a campus, including the question of confidentiality for reports made to such offices. This chapter highlights the approaches to campus-based victim advocacy that have been most validated by research.

Part III shifts attention to how to prevent violence against college women and reviews strategies such as campus climate surveys, campus outreach efforts, and student-led social movement organizations, which seek to create awareness and provide students with information regarding their rights under Title IX. Educational programming that emphasizes women's actions and bystander programs and national campaigns that engage men as allies in violence prevention are also considered.

Campus surveys are the focus of Christine Lindquist and Christopher P. Krebs in Chapter 13. As other authors in this volume observe, obtaining accurate estimates of victimization can be difficult, but climate surveys can provide much-needed information to a university regarding the extent of victimization of its students, which can then be used to inform prevention and intervention efforts. Furthermore, standardized climate surveys, which can be used to compare institutions, can help highlight best practices for violence reduction. Reviewing efforts made by individual institutions and in collaboration with federal agencies to create and implement climate surveys, Lindquist and Krebs also draw from their own work to offer several recommendations for maintaining methodological rigor in view of the difficulty of capturing experiences and attitudes of a large population of students. The chapter concludes with a discussion of the future of climate surveys, including legislation that may mandate their implementation in schools.

Once there is some understanding of students' experiences, beliefs, and attitudes, prevention of violence ultimately relies on the education that incorporates this information. In Chapter 14 Sarah McMahon focuses on the role of bystander education, a mandatory part of the SaVE Act. She provides an overview and history of bystander programs, detailing how they arose in response to critiques of traditional sexual violence prevention programs, which focus on individual behaviors and attitudes and could result in victim blaming. In contrast, bystander programs treat sexual violence as a community health issue and involve everyone in sexual violence prevention efforts and thereby also change social norms that are supportive of violence against women. Reviewing several popular programs, McMahon notes studies showing that these programs can affect attitudes and, to a lesser extent, behaviors and these changes may persist over time. McMahon concludes with several recommendations for bystander programs and encourages continued evaluations to assess their effectiveness as sexual violence prevention strategies.

In Chapter 15, Ráchael A. Powers and Jennifer Leili explore men's anti-violence programs and men's engagement in efforts to combat violence against women. Given that men are the main perpetrators of violence, they play an important role in the acceptance of gender-based violence. Thus, involving men in efforts to prevent violence against women is vital. Reviewing some of the best practices for these programs, Powers and Leili look at several prominent examples of men's college-based anti-violence programs and consider evidence for their effectiveness in changing norms and behaviors. Non-institutional efforts to engage men in anti-violence efforts, such as SlutWalks and Take Back the Night events are also covered here, as are critiques of them, such as the claim that men receive accolades "just for showing up" or that they downplay the seriousness of victimization. The authors conclude with a discussion on the future of these programs, including the role of social media and the need to be culturally relevant.

In Chapter 16, Ava Blustein considers the rise of local and national student campaigns and political protests against campus violence against women, which have increased in recent years, as organizations such as Know Your IX attest. Blustein, who works with Know Your IX, looks at important efforts on the part of student-activists, many of whom are victims themselves, and examines both the goals of these social movement organizations and the extent to which they have been successful in changing campus culture and climate. In particular, she describes how Title IX has provided students with a means to protest, while also holding universities accountable for their responses to sexual assault on college campuses. Further considering how social media offers a way for students to expand the reach of their activism, broaden support, and increase awareness of their issues and the efficacy of their efforts, she concludes by calling attention to the growing diversity of

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the movement, as it recognizes the interconnections between sexual violence and other forms of oppression on college campuses.

In Part IV, our authors offer guidance for and critical discussion about ways to prevent and intervene in violence against women. Drawing on her expertise as a Title IX coordinator, Meredith M. Smith reviews the origins of the 2011 DCL and argues that concerns about compliance may hinder the ultimate goal of this legislation to prevent gender-based violence and support victims. While sexual harassment and violence have always been part of Title IX, frustrations of victims and the community over mishandled incidents of sexual violence brought about refinements in how schools should respond to such cases. As a result, Title IX investigations increased exponentially, as did administrators' concern with ensuring compliance with regulations, which soon overshadowed the intent of the legislation. Smith urges us to move beyond concerns about compliance and embrace the spirit of the legislation, the call to create meaningful cultural change that will reduce violence against college women.

In response to the federal mandates that have led to changes in the ways that law enforcement and campus policies address campus violence against women, claims about the inappropriateness of universities responding to a "criminal" problem have increased, as have significant concerns about the rights of the accused. In fact, the most prevalent critique is that Title IX and other federal initiatives fail to take adequate steps to prevent false allegations and wrongful convictions of young men. In Chapter 18, Helen Eigenberg, Stephanie Bonnes, and Joanne Belknap review the significant national and legal challenges associated with federally mandated requirements to address campus rape. They point out that these changes have reinvigorated a backlash, which uses many of the tactics of 1980s and 1990s critics, including attempts to minimize the extent of the problem, redefine rape in ways that are consistent with rape mythology, challenge procedural and legal responses to rape on campuses, and "blame" feminists for the ways that overzealous officials are responding to this issue.

While there exist attempts to minimize the extent and impact of violence against women on college campuses, there has also been an opposing cultural shift that includes the engagement of bystanders and allies. Bystander intervention has gained prominence in recent years, to the point that it is now mandated within VAWA legislation, because it recognizes and works to transform the culture of campuses within which violence against women occurs. While we applaud these efforts, the monumental task of changing campus culture must acknowledge all of the elements that individually and synergistically create the milieu in which college students live and learn. Thus, in our concluding chapter we consider the challenges and opportunities for universities and colleges seeking to address violence against women. The challenges are many, from victim-blaming beliefs that affect reporting, to

victim services that are understaffed and face questions about their advocacy and confidentiality, to expectations that campus administrators can somehow find justice for survivors and perpetrators within their policies and programming. Fortunately, survivor-activists, the detailed guidance of Title IX offered by the OCR, and the explicit mandates of the Campus SaVE Act have created pressure on campus administrators and service providers to do more, and to do it better. But, in fact, universities already have the means to respond to campus violence against women by virtue of the campus missions of teaching, research, and service. Programs that attempt to transform campus culture can build upon existing teaching platforms and educational strategies. Assessing these programs and getting detailed information about the experiences of students in climate studies are what scholars and researchers already do, and do well. The direct care provided in reporting offices, counseling centers, and victim services is aligned with the existing service mission for university students and communities.

At the same time, universities must still select and implement policies, programs, and services. But the questions are which programs, which services, and for whom? Addressing these challenges in the Conclusion, we look at several questions: How do colleges and universities design their systems of prevention and response to fulfill the needs of all of their constituents? How do they continue to grow and improve their services? And, ultimately, how do they ensure that they are, in fact, creating the safe, inclusive communities of higher education that we all envision?

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