



Office of the Vice President for Student Affairs

DATE: February 10, 2014
TO: State of Connecticut General Assembly
FROM: Dr. Thomas C. Pellegrino
RE: February 11 2014 Testimony Re Bill no. 5019
An Act Concerning Sexual Assault and Intimate Partner Violence on Campus

Dear Assembly Members,

Thank you for allowing me the opportunity to speak before you today on this bill and the important area it deals with, specifically sexual assault and intimate partner violence on college campuses.

I want to first thank this legislative body for its ongoing efforts aimed at improving processes that schools and colleges have in place to help encourage reporting of crimes of sexual violence and the support of victims. When this body conducted hearings on the question of mandated reporting some two years ago, that discussion prompted several universities, including Fairfield University, to take the independent step to revise and expand our on-campus reporting requirements. Two years later, we now have policies that cover and require every employee and agent of the University to report crimes of sexual violence made known to them unless they were otherwise governed by legally prescribed confidentiality protections. I believe Fairfield University is a better campus today because of that change in its policy and know my colleagues at other institutions within the State would agree.

Today we are again addressing an issue that demands the attention of all college campuses: the prevalence of sexual violence on college campuses. As President Obama stated in his January 22, 2014 Memorandum establishing a White House task force to protect students from sexual assault, this should be viewed first and foremost as a call to action. This chamber is responding to the call and our college communities are doing the same. So I wish to begin by offering my support of Bill no 5019. While we are already accomplishing many of the changes the Bill puts into place, particularly in the areas of reporting, victim notification, and training of personnel, there will always be more work for us to do. There are two critical elements that I would highlight here: The first is on assessment, the second relates to collaboration and resources.

First, a note on assessment: The Bill sets forth an annual reporting requirement that requires colleges and universities to report back on a series of data points, ranging from the number of sexual violence incidences to the number of students and employees participating in educational awareness programs. Having a series of metrics that are known and regularly assessed is of critical importance to achieving the overarching goal of ending sexual violence on campus altogether. This goal cannot be achieved without data. On our campus, we are now collecting data that doesn't just report back on the required metrics under the Clery Act. We also collect information through surveys and focus groups that

provides us critical insight into campus attitudes around sexual violence. Our efforts around this heightened level of assessment must of course continue.

Second, I would highlight the importance of having a sexual assault response team that invites partnering with important external constituents. At many schools like Fairfield, we have found collaboration to be of significant benefit in our efforts to address sexual violence issues on a proactive as well as reactive basis. Our collaborations with the local police in Fairfield as well as organizations such as CONNSACS and the Center for Family Justice give us access to expertise and resources that are crucial to our efforts. I can cite one important example of collaboration: A number of Connecticut institutions, including Fairfield are collaborating with Connecticut Sexual Assault Crisis Services, Inc. (CONNSACS) on the *Where do you Stand* campaign. This is an educational program that utilizes bystander intervention theory and other techniques to better educate our college males on their unique role and responsibility to take a stand with their peers against all forms of sexual violence. As this body is aware, historically our educational initiatives both in college and in high school have focused on the behavior of the victim – in most cases females. We believe we need to put more focus on our males something that is indicated in the Bill's focus on bystander programs. Our intent is to work more closely and directly with our college males, sharing with them statistics and embedding within them a personal sense of responsibility to hold themselves and their peers accountable.

Keep in mind that there are strong cultural forces here. It is not just how the "all fun, no-rules" description of college life gets portrayed in the media and in entertainment. It is also how the opportunity for parents and guardians to discuss their expectations with their children is an opportunity that is frequently missed. Recognizing this, administrators take time to encourage such discussions between parents and students at our orientation sessions preceding that start of the school year. These are difficult discussions to have with a parent and student, but ones that must be had if we are to take a holistic approach to changing culture.

The number of cases and the complexity of the issues that are being presented to our campuses are increasing. While we continue to build the cadre of trained Title IX compliance officials on our college campuses, we will also need to make sure that the training does in fact equip these individuals with the tools necessary to investigate, support and adjudicate cases. Also, we need to make sure that the individuals carrying out this important work on our campuses also feel supported, that they realize they are not alone in what is a shared responsibility among staff, faculty and students, and that our institutions are at all times keeping in line with current regulations and best practices. What I describe here is not easy work, but it must be undertaken and we are committed to doing so. The costs associated with training are not insignificant. This includes not only standard Title IX certification training, but costs associated with securing external groups to come to our campuses to train our staff who conduct hearings. I would respectfully request that this body consider providing funding or avenues of accessing funding to assist colleges and universities in meeting the cost of training. This financial assistance would better enable us to carry out our duties in this regard.

In closing, I know I speak for many college administrators when I say that sexual violence has, appropriately, become the central topic of discussions at our professional conferences, with our staffs and with our boards of trustees and directors. It is a focus of our educational and programmatic efforts with all of our students, particularly those who are just making the transition from high school to college. I also know I speak for my fellow administrators when I say that sexual violence is the issue that keeps us up at night, not only because the health and safety of students is our responsibility, but

because we have children too. We are their parents, their teachers, their coaches, their mentors and their neighbors. We see first-hand the faces of the victims as well as of the accused in a dynamic that yields no winners. So, our goal, again, must be to prevent sexual violence altogether. The path to that goal is not easy. Some would point to an increase in the number of complaints being brought on a college campus and say that the goal of ending violence is not being achieved. But we know here today that this increase in reporting is occurring because we are creating a better environment for reporting and addressing reports on our campuses. This legislation makes that environment even stronger, and will aid our continued progress towards ending sexual violence on our campuses.

Thank you.

Submitted

Dr. Thomas C. Pellegrino

The following is additional written testimony describing policies, training, and educational practices at Fairfield University.

Policies:

We have policies for Sexual Misconduct as well as Bias, Discrimination and Harassment. These policies are contained in the student handbook and students are notified of their contents each semester. Taken together, the policies cover the entire spectrum of prohibited behavior under Title IX, Federal law (e.g. the Clery Act), State law and University policy. Policy language has been adapted to comply with, among other things, the Dear Colleagues letter of April 2011, et seq.

Our policies are reviewed on an annual basis and updated to insure compliance with changes in law as well as best practices. Our current policy reflects the most recent changes in State of CT law regarding, among other things, standards for the reporting of claims, providing support to victims, and procedures for running judicial boards. We have a stand-alone judicial board – the Discrimination, Harassment and Sexual Misconduct Board - trained and designated solely to handle sexual misconduct cases. Fairfield University also runs annual mediation training and certification for both students and employees. Once trained, these certified mediators are available to hear matters arising under our discrimination and harassment policy (we do not offer mediation for sexual violence cases).

Two years ago, Fairfield took the step to mandate reporting of sexual assault by all employees not legally covered by confidentiality;

Since we ramped our efforts to require broader reporting and also ramped up our many education initiatives, we have seen an increase in the number of sexual assault complaints coming to our attention. While still well below what we understand to be the reality of college-age females reporting incidences of unwanted sexual activity (1 in 4; 1 in 5), we do hear from students that our many efforts around notification of policies, educational programs, etc., make them believe that the University wants complaints to be reported and that it will act on them;

Training:

We work closely with Ct Sexual Assault Crisis Services (CONNSACS) to provide annual training to board members and other members of our community on the experiences of victims and the handling of board cases;

We have a certified Title IX investigation team in place on campus. I facilitate annual training of this team to be certified/refreshed as investigators and compliance officers. Our most recent group of reps, including our Title IX coordinator Terry Quell and Title IX investigator Will Johnson and Dean of Students Karen Donoghue, just returned from a full week's certification refresh in New Orleans. We plan to expand the number of certified investigators each year, and include members of HR;

On December 10, 2013, Fairfield University hosted the CCIC and its sponsored lecturers for an update on legislative initiatives related to sexual violence on campus. Attended by college administrators and law enforcement officials from around the State of CT, this program provided updates on Clery, Title IX, and legislative efforts (both state and federal) aimed at raising awareness on, and decreasing the prevalence of sexual violence on college campuses

Following up on the December 10 meeting, we will be working both as an institution and as a member of the CCIC to review and certify compliance with the mandates of State of CT bill 00239, *An Act Concerning Sexual Assault and Intimate Partner Violence on Campus*. A key component of the bill is its call for a sexual assault response team that includes members from both the campus community as well as the Fairfield Police and one external agency. Fairfield has enjoyed strong collaborative partnerships with Fairfield PD, CONNSACS and the Center for Family

Justice (formerly known as the Center for Women and Families). We look forward to formalizing this relationship and providing a model for other schools within the CCIC to follow

This spring, Fairfield will be working with CONNSACS to sponsor the *Where do you Stand?* Campaign on campus: This is a campaign focused specifically on males on college campuses and is designed to get males to understand how sexual violence is, for the most part an act of violence by men, and that proactive steps to curb it need to be owned by male college students (and not just education to women about how to avoid rape, say no, etc);

On Feb 25, myself, Todd Pelazza, Will Johnson and Rev. Paul Holland will be taking part in a 10X10 train the trainer program offered by Chief Gary MacNamara of the Fairfield PD and the Center for Women and Families. This training is focused specifically on male behavior and how best to educate males;

The Department of Public Safety runs its on workshops and training for its staff on how to deal with sexual assault complaints to insure appropriate sensitivity to victim needs. In my opinion, we do an excellent job in this area. We always work closely with Fairfield PD any time a complaint is raised. Further, DPS's role is clearly delineated in our protocol - they serve as first responders to assess the situation and insure safety as well as access to supports for the victim. Fairfield PD is always brought to campus whenever a complaint is received. We then pass the matter to our Title IX team for investigation and outreach to the victim (and to do outreach to the accused)

We do annual training of all coaches and their teams (meetings are with individual teams, not in a "tent" setting) as well as meetings will all sponsors of summer camps on our policies, procedures and their reporting requirements before camp season starts;

We require background checks for all new employees as well as proof of the same for camp counselors

We provide workshops for faculty on reporting requirements. Last year, I worked directly with the Academic Council to develop standard language faculty can use in a syllabus to apprise a student of the supports available to a student bringing a complaint of harassment or assault, including the role the faculty member will play in assisting the student in reporting the matter to DPS;

RAs and New Student Leaders (student employees and leaders who deal directly with their student peers on nights and weekends) received training each summer on their roles and responsibilities in reporting and supporting victims

Notifications:

University Policies: At the beginning of each semester, we put out communications to the entire campus community identifying our policies on sexual misconduct and harassment. We also provide the contact information for our Title IX Coordinator and Deputy Investigator, and a link to a FAQ brochure on what to do if you are the victim of a sexual assault;

Clery: At the beginning of each semester, we issue a notice under the Clery Act to all "campus security authorities" advising them of their specific responsibility under both federal law and university policy to report crimes. We provide this group with reporting forms for crimes, including our specific sexual assault form.

Fairfield also complies with Clery through its annual distribution of its Crime Report. The Crime Report has been updated to meet the requirements of S. 47, the Violence Against Women Reauthorization Act of 2013 ("Act") and that Act's prescriptions regarding new reporting definitions and statistical reporting requirements. We also provide notification of the educational programs in place, as well as supports in place to deal with sexual violence as required by the Act.

Educational Programs for Students:

All freshmen are required to complete HALO, a 1 hour online sexual assault awareness and prevention course in the summer before freshmen year;

The Freshmen Year Experience (mandatory for all freshmen) has one class module dedicated specifically to Healthy Relationships, which includes information about sexual violence, trends on campus, supports and services available at the University, and what to do if you or a friend is the victim of interpersonal violence.

Students are provided a copy of a user-friendly, FAQ brochure on what to do if you or a friend are the victim of sexual violence. This brochure is in hard copy and available on our website:

http://www.fairfield.edu/media/fairfielduniversitywebsite/documents/student/ps_sexual_violence.pdf

Just in the Fall of 2013, Fairfield University students had access to the following educational and social programs all focused on issues relating to sexual violence, domestic partner violence, campus culture, LGBTQ issues, etc:

Healthy Relationships Program: Sept 25th The Center for Women and Families will engage with students in dialogue about what defines a healthy relationship.

Dinner Series: October 8th Sophomore Residential College met with a Sexual Assault survivor in the Ignatian Residential College

Jane Do No More: October 8th Sexual Assault Survivors shared their stories to educate and prevent sexual violence from occurring on campus. Estimated 400+ students in attendance

RAD (Rape Aggression Defense) for Women Classes: October 15th, 17th, 22nd, 24 (6pm-10pm) Self Defense Class for women to prevent and avoid dangerous situations where sexual violence or abduction could occur.

Kerry Cronin Recurring speaker invited to our campus talks about the hook up culture, relational issues facing college students and dating/domestic violence (she did not come this year)

LGBTQ & Sexual Violence Dinner & Discussion: November 7th : Sophomore Residential College (Service for Justice Residential College) hosted Speaker from CONNSACS to discuss issues related to sexual violence in the gay/lesbian community

“Stop It”: November 21st, Sexual trauma Outreach Programming and intervention Training consultant will speak to students about ending sexual violence. Co-Sponsored by FUSA, Reslife,

Center for Academic Excellence: November 12 panel discussion on dealing with students with disabilities, accommodation needs, and who present with emergencies that require intervention by either case management or, in the case of harassment, including sexual harassment, referral to our Title IX team.

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