2016 Summary: Sexual Misconduct at K

In our continuing effort to provide helpful information to the campus community, I offer a summary of sexual misconduct incidents reported to the Office of the Dean of Students during the 2016 calendar year. The increased number of reports received in 2016 (13 in 2016 compared to 12 in 2015) is helpful in identifying patterns and providing clarity and nuance about specific behaviors. The better we understand what goes on, the better we can prevent it.

These incidents include only information reported to the Office of the Dean of Students. Information shared confidentially with the members of the Counseling Center or with the Chaplain is not included here, nor is it shared with the Office of the Dean of Students.

The term “sexual misconduct” is an intentionally broad term that refers to a wide range of behaviors, including sexual assault.

During 2016, 13 reports came to the Office of the Dean of Students (DOS). Seven reports came directly from students with complaints, while six came from faculty and staff who had received information from students.

Three reports shared by faculty members had no identifying information about the people who were involved, nor was there specific information about the reported behavior. Two of these reports indicated that the faculty members believed the complainants were receiving support from the Counseling Center. There was no outreach to the students in these cases because no identifying information was shared.

Of the ten reports that included identifying information, one student did not respond to outreach from the DOS. The reporting staff member in this case indicated that student was working with the Counseling Center.

- Nine of the students who reported sexual misconduct were women, one was a man.
  - Two first-year, two sophomore, two junior, and two senior women reported sexual misconduct. The male reporter’s class year is unknown.
- Four of the reports identified other K students as the perpetrator, two of the anonymous reports suggest other K students as the perpetrator, and other perpetrators were not K students. All of the alleged assailants were men.
- Three students reported stalking behavior (two by former boyfriends), one reported mild physical violence (described as a “light slap” by the reporting student) not of a sexual nature, one student reported uninvited touching of their genitals, and four students reported sexual assault or rape.
- One student reported non-consensual, non-sexual video recording in a public place of one student by another that was later found to have been consensual.
To date, three of the reporting students have sought informal actions that included meeting with a dean, no-contact directives, and similar remedies.

Two students contacted consulted with Security and local police for information about Personal Protective Orders and pursuing legal action.

Four students have, so far, not opted for College or legal action other than the use of Counseling, DOS, and other supportive resources. Their options to seek College action remain open.

One investigation led to the finding of consensual activity, with no formal action taken.

Patterns

- Alcohol was reported as a significant factor, for the reporting and/or accused student, in five of the reports.
- Two of the incidents occurred on campus, four occurred off-campus, and the stalking incidents included a range of behaviors that mostly occurred off-campus.
- About half of the alleged perpetrators were identified as K students.

Students who report sexual misconduct have a variety of reporting options from which to choose. These options range from providing no identifying information/seeking no action to involving law enforcement. All of these options are reviewed with each reporting student, and decisions about options may change over time. We adhere as closely as we can to the wishes of the complainants at every step.

Our ultimate goal is to prevent, eliminate, and remedy sexual misconduct. One of the best tools in this effort is information. Sexual misconduct occurs at K. This summary provides a description of some of the forms of sexual misconduct that K students engage in. No one deserves to be subject to any form of sexual misconduct, ever, no matter the circumstances. We all have a role in intervening any and every time something doesn’t seem right.

Please remember the basics – the most important thing is seeking and providing clear, sober, and enthusiastic consent at every step. Intoxication, unclear or non-existent verbal behavior, and assumptions about others create significant risk of sexual misconduct. Unless there is a clear, unambiguous “yes,” there is no consent.

To learn more, please refer to the Title IX website (https://reason.kzoo.edu/titleix/) for information about campus and community resources, and https://reason.kzoo.edu/studev/policies/sexmisconduct/ for more information about the student conduct process and remedies.

Sincerely,

Sarah B. Westfall
Vice President for Student Development and Dean of Students