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We have great expertise on our faculty, and we will draw on that and turn to them to help improve our response, support, and prevention practices.

We have a student body of caring, conscientious young people who want a safe and respectful community.
We will do whatever it takes to create a safe, secure environment for all our students, and foster a culture of respect and shared values on our campus. Our university will not tolerate behavior that runs counter to these values.

I am encouraged by the attention the problem of sexual assault on college campuses has received recently on a national level, as outlined in the recent report from the White House Task Force to Protect Students from Sexual Assault. This is an important step toward the kinds of deep cultural change that must take place to stop such violence on our campuses.

But the actions taking place nationally are not nearly enough. We must address this problem here on our own campus and within our own community. We must take this opportunity to rise above the fray and become leaders in the fight to eradicate sexual violence from college campuses, beginning with our own.

Last fall, we commissioned an external review of our sexual misconduct policies and protocols, and we have already implemented or are in the process of implementing all of the recommendations of that report, including adding staff to support students who have experienced sexual violence. We have that report available for you.

Next week, I will announce details of an additional independent review I have ordered jointly with our Athletic Director and Vice President for Student Affairs to examine our practices for preventing and responding to sexual violence. We will appoint an independent panel, whose charge will include an examination of our athletic department’s recruitment practices, and a campus climate survey to learn more about the culture of our own campus community when it comes to sexual violence and harassment.

Our students’ safety and security is our top priority. We have strong policies and protocols in place, and we are working to make them stronger still.

Until we have a campus where every individual feels safe, where everyone is respected, and where no instance of sexual violence is tolerated, we will not consider it good enough.

This is a difficult time for our community, especially for those whose lives have been directly affected by sexual violence. As a university, we will take this time as an opportunity to make our campus safer, our community stronger, and our intolerance of sexual violence in any form clear and unequivocal.