Richard Spada: 00:00:01 It's 3:30 and I would like to welcome you to the open forum today, hosted by our task force on sexual misconduct, bullying and campus climate. My name is Richard Spada, and I'm the chair of the task force, and I'm really excited and delighted that you're here. Your voice is important. We want to hear what you have to say. Your ideas, your input, your insights, your feedback, et cetera.

With me at the table are members of the task force. We'll introduce ourselves in one second. You'll see a slide up there. I want to give you a little bit of an overview of what we're going to do today, and to share with you specifically the work that the task force has been charged to do by Dr. Toro, and then hear your insights and perspectives during our community call for action.

So, the purpose of today's meeting, you'll see up on the screen there, is to really hear about your views on existing policies and procedures and rules associated with the reporting and investigating of allegations of sexual misconduct and bullying on campus. We want to hear from you in terms of your perspectives on that. We also want to get feedback from you if you're willing to share feedback, what you think about the different programs that are in place, the training, the education, the communications types of things that go on campus that are intended to prevent sexual harassment, that are intended to prevent bullying, that are really intended to create a very safe and inclusive campus environment for everyone here at Central. That's including faculty, staff, students, alumni, guests of the university.

And finally, we would love to hear from you if you have any insight on best practices. What do you know of that perhaps is being done here at Central or at other universities or at other institutions that you consider to be best practices, that we as a task force should take into consideration and research further? Because we need to hear from you those ideas. I'll share with you in a second how we're actually structured to do that. But that's the purpose of this meeting. These three things. We want to hear this from you.

You see the agenda up there. And we'll review the charges. We'll talk a little bit about the work that we've conducted to date, tell you a little bit about the information and data gathering process that we're following, and then open it up to a call for community input to hear from you. And then we'll close the meeting right at five o'clock. I do want to let you know that
this meeting is being recorded, and this meeting will be transcribed. That is for our research purposes. So, that's what these fine gentlemen are doing over here on the side. So, thank you very much. And the transcribe notes will be available, as this is a freedom of information act meeting, and it's pure transcription of what's said at the meeting.

So, as we get started, I want to introduce you to members of our task force. And I guess I'll let them introduce themselves just quickly as we go down the, from my right to left. Not all the task force members are here. Some have classes. Some are off campus today. But why don't we start with Bill. Just say hello. Do you want to pass the microphone?

Bill Panetta: 00:03:16 Afternoon and welcome. My name is Bill Panetta. I am an alum of Central and a retired HR executive from United Technologies Corporation. I'm delighted to be on the task force to take a look at what we might be able to help improve, digest and send out in a very digestible form.

Shelley Jones: 00:03:37 Shelley Jones, Associate Professor in Mathematics Education.

Yvonne Kirby: 00:03:42 Yvonne Kirby, Director of Institutional Research and Assessment.

Jean Alacandro: 00:03:48 Jean Alacandro, the Director of Residence Life.

Ululy Martinez: 00:03:53 Ululy Martinez, alumni and attorney practicing in New York City.

Fiona Pearson: 00:04:00 Fiona Pearson, Professor of Sociology here at Central.

W. Fothergill: 00:04:04 William Fothergill, Associate Counselor in student wellness services.

K. Rodriguez: 00:04:09 Kristina Rodriguez, I'm the Vice Chair of the Student Life Committee on SGA and I am a Sophomore student.

R. Spada: 00:04:16 Thank you. And again, I'm Richard Spada. I am external. I'm an alum of Central, and recently retired from Novartis Pharmaceutical Corporation where I did work in diversity and inclusion. So, in addition we have a few members who are not here: Natalie Ford is not here from the Learning Center. Victoria Minervino, who is a senior is not here. As well as Cecilia Perez-Colon from Contracts Compliance, she's not available to be with us today.

And oh, Jeremy, you want to introduce yourself, sorry.
Hi, everybody. I'm Jeremy Visone, Assistant Professor in Educational Leadership Policy and Instructional [inaudible 00:04:57]

And Sinead Ruane is going to be joining us a little bit late. She has a class that ends, and will be coming in a little bit late. Also with us we have Susan Matterazzo from the President’s Office, who will be out note taker as well throughout the course of today's meeting. We've all been working together quite diligently since May, when Dr. Toro actually brought us together and asked us to volunteer our time and our talent and our efforts to help address this very important set of topics and charges here at Central. As we stated, Ululy, myself, and Bill, we are external. We're volunteers. We don't get paid for this. We're doing this because the institution means that much to us. And so, we're really honored and excited to be invited to do that, and as well as all of our other esteemed colleagues here.

So, I want to share with you as we get started some guidelines and ground rules as to how we're going to operate in the open forum today. This is an open forum, and what that means is that this is an open forum for anyone on campus that is students, faculty, staff, alumni of CCSU. You're welcome to be here, and anyone may share, and anyone may speak their insights, feedbacks and ideas during our call to action, or call to community input section.

When we do get to that portion of the agenda, we have set up a microphone and we invite you to come up for three minutes and to share your insights or ideas or feedback with us. At the end of three minute, my esteemed colleague to the right, Yvonne, will let you know that your three minutes are up. And in order to be as inclusive as possible, we would like to hear from as many people as possible. Since there are not that many people in the room, there's a high likelihood that we'll be able to rotate around again and get more and continue that conversation. Okay?

What's that? [inaudible 00:06:43] I will let them, yeah. When you do come to the microphone, we will ask you to introduce yourself. It's important we know who you are, and if you're faculty or staff member, an alumni, et cetera. As I stated, the meeting is being recorded. We have a formal minute taker as well. And as well, my colleagues up here, with computers up, taking notes. They'll be taking notes as well during this in order to gather as much information as possible.
There's various different ways that you can provide input. You can provide input today by speaking during the call to community input. We also have two bins over there where Jeremy is sitting: One where you can actually write your thoughts and feedback and ideas and put it in bin that says, "I'd like it read at today's meeting." Or you can put one in another bin that Jeremy will direct it to if you don't want it read at today's meeting and you want the task force to look at it and possibly follow up with you.

After today's meeting, we wanted to make this as inclusive a process as possible. There are two other ways in which you and others on campus can provide feedback and input to us. One is by going to the link, or going to the campus culture webpage, and you can enter in any type of feedback or information or insight that you would like for us, and it will be directed to us. And then the last way is for you to participate in a survey, which will be launched on or about October one. We're still finalizing the date of that with Janice Palmer and [inaudible 00:08:13] communications. And it's a survey to gage your insight to what you know about the different programs and initiatives that are currently ongoing on campus, and it also asks you to provide any additional feedback or insights that you want us to take into consideration as we're doing our research and writing our reports. So, those are two additional ways in which you can actually provide input.

As I get started, I want to share with you the charges that Dr. Toro set forth to us when she invited us to become a part of this task force. And basically there are five task force charges that we are actively looking at and trying to work with and understand. And it really does start off with looking at the processes and procedures that are in place here at Central for the reporting and handling of sexual misconduct and allegations of sexual misconduct and bullying. We want to know what the processes are in place that are existing. How it actually happens today. Okay? We want to understand that. We want to take a look at the organizational structures that are in place to support and enable those processes to work effectively or not effectively. That's what we're going to be taking a look at.

We are going to take a look at what triggers an investigation. How an investigation is triggered. And what are the steps that are followed by the individual groups that actually are the input groups, basically, but where people will go to. We'll want to also take a look at the communications processes that are in place during investigations, and what is communicated post
investigations as well. And that also includes how well parties are informed of the conclusions or the findings. In addition to the policies and procedures and rules, et cetera, we're going to be taking a look at all of the different, as much of the different training and programmatic and communications activities that are taking place on campus today, that are intended to create a safe and inclusive environment for all. One that in which sexual harassment and bullying is really eliminated. And we are taking an in depth look at a variety of different departments and functions, and understanding what's going on there.

We also have a group of people that have been charged to take a look at an external perspective as well in terms of best practices at other colleges and universities and organizations and institutions in terms of how they go about addressing issues and allegations of sexual misconduct and bullying, as well as how they go about defining climate and culture, and what they do to measure climate and culture. And how they work with that data and that information that they get back from the respective audiences, the student bodies, the faculty, the staff, et cetera.

So, these are the charges that we have organized around in our data gathering and information gathering processes. And so, this is kind of a recap of what we're looking at. And what's important to realize here is what we're looking at is the existing policies, procedures, programs, et cetera. There is debate whether or not we should go back and look at the past and how it's been done in the past. What we're looking at today is what is currently done. We're trying to understand it, effectively evaluate it, make recommendations for improvement or changes or additional types of programs, policies et cetera going forward.

It's important that I just give you this definition because I've had some feedback from people on campus like, what do you mean by organization climate and culture, and what are you looking at? One of the things that I think is really important with any organization, and from an external perspective in the business world we do this a lot. I know my colleagues will attest to that as well. It's very important for an institution and an organization to have a definition of what it means by climate and culture, what they aspire to be. What are the established values and norms, behaviors. Those things that all feed into a climate or culture which really builds and sustains psychological trust and safety, that enable people to be fully themselves and show up
and be able to be 100% present at the work that they do, in the studies that they undertake, et cetera.

And so, we are looking at how does Central Connecticut State University define its culture? And we're trying to understand looking at existing data what the campus community feels about the culture and the climate. And so, this is just a definition that is a typical one that we've fallen back on in terms of what we're looking at. How we're going about doing this, we're doing documentation reviews. We have identified departments that report to Dr. Toro, Dr. Troiano, Bernard Sullivan, and a fourth one. What's that? [inaudible 00:13:26]. Key departments. And we have sought out information and data requests from them, and we're in recipient of binders and binders of information that we are starting to look through.

In addition to the information and data that we have received in hard and electronic copy, we are in the process of forming interview teams where we are diving deep into each one of these areas. And we're going to be holding a three-day conference in October where we will be meeting with and interviewing the key leaders in these functions and departments to get a better understanding from their own voice what the policies, practices, processes are that they undertake in their departments. And then as a collective community here, as a collective task force, we'll come together, look at that, look at the consistencies, where there's variation, where we see challenges, where we can identify opportunities to make change. We'll bring in external insights and we will then create a series of recommendations which we will provide to Dr. Toro and the campus community. Our target and goal is December 10th of this year to bring this to conclusion.

So, at this point, what we would like to do is to invite you and to hear from you, your perspectives in terms of your views on the policies, the procedures, the practices that are in place when an allegation of sexual misconduct or bullying is put forth. Your views on that. And any programmatic initiatives, et cetera, communications that are in place on campus to create a safe and inclusive campus for all. What I do want to emphasize for you at today's meeting is not to talk about any particular investigations, past or present, that have been done or are currently in place. That is not the purview of this committee. And I will tell you that this committee is not looking at any of those. Be very clear about that. That is not our purview. We are looking at policies, procedures, practices, programs, initiatives, et cetera.
R. Spada: 00:15:44 And we are looking at climate as well. Absolutely. But that does not mean going deep into investigations or, this is not the place to surface investigatory type of things. Okay. I do want to let you know that on the back of the table, there are a series of resources that my colleagues here have put together, that you are welcome to take with you that address sexual misconduct, bullying, and the different processes and practices and programs that are in place here at campus. And we encourage you to take that today as well.

So, on that note, just a reminder that we are all welcome to speak. Want to provide open forum to you for three minutes, and when you do come up to the microphone, please state your name who you are, and share with us your insights. We will try to limit as much crosstalk as possible because we want to hear from you. But one of my colleagues may have a question to get a little bit more information from you. And we'll go from there. Okay?

So, I'd like to open it up to call for community input. And you're welcome to come up to the microphone or you can write, and we'd love to hear from you. Hello.

Speaker 12: 00:17:08 Hello, how are you?

R. Spada: 00:17:09 Well, thank you. Can you go up to, is the microphone on?

Speaker 12: 00:17:14 I don't know, is it? Yeah.

R. Spada: 00:17:16 Get a little closer. Thank you.

Speaker 12: 00:17:17 Okay. She's going to read first.

R. Spada: 00:17:20 Sure.

Speaker 12: 00:17:20 Okay.

[Redacted]: 00:17:20 Okay. My name is [redacted]. I think some of you know that already. I'm a recent CCSU graduate and I'm a survivor of sexual assault. I sat at the first forum I spoke at last semester. That I understand there's not a lot of time and a lot of people who want to speak, so we'll do our best to keep our statements short. But we will finish our statements. Our stories have been talked over and covered up for long enough. Having to sit through four or five minutes of the pain survivors have endured
at the hands of this institution is a small price to pay for the lifetime of trauma you've put us through. I want to acknowledge my fellow survivors in this room today. They are warrior women, my sisters and my inspiration. One in particular has inspired me to speak out and has changed my life. [name redacted] is here today.

[Name redacted] is a survivor of sexual assault committed by a former CCSU professor in 2015 in his office on this campus. When she reported her assault to the university, she was told that he was fired. But the truth came out later, as it always does that he was allowed to resign. And because of the minimal damage this left on his life, he even went on to teach at an all-female university. The catastrophic damage this left on her life cannot even begin to be put into words. I want to share with you something which [name redacted] permission she said to me a couple of weeks ago.

Why are so many administrators and individuals and authority not standing up for the students that count on them? Do the right and responsible thing. Demand change of a [inaudible 00:18:53] system. This is not over and we won't stop demanding the change because we live with the devastation. Change is now. No more victims. [Name redacted] is my hero, and everyone should know of her strength and her story. It will not be covered up any longer.

I reported my rapist to CCSU just a little over a year ago now. The Board of Regents told me they can't help because they don't have students, and called me insane. At open forums like this one, Janice Palmers quietly referred to one survivor as the legit one while speaking to a reporter, and even laughed in my face at an open forum where I acknowledged that my rapist was in the room and that my school had done nothing.

My rapist bragged about raping me and quoted student conduct officer Chris Dukes telling him that the school would do everything they could to make this go away. We are not going away, not until the job is done. Since this task force has been put into place, not a single one of these women have been contacted. We are the women that made this task force happen. Survivors are here now and we are not heard until all of us are being heard. So, my question is, what have you done for us? Because us warrior women are still here and we're still fighting just for you to hear us, much less help us. There is no you without us, but there is an us without you.

This is my final statement to a cold, uncaring system. I pass the torch. I've said all I can, and if you can watch students suffer,
and still do nothing, it's clear that there is no place in your heart for anyone but yourselves. We aren't people to you, we're just problems. If it seems like I only came here today to criticize, it's because it is. Only cowards hide behind silence. To say that you're not looking into investigations, past or present, is absurd. And to my fellow survivors and advocates who have been beaten down by this institution, I leave you with the words of Judge Aquilina: "Leave your pain here, go out and do your magnificent things."

R. Spada: 00:20:51 Thank you.

My name is [redacted]. It breaks my heart to be here today. I might stumble, so please forgive me. This I very uncomfortable, but I have to do this, even though it happened four years ago, please bear with me. My time might be a little longer than three minutes, but I'll read as fast as possible. It breaks my heart to be here today, to look at all the students and staff who have tried to do the right thing. To know everything that I encountered four years ago are still obstacles in your system today. I didn't come forward just for myself, but because as a student, it was my obligation to this school to come forward as you asked me to. You asked the students and the staff to come forward when they hear or see something wrong. You ask us to come forward when we have been sexually assaulted only to be more traumatized by you and your calloused words. We all have been doing what is asked of us by you. We are waiting for your support. We're waiting for what is right. We're waiting for you to do your job.

And I'm sorry, I don't mean to direct this at you, but I want people to take away who are responsible, okay for what they did to me. I'm trying to make that happen. We have walked away far more broken and we have come to you for help. It's not okay when I come forward with my truth of what happened and I was completely dismissed. If you could only imagine what that looks like and feels like. I lost who I was prior to the sexual assault. I was 50 years knowing myself to living in isolation and trying to pick up the pieces. I'm only trying to survive each day. I'm not a survivor. I'm just trying to survive. That's what I'm doing. Your friends and family are impacted, ripple effect, devastating caused by it's real and just another portion of your trauma you experience. I was only asking for you to do your jobs. I didn't need new policies or procedures. I just wanted you to comply with the policies and procedures that already existed.
I have been in and out of therapy for four years. I've been with the same therapist for two years, God bless her. We do a lot of visualization. I want to share one of her techniques. I want the students and the victims and the victims of this university to imagine that each of the staff sitting on this stage have a huge bag on their lap. Everything I say and read will be going to fill these bags. Feel free to dump your truth in the bags. All the bags will be left behind when I leave today. I've carried this heartache and this devastation caused by your staff long enough. By giving it back to you, I ask you to try to be responsible with it. Use it for the good. Use it for this day forward, because change is now. Not later.

I reported to the Women's Center. I was hysterical and I remember sobbing and trying to remember what I was trying to get my truth out. I was getting counseling from the Center. After about a month, I was told by a staff person that the sexual assault I went through, the experience of it, I could think of it as a tool in my social worker toolbox. I was told that I should be proud of myself for getting a good-looking, intelligent professor removed from the campus. I was also told I should feel pretty special for speaking to the President of the university. You know who you are. Don't even dare roll your eyes at me. No more insults or injuries by you. Your words were mean and calloused. I just didn't even know what to say. Your words never left my thoughts except for today, I'm putting it all in the bags in front of you.

The additional pain you caused me, I have spoke to other students and staff. You've exposed your mean, callous words as well. Much damage you have caused. You hide behind a title, and you say what you want. You are traumatizing students and staff. I would suggest you only listen to the students. Stop talking. Or maybe keep talking, and all the students, staff carry a tape recorder or their phones, so they could tape you. Maybe then, that might cause you to pause before you speak.

Human resource department. Anna, are you here? [inaudible 00:25:55] okay. you know me. I'm the one who came to your office with Sarah Dodd. I was trying to comprehend how it was possible that a professor who sexually assaults a students, admits to it, writes a statement with the ugly details of what he did to me, and the university let him resign. The record of the assault would follow him. We are not just talking school violations or policies, but the acts were felonies and misdemeanors in the real world. I ask you how is it possible that he was able to resign? You said and I quote, "What do you
expect for us to do? Hire him back to fire him?” That’s what you said to me. Was that necessary?

R. Spada: 00:26:43 If you could direct your comments to the committee. Thank you.

: 00:26:43 I am.

R. Spada: 00:26:45 Thank you.

: 00:26:47 But I just, since I'm talking about someone and I said their name-

R. Spada: 00:26:47 I understand.

: 00:26:50 I want them to know that I'm here, and I observe them.

R. Spada: 00:26:54 I understand.

: 00:26:56 All sexual assault should be handled outside the university. Do you ever think that it is a conflict of interest to investigate yourself? Do you think it's none bias reporting system and transparent system. Come on, really? I believe a student should have the right to have a city police handle their investigation if that's what they want. That is another forum, I'm sure. I believe when a student reports a rape or a sexual assault, that you remove that individual from the school. Emotional trauma caused by seeing her or his rapist in classes or on campus, you make me sick. A couple of years before me, I had a staff member removed, a staff member was removed from his office to a teaching position while they investigated the sexual assault of a student. The student was subjected to more traumatization, harassment caused by students and staff. What happened to safety you pledged to these students and your staff members? You make me physically sick.

The VA office, are you here? Any representative? You were kind of when I requested to tell you my truth. I provided you with a report. As a veteran, I expect far more from your office. I reported I was sexually assaulted by a professor on campus. You did nothing with my report. You wouldn't file a complaint about the school. You didn't do anything. That too, is considered doing the wrong thing. What the hell? All these veterans that come through this office. If you revisit your website, it clearly states what you're responsible for. What the school must comply with for their veterans, it calls for action, it calls for a system of transparency. I ask where were you for me? Did you not
recognize the impact of not doing anything? How it horribly affect me and my self-worth?

The Board of Regents. Are you here? Anybody representative? Okay. When Sarah Dodd and I met with Mr. Weinberger and Mrs. Weaver, after reading what happened to me, I was told that catastrophic mistakes were made by CCSU. These were his words, Mr. Weinberger's words. I finally felt like I was being heard for about 48 hours, for the BOR to deny that they are responsible for students in the 17 colleges and universities that they attend, is just ridiculous. To tell a student that they are insane when they reach out for your help, is insane, insensitive and negligent. You make me sick. Your students are asking for support and change on their campus. To change an attitude of the staff. To change how they have done things in the past, and how to do their jobs right now and in the future.

And going to [inaudible 00:29:54] the police department, I won't even go there. After four years, nothing has changed in this university except for the amount of victims you have collected, and the collateral damage and the trust broken with your students and the staff, the rot eating away at the foundations. The red flag campaign will be kicked off next week. Every flag you see, I want you to think about all the victims who embraced and believed in your red flag campaign, only to be humiliated, discarded as only problems to the school. I want you to make a commitment to the students. I want you to promise that every student and staff that come to you, you see an opportunity to do what is right. An opportunity to demonstrate in lead by example. An opportunity to rebuild trust with your students.

Now, I want everyone to help me close the bag sitting on their laps. Your time is up. This day forward, I want you to make a change. I love these students. I don't know them. I care about the people. I wanted to finish my education, and I was unable to do that. I'm lucky to be here right now. So, with that, I thank you.

R. Spada: 00:31:13 Thank you. Thank you both, blank and blank. I appreciate your courage coming forward and sharing your story and your perspectives. And I would like to clarify a couple of things. I said earlier that it is not within our purview to look at past or current investigations. What I meant by that is that it is not our job to conduct investigations on any individual. And we have not been involved with conducting any investigation of any individual, nor will we be in the future. That does not mean that we will not
look at past investigations, and understand how they were conducted and what took place and the outcomes of them from a policy, process and procedure perspective. So, that's a very important point of clarification.

I do want to concur, and I'm sorry that ... have left, the change is now, and I believe that's why Dr. Toro has charged us as a task force to come together to take a look at climate, the current state. And we are eager to understand more. And ..., I would like, she's not here, but I would put this on the record as well, you're correct, survivors have not been contacted, but there are survivors of sexual assault on our task force. And I believe it's within our purview to reach out and to seek input from other survivors of sexual harassment and sexual misconduct on campus to further understand their points of view. And I believe that we as a task force will do that and invite those people to the table. We've just begun our data gathering and our process. So, I would like that to be on the record that that is what we will probably be doing as well.

I don't know if any of my colleagues want to add to that? Any comments? It takes a lot of courage for both of those women to come forward. And I know I'm grateful and I believe that we are all grateful for that. So, if you see them, please thank them on our behalf.

The mic is open. We invite any or all of you to please come forward and share your thoughts and perspectives. Hello.

J. Deblasito: 00:34:03 Hi, I'm Joanne Deblasito. I'm a professor in psychology, psychological science. And yes, we've met before. Nice to see you. The concern that a number of people have is that originally the task force was going to be just looking at sexual misconduct. And since then, bullying has been tacked on, and so has campus climate. And I guess my question is all three of those are really big things. And all three of them truthfully, deserve a task force.

R. Spada: 00:34:38 They do.

J. Deblasito: 00:34:39 And so, my question is how are you balancing it all? How are you going to give the right kind of attention to each of these issues that are so important? And I think for many of us, we're disappointed that this is not a task force solely for sexual misconduct.

R. Spada: 00:34:58 Thank you June, for that comment. And my colleagues can jump in as well. I think we understand and appreciate exactly your
point of view, because it is a very, very big, broad charge. A point of clarity, when we were called together, it was for sexual misconduct and campus climate. And as we were organizing, Dr. Toro had asked us to include bullying as well. I can tell you, and my colleagues will probably reinforce this, is that as we have started to dive deeper, it's become bigger. And you are absolutely correct, June, that each one of those is a bucket into themselves. And I would, without jumping to recommendations going forward, I would venture to say that we need to take a look at each of these in very separate and distinct ways.

Take climate, for example. That's huge. I mean, they're all huge. All three of them are huge. And so, I think what we will come forward with is our view of the current state here at CCSU, and put forth recommendations that say these things need to be looked at in a much deeper level, with a lot of discipline, much more deep discipline and deep thought and experience that other parties need to bring to the table to really understand that. So, I hope that's, yeah. Thank you. Thanks for raising that.

Come on down.

G. Moreno-Fuent: 00:36:38 Hello, my name is Gladys Moreno-Fuentes. I am a counselor.
R. Spada: 00:36:41 Hello, Gladys.
G. Moreno-Fuent: 00:36:42 And I'm glad that bully and climate campus was included, and I agree they are three huge issues. But I believe each one deserve equal attention. I was, as a person experiencing bullying and hostile environment, but also as a member of the committee on counsel of women, Women of Color subcommittee, based on what I've heard from other women who have been seeking help in our subcommittee, they have been meeting with us, reporting a lot of bullying and abuse of power. I would say that people have lost faith in the investigation process. We have. And I agree with what was said before that maybe these type of issues should be investigated by outside entities. For a few reasons. After many years, individuals in charge of investigation develop personal relationships with others on campus. And that relationship many times interferes with their ability to be objective. That has been my experience.

Other thing is I don't know if some people, either administrators or investigators, I don't know the reason that they don't have enough training or they decide to be biased because of personal relationship, but many times after a victim takes the courage to move forward on people's cases, they never hear back. Never.
And those victims are left alone dealing with the bully, the abuse of power, plus the consequence of reporting those situations. I would have more concerns, but this [inaudible 00:39:05] is not safe for me enough to be able to express more specific concerns. So, I would love to meet individually and be more specific. But again, I'm glad that the bully is put on the table. I hope that hostile environment is seriously addressed, and something is done on campus. And I hope that at some point we all feel safer on campus.

R. Spada: 00:39:35 Gladys, correct? Is it Gladys?

G. Moreno-Fuent: 00:39:37 Gladys Moreno-Fuentes.

R. Spada: 00:39:38 Gladys, thank you for that. I'm happy to share with you my card. It's right here if you'd like it. Take one before you go, to hear back from you. And my colleagues would be delighted to hear from you as well. Thank you for sharing that. You're absolutely right. I think each issue does deserve equal attention. We talked about that earlier with the, June's comment by the scope of this. You raise a very important point, Gladys about external perspectives and external investigations and investigatory process.

That is why we have one of our three pillars on this task force is looking at external best practices. And we're looking not only at other educational institutions, colleges and universities. We're looking at business best practices. So, for example, in a corporate environment, when an allegation of sexual misconduct, bullying or abuse is surfaced, how does a corporation address that? Right? And often, things are reviewed externally and then brought back in. We're looking at those things, and that's part of the work of our best practices team. So, I wanted to share that with you. But thank you very much for your input. Thank you.

Hold on, we'll pass this down. Just William, there you go.

Yvette Negasimb: 00:41:05 Good afternoon, my name is-

R. Spada: 00:41:07 One moment, William wants to just say something, and then we'll come right to you.

Yvette Negasimb: 00:41:07 Oh, okay.

William: 00:41:09 Testing, okay. I just want to clarify something, because again, throughout this process, we will be gathering information. If you
have a statement that you're going to read or you have read, that you would like to share with us, that you can provide that to Jeremy at the table, because we would love to have that information.

R. Spada: 00:41:27 Yeah. And as well, this is being recorded and we will have transcription of that as well. Yeah. Great. Hello.

Yvette Negasimb: 00:41:34 Hi. Good afternoon. My name is Yvette Negasimbi.

R. Spada: 00:41:37 Hello, Yvette.

Yvette Negasimb: 00:41:38 I'm faculty member in the department of counselor education and family therapy. And I'm also the co chair of the concerns for women. So, I want to talk about two issues: Climate and bullying. So, with campus climate, departmental climate, or whatever it is, this is an experiential thing. It's the person who experiences it. That it's a hostile environment. And nobody can say it's not. So, that's just one observation, because it has come to my attention that when people say the environment is hostile, someone comes in and says it's not. So, I think it is important to believe the people who report, that that is their experience. And when people try to investigate, they should come from that perspective. Not from their perspective.

And then the second thing I want to talk about is bullying. So, when it comes to bullying, we find that it's the people in power whose word counts more. Those who are not in power, no one listens to them. So, I'd like the task force to pay special attention to those two points, focusing on the issues that I have addressed. Thank you.

R. Spada: 00:42:59 Thank you, Yvette, very much. I appreciate that. My colleagues Jean has done some work in this area, and is bringing to the table some stuff in this area.

Jean Alacandro: 00:43:14 A little bit about bullying, when we are in situations like this. Because we talked about this extensively, how to define it. And basically, once you get through the point where after like 12th grade when you're in an environment like this, it becomes a form of harassment. So, whatever falls into the category of harassment on the university documents the state of Connecticut, and those things that people violate, those are the things that we would be looking at related to bullying, per se. They would be related to harassment in this form. So, just to help clarify that for those of you in the room.
R. Spada: 00:43:55 Yeah. Thank you. Thank you, Jean. And I think it's come up with other speakers as well as yourself: It's so emotional. It's very subjective. How one person defines it, it may be different from another person. How one interprets the behavior may be different than another. And that's why we have to step back and look and say, how objective are our processes? How are we ensuring an objective investigation takes place? How are we ensuring that all the facts from both parties or multiple parties gets brought to the table, and how is it investigated and interpreted? Right? And that's what we're looking at.

I will tell you that we have stacks and stacks of information and data and processes that we're starting to sift through. And done in multiple different ways throughout campus. And that's what we're going to be looking at in terms of a level of consistency and things like that. But I want to thank you, Yvette, for that. Appreciate your perspective and input.

Hi.

Jacqueline C.: 00:45:10 Hi, my name is Jacqueline Camino-Boben and I am-

R. Spada: 00:45:10 Jacqueline?

Jacqueline C.: 00:45:13 Yes.

R. Spada: 00:45:14 Hi, Jacqueline.

Jacqueline C.: 00:45:14 I am the director of the Women's Center here at CCSU, and I've been director of the Center for the past 20 years. So, I've had an opportunity to observe what takes place for women on this campus. I'd like to make three points: One is I'd like to, the Women's Center has been advocating for the past few years on having a sexual misconduct policy be included on every syllabus. So, that's something that I would really like the committee to take into consideration. To understand that a paragraph is not sufficient enough. In order to educate a campus community, providing pamphlets to students, faculty. We accept it. We put it away. But if you include it on the syllabus, every student on this campus receives a syllabus. So, I think it's critical for someone who has been doing this work that if you want to educate a campus community about your policies and procedures as it pertains to violence against women's issues, included on the syllabus. That's number one.

Number two, it is critical that people understand the role that the Women's Center has had in creating a climate that would be
conducive to the well-being of female students. We were the ones responsible for advocating for the inclusion of consent, and some of the definitions that you all review. So, with that piece, once again, I think it’s critical that every student that has a syllabus, we attach the sexual misconduct policy on that. Number two, you all speak about bullying, but as the Women’s Center director whose been on the committees for the concerns of women, and chairs the women of color subcommittee, one of the things that we have seen on this campus is the mobbing behavior that exists?

R. Spada: 00:47:19 The what?

Jacqueline C.: 00:47:20 Mobbing.

R. Spada: 00:47:21 Mobbing.

Jacqueline C.: 00:47:22 Mobbing is so pervasive on this campus. And so destructive. Especially to women of color. And the institution needs to address that. Because some of the behavior that's being exhibited is being done by the same individuals over again. And they come together, and they attack, and they bring people with them to attack individuals and destroy people's careers. And we've had several people leave this institution because of that type of behavior. So, I hope that you include mobbing to our definition of bullying. Because I think once you really look at it, it's something we've spoken to different departments about, is the mobbing behavior that exists.

And then number three, I think it's critical that if we are going to look at the campus climate and the issues that are impacting women, that we include the diversity centers. So often these areas on campus that are responsible for advocacy not part of the conversation. And in order for us to create a campus that is inclusive, these diversity centers need to be part of the discussion as it pertains to recruitment, retention, and providing support to people from these diverse communities on this campus. So, those are the three recommendations that I have is that number one, to advocate for the inclusion of the sexual misconduct policy on every syllabus. Number two, to include mobbing in your definition of bullying. And then number three, in terms of engaging the various cultural centers, diversity centers when these discussions are taking place on campus, so that you can hear from the individuals that they are represented.
Sp, thank you very much for the work that you're doing, and I think it's very much needed. And at the same time, I think it's going to make changes to the campus. So, thank you.

R. Spada: 00:49:35 Thank you, Jacqueline, for that very much, and those three points. One of the things that we are looking at it, you made me think of this is, as you were talking, there was a great article about a month or so ago in the New York Times about campus civility. And some universities around the country are starting to put a curriculum or put courses in, and all students and faculty participate in terms of campus civility, and what does it mean to show up as a citizen on campuses, and what's expected from a behavioral perspective. So, talking through these things just made me think about that, and I just wanted to share with you that we're looking at some of that. So, thank you.

Okay. Hi.

H. Pacheko: 00:50:14 How are you?

R. Spada: 00:50:15 Well, thank you. How are you?

H. Pacheko: 00:50:17 Harry Pacheko of [inaudible 00:50:18] Services.

R. Spada: 00:50:18 Hi, Harry.

H. Pacheko: 00:50:19 I've heard since the start that individuals have come forward and reported either sexual harassment, misconduct. I guess what I like to know is, are these reporters informed as to the timeline in which they're going to receive some either being told how long certain things are going to take, what's the result? Something that lets them know that they're going to receive something in some kind of timeframe so that, I just heard earlier that it's been over a year, and this young lady has not heard about what's happening with her situation. And I think that's just uncalled for in this day and age, whether it's through electronic mail, whatever form. But that they should be informed on a regular basis. There should be something in print that says they must be informed at this stage, three months out, four months, whatever it is. So, that they feel comfortable in that something is being done and addressed.

Speaker 23: 00:51:22 Can I actually just clarify. It's not that I haven't heard, it's that almost immediately [inaudible 00:51:27] out of their jurisdiction, and that there's nothing they can do to help.

R. Spada: 00:51:22 Thank you, Carrie.
H. Pacheko: 00:51:32 Well, but also we [inaudible 00:51:32] to be told what are the options.

Speaker 23: 00:51:33 Yeah.

R. Spada: 00:51:33 Thank you, Harry.

H. Pacheko: 00:51:33 You're welcome.

R. Spada: 00:51:35 Very much appreciate that. One of the first things that we have asked for from all of the offices which we are going deeper in investigating and understanding is to have each one of these offices actually do a process flow chart of the steps that they follow when an individual comes forth with an allegation of sexual misconduct or bullying. And to actually map out from A to Z the steps that they follow, including when and how they communicate, status along the way, the process and the findings.

And right now, one of the things that I've been observing is that there are multiple, I'm going to call them multiple points of entry on campus that individuals can go to. If you're a student, you can go to one point and make an allegation. If you're a faculty member, you can go to another. If you're [inaudible 00:52:27], you can go to another. There's multiple ways, functions to go to. And we're starting to explore, do they all follow the same process? I don't know if they do. We've asked them as part of our investigatory process to map out what they do. So, we can look at apples to apples and make it as objective as possible, because this is a hugely emotional and subjective process thing that we're going. And to what degree is there consistency, and to what degree is there variation in how these things are being handled? Right? The levels of communication. When things are communicated. How things are communicated. Who's doing the communicating? Who's doing the investigating? What happens if someone doesn't agree with a finding? Right?

So, it got to be mapped out. We have to look at it as objectively as possible. And that's what we're trying to do. And we've asked every one of the functions, our offices that have been providing information for us, to map out what they do so we can put them side by side, and to see. Because therein may lie a problem and there may lie a huge opportunity. Huge opportunity. Right? To bring some consistency to this. And so, thank you for that, very much.
Hello there, come on down.

Iwelda: 00:53:41 How are you? Well, my name is Iwelda, and I direct the EOB program.

R. Spada: 00:53:50 Hi, Iwelda.

Iwelda: 00:53:50 And I have to-

R. Spada: 00:53:54 First of all, what is the?

Iwelda: 00:53:56 The Educational Opportunity Program.

R. Spada: 00:53:58 Okay. Got you.

Iwelda: 00:53:59 We just celebrated 50 years. I don't know if you had a chance to look at the Courier, but there was some good news from our students there. But I'm thinking about, I got to go back to what Jacqueline, the director of the Woman's Center, yeah. There has to be, and I understand in the syllabi, we've got to in the curriculum, and also, and I understand because prior to [inaudible 00:54:19] coming into higher education, which was over 30 plus years, I worked at an agency where we had some intense training. It was mandated. And I understand we have contracts, we have unions, et cetera. But because what happens is with the students that I've been working for for years, the first thing that comes into my mind is when I have the young ladies that through the years, they share these little tidbits about things that, is it bullying? Is this considered bullying? Is this considered sexual harassment? They're having a hard time defining, okay? If it's true bullying or sexual harassment.

And because of the form of what I describe as the form of the authority versus a student. Okay, I'm in a position of authority, and especially coming from other countries where you have to respect your authority and you're always right, that's the mindset is still that way, okay? And so therefore, there has to be some intense training. And again, and I understand that there is, but there has to be a form of, we need some professionals who this is their back alley, so that we can really understand and respect that we're in a diverse society, and everybody interprets bullying and sexual harassment differently. And I just want to leave it off that way, because I try to attend to the workshops or the training that's offered. And I always say why is this still happening? And the intensity that it's occurring,
R. Spada: 00:56:07 Thank you. I think your points about the training from an educational perspective or an educational institution. Education is key, right? Everybody speaks the same language. Everyone should have the same understanding of what is meant by bullying, sexual harassment, misconduct et cetera. People should know the processes, et cetera. One of the things that we are looking at as part of this task force is what is the training that is considered mandatory training? And what is not? And we are also looking at the degrees of compliance with mandatory training, and what's reported, and what happens when people don't comply with mandatory requirements for training and how is that dealt with? So, that's some of the things that we're looking at. And when we start to dive deeper and interview these different functions, we're asking those questions.

Case in point, title nine training. What's happening with that. And we're, in terms of the compliance perspective and what happens when an individual doesn't complete her or his required title nine required training? Right? It happens. So, we're looking at that kind of stuff. And so, but that's super, and thank you very much for that, Iwelda.


Fiona Pearson: 00:57:21 Hello. I just, I'm connecting dots here, and I wanted to put this out there, because what I think [inaudible 00:57:27] said about power is really important. I think some of the things that subsequent speakers, Iwelda, Jacqueline have brought up in regards to training and who is training, and then going back to even at the beginning, who said I just need you to comply with existing policies. Something that, in thinking about power, we are consulting people who are in positions of power, right, who are supposed to be implementing these trainings and monitoring incidents on campus. But how you experience that process is important to us. And that's part of what you're sharing today.

But just know also that there is the campus climate website where you can submit anonymously. So, if you feel that because of your, if you feel that your treatment was not in line with existing policy even, so it's not that the policy is the problem, because we're examining policies, but we'll also be looking at past cases, but it's from you that we can learn if existing policies are working already, but they're just not being implemented effectively, that's where you can communicate that. And you can share that today at either of these forums. But that website
is another place where you can share that information about existing policies that you feel are not being implemented in the way that you have come to understand they ought to be implemented. So, please use those resources to communicate with us as well.

R. Spada: 00:58:54 That website is monitored on a daily basis, and when items are submitted, those are forwarded directly to us by the webmasters. So, thank you.

Hi.

David Spector: 00:59:09 I'm David Spector, Professor of Biology.

R. Spada: 00:59:12 Hi, David.

David Spector: 00:59:14 I'd like to mention two things that I think contribute to campus climate. One is history, and the other is perception. I think many people find it ironic that this event is taking place in the same week that there's an event celebrating the career of President Miller. Many people have viewed leaders on this campus as people who have bullied, people who have covered up cases of sexual misconduct. Talking about presidents, vice presidents, boards. Many campuses today are addressing the fact that their land was stolen from natives, addressing the fact that early in their history, slavery contributed to building their campuses. Addressing the history of how campuses responded to the Red Scare and the Lavender Scare in the 1950s. Those conversations about history contribute to campus culture. Covering up can also be part of campus culture. I believe that on this campus, coverup has been a bit part of campus culture. I urge the committee to address how this campus can look at its history, look at its history openly. Not reopening every individual case, but asking how has the institution behaved? What is the history? What is this institution built on?

And then I want to address perception. Perception is a big part of campus culture. We've heard about communication, about how somebody who files a complaint needs to have proper communication with appropriate offices according to schedules and so on and so forth. The campus community needs communication too. We live on rumor here. A lot of our perception is based on I heard there was this case. I heard that so and so experienced an insult. I hear that this group of people is having a problem. It's not addressed by our leadership. Complaints get filed. They get buried somewhere deep in a clery report or something, there may be some statistic. Maybe not if
it doesn't objectively fall into the appropriate category for a clery report. We need more open communication about individual cases, about groups of cases. What is happening? Many of us who have been on this campus for decades have wound up with a very negative perception of what this institution stands for in terms of bigotry versus inclusiveness.

And speaking of history, I don't know how many people on this panel know or remember, but I can remember talking to a blue ribbon panel addressing some of these issues ten years ago. Blue ribbon external panel. I don't know what happened to that report. I hope more comes out of this report.

R. Spada: 01:03:08 Thank you, David. You raise some really important points there in terms of perception history. You raise some challenging perspectives in terms of communications and what can and cannot be communicated. There's lot of different levels to that. I do think from a culture and climate perspective, it's really important for us to look, you're right, at the past, and then say, what do we want to be? What do we aspire to be as Central Connecticut State University? What have we learned from out past? How do we want to be known? How do we want to be identified? What's important to us? Those are all important parts of culture and climate. And I think going back to what I think Shannon said, change is now, not later. And I think we have to start to look at those things. And I believe our task force is looking at that. Thank you for reminding us about the blue ribbon external panel. Because that did come up and we didn't jump on that, and I'm glad that you brought that up because it's something that we need to pursue and also see as well. Thank you.

Hi.

[Person]: 01:04:23 Hi. My name is [Name]. I am-

R. Spada: 01:04:26 What's your name?

[Name]: 01:04:32 [Name].

R. Spada: 01:04:32 [Name].

[Name]: 01:04:36 Yeah. I am a CCSU alum.

R. Spada: 01:04:41 I can't hear you. Can you speak a little closer?
I am a CCSU alum, and a survivor. My question, or not so much question. But I would like clarification on what you mentioned in the beginning about current data. Could you please define what you mean by looking at current data to assess policies and procedures and where to move forward? It's measured from when? Because my situation took place 20 years ago. Obviously things have changed since then, I would assume, I would hope, in terms of policy. In terms of action, there has been none. I also agree with what Iwelda said regarding the syllabus. I was a commuting student, so I did not have resources that a resident student would have. I was essentially by myself. I did report to two professors, and my department chair person, and I declined to take it farther because I was leery about repercussions. So, and I did not know what my choices were. And I did not know also what to call it. What had happened to me. I do know now that it was assault. So again, education, not only for the students, but also for the staff. Because they didn't know what it was either.

I worked prior to coming to Central. I decided to go to college later. And I got extensive training on sexual harassment in the workforce. And I knew what to look for there. I knew the chain of command. I knew who I needed to report to, what I needed to do. How I needed to conduct myself and to move forward. And I knew what actions would have been taken, had I made a complaint in my workplace.

When I got here, and something happened to me, I did not know what the chain of command was. I did not know who was responsible. And there was no clear direction. So, I would sincerely hope that as you look at all of this information, that you do take into consideration past events and how the university conducted themselves. I'll also say that I again, came forward on a more official capacity in 2014, and spoke to administrators regarding my situation. And again, nothing was done. And I would also like to point out, that the university lied to me, to my face, and said nobody had ever launched a formal complaint against the professor that I was accusing. Which was not true. He had numerous complaints launched against him.

So, please take into consideration the culpability that the university has had in where we are today. And there is mention about training for the staff, the professors. Are you also looking at the union contracts that the faculty has in regards to the potential role that they play in creating these kinds of climates?

R. Spada: 01:09:43 Yes.
Okay. Thank you.

R. Spada: Okay, right?

Yes.

Thank you. Thank you for that, and thank you for coming forward and sharing a bit of your story, who you are, and your perspective on that. A couple of things: You reinforce the importance of the education going back in history, et cetera, so on and so forth. We are looking back anywhere between five to ten years in terms of past. But it doesn't mean that we can't look further back, so we may reach out to you as well. So, I want to thank you for that and thank you for your perspectives and bringing that forward. Thank you.

Hi.

Toyan: Hi. My name is Toyan.

R. Spada: What's your name?

Toyan: Toyan.

R. Spada: Toyan.

Toyan: Yes. I work at the international office. And as I'm speaking to you now, my voice is shaking. Not because I'm not a strong person, but because there are two things. You come to work, you spend your hours here. And you really need to be in a place where you're very productive. So, there are two issues: The first issue is you come to work, you want to enjoy your place of work, and you want to be productive and you want to be efficient, and you want to be the best to your place of employment. So, when you come to a place where there's something called a rumor mill here in this institution. It's heavy. It's thick. It's alive. And there are all kinds of information going through that rumor mill. And within that rumor mill, people use it as a resource. It's not a fact. There are no facts at the rumor mill, but it's used as a resource, as a tool to destroy employees that actually are very efficient. I'm not sure why. I'm not sure what the purpose is. But information in those mills, those rumor mills, are not accurate.

So, those information are used to destroy, it's a form of bullying. It's a form of mobbing. However way you look at it. And it's also a form of creating a hostile environment for the
people that are within the organization. So, that's one thing. So I would love for you to see how you can actually eradicate that rumor mill, because there's no reason why we all should be functioning on what's not accurate. We all should be functioning on what's accurate so that we can all be and do the best that we need to be.

Then there's also this thought of, is it even worth my while opening my mouth? Do I really need to be part of this conversation? Can we really make headway? Because over the years, you say one thing, something else is done, like some people have said here. You never hear back. And sometimes you just let it go and you just leave it alone. But the question is, is it possible, and I know that we have a new system in place, we have a new president in place, and she's doing the best she can to put the task force together. And I'm so grateful that this is happening, that this conversation is happening. So, the question is how can you help us go forward with this? And are we able to trust the system to the point where we know that eventually it's going to be as efficient and effective as it needs to be? And I'm [inaudible 01:13:15].

R. Spada: 01:13:15 Wow. Thank you. Toyen, right?

Toyan: 01:13:18 Yes.

R. Spada: 01:13:19 Toyen. Thank you. You talk about some really important things. You talk about trust. You talk about psychological trust, trusting the system, trusting the people, trusting the processes. Right? And that needs to be built. Trust needs to be built. And trust is built by demonstrative behaviors by leaders and others in the organization. And I think that I give Dr. Toro a lot of credit for stepping in and stepping up. She had to. Right? In forming this task force. And you talk about the rumor mill, et cetera, and it can destroy people, and things you hear and things you don't hear.

That's why objectivity is key in all of these instances. And we have to ensure that the processes that are in place, and how things are worked through are as objective and non-subjective as possible. And there has to be checks and balances in place for that. And we're looking at that, and that's what we will be looking at that. So hopefully some things will come out of this. I'm expecting things will come out of this, recommendations that will come out of this to hopefully address some of these with Dr. Toro and the community.
And I encourage you and others, you have felt safe to speak up today, I would encourage you to speak up directly to Dr. Toro as well. I've gotten to know her over the past May, June, July, four months, four or five months, and I find her to be an incredibly open person. And I encourage you to have that dialogue with her. And go in there with an open mind. She comes in here without past baggage and history. And the change is now. Right? And I think, I really do get a sense that she believes that, and she wants this change to take place. And we sit here and we talk about that. And I encourage you to, all of you to engage in that kind of dialogue with her as well. So, thank you.

Sure, you want to come, oh, go ahead.

G. Moreno-Fuent: 01:15:36  [inaudible 01:15:36]

R. Spada: 01:15:39  That's a great idea. Gladys, right?

G. Moreno-Fuent: 01:15:46  [inaudible 01:15:46]

R. Spada: 01:16:03  That's a super idea that is worth looking into on our part, and how we can facilitate those things. I think that we see some successful practices externally in those areas, and take a look at how we do that. Because it's about demonstrating that from the top levels of leadership down and open dialogue and communication. Right? So, thank you for that. That's on the record too. So, thank you.

Hi.

: 01:16:32  Hi. My name's . I'm a student here at Central.

R. Spada: 01:16:36  Hey, .

: 01:16:36  Sorry [inaudible 01:16:37] so sorry if I'm like a little nervous or anything. But so, if somebody goes through something traumatic, like example a sexual assault, we need to be more supportive from counseling in terms of understanding and availability of appointments. It takes a month to get into counseling list unless you are seen as suicidal. CCSU Health and Wellness is a resource that needs to be more invested in. And I've heard that from numerous students, being a student leader. Central can benefit greatly from more counselors, because finding a good counselor is like finding a good shoe. Sometimes it's really hard. Students would be more confident to get emotional help if they had more options for counselors, if they had more times for appointments. It just overall leads to more
confidence to coming forward with their mental illness in and trying to receive help.

Students need to be able to trust the people who you hire and to get help when they need it, and they need to know where they can find it. We can't rely on other faculty or other students for mental illnesses or coming to try to talk to somebody, because not everyone has the power to be able to reach out to faculty or to other students in. With health and disability services here, students should feel comfortable in coming, knowing that they are going to be helped. And not all the times does that happen.

But so as the task force on sexual misconduct, bullying and campus climate, I hope that you take the time to consider that students need more protection from new policies, but in addition, we need more professional staff to help us emotionally through whatever we are going through.

R. Spada: 01:18:27 Thank you, very much for that. William happens to be from that area. And want to share an insight, William, on that?

William: 01:18:38 And it's...?

...: 01:18:39 Yeah.

William: 01:18:40 Thank you. And I say that, we're waiting for the results from a recent assessment of our department and the needs of our department, and one of the areas that we're trying to address is staffing. And you are so right, and I thank you for boldly speaking to that issue, because it is an issue that's intertwined with everything that this committee is looking at. So, again, I remind our campus that counseling is the only department on campus that fully offers confidential support. Everybody else is light support. We offer full legal confidential support. And so, when individuals are dealing with these particular issues, it is very important that they know who they're talking to, and they know the levels of support. So again, I truly thank you for being an advocate for more supports.

...: 01:19:32 For students, for getting more appointment times, what does, because sometimes it may take months if they're not seen as suicidal. But some students really do need help, or they can go into that level.

William: 01:19:45 Well, one of the things that we're trying to address is how people perceive appointment times. And actually we're
probably within the system, the only system that does not have a waiting list. So, we don't have a waiting list, and we have every day there's what we call student consult appointments for students that need to be seen. So, we make every effort to do that. But it comes back to your earlier statement. We are truly understaffed.

William: 01:20:13 Yeah.

We should have on our campus about eight counselors within our staff. Technically now we have three full-time counselors, and that was just because we just hired somebody. So, we're grossly understaffed and compared to what the international standards are for counselors. Eastern has more counselors than we do.

R. Spada: 01:20:14 Yeah.

Okay. So, no. I mean, we can go deep into this, but I do think, hi. Who are you?

Antonio Garcia: 01:20:42 No, no, I just want to-

R. Spada: 01:20:43 Oh okay.

Antonio Garcia: 01:20:45 [inaudible 01:20:45].

R. Spada: 01:20:45 Oh, do you want to say something? I don't know who you are.

Antonio Garcia: 01:20:49 I just want to make a-

R. Spada: 01:20:51 Who are you?


R. Spada: 01:20:53 Who are you?

Antonio Garcia: 01:20:54 Oh, I'm Antonio Garcia.

R. Spada: 01:20:55 Okay.

Antonio Garcia: 01:20:56 Faculty member of the Spanish [inaudible 01:21:00] language department.

R. Spada: 01:21:02 Okay. Thank you.
Antonio Garcia: 01:21:05 As William mentioned previously, on July 25, there was an external review about the Wellness Center. The report arrived last week, and Dr. Toro is reading, and I can assure you that Dr. Tori is taking seriously about these full report that has like, I believe 50 pages. So, probably soon the Wellness Center, Dr. Trojano and the students know about the results.

: 01:21:39 Also, just a quick suggestion. I'm so sorry. But our counseling is only open from Monday to Friday, like right to five. I know other campuses have weekends, because not all who are speaking about sexual assault, most does happen on the weekend or, support should be there while we're here on campus, or so. Just a suggestion.

Antonio Garcia: 01:21:58 Yes, . This is also taken into consideration by the evaluators.

: 01:22:06 Thank you.

R. Spada: 01:22:08 So , thank you for that. And Antonio, thank you for that. William, thank you for that. Student wellness, and the counseling and health is an active part of the research that we're doing on this task force. So wherever you had, there you go we are looking into that as well. And we'll be tapping into that report. We have about eight minutes left, so we have three more people. And if I could ask you to stick to the three minutes, that would be great.

Eva: 01:22:32 Yeah, hi. Oh, can you hear me?


Eva: 01:22:34 Yeah, hi. My name's Eva.


Eva: 01:22:37 I'm staff here, and let's see, all kinds of things I want to talk about, but I'll try to narrow it down.

R. Spada: 01:22:37 Can you speak, get a little closer?

Eva: 01:22:45 That better? Better? Okay. I'll second, third, 1,000 support the rumor mill thing. It's very strong, and I don't know. Sometimes it's positive, sometimes it's incredibly toxic and vindictive. Say, perhaps someone hears of a staff member allegedly having an affair with an administrator, and hearing that personal medical information, confidential medical information coming back to
possibly a person that, the campus doesn't have any business knowing. And another level of time off requests. There's no way on this planet a seven-month pregnant woman ought to have been told they can't sit down when they're not feeling well. No, go out and distribute these fliers. This person needed to have been in the emergency room. Now, we're talking about a cost of at least $50,000 to our insurance because of this one decision. There is no accountability for these decisions. They're micro decisions, you may call, that has a serious impact on many people's lives. Students, staff, administrators, faculty. The perception of the university.

I believe, my input is that these trainings, they're good. We do have trainings. I think there are people that don't take it seriously. When I can sit in a room and listen to a person make very crass comments about title nine in front of a whole room of students, and it's not addressed. It's okay. It's not taken seriously. I'm wearing a shirt that I wore at my niece's funeral. She was three months old. She's half Vietnamese. Maybe three weeks later, I listened to a tirade of about how awful Asians are from a staff person who's perceived as professional, maybe administrative. And how are we supposed to feel about that? The training did exist. I wallowed it. I'm talking about it now. And I wanted to say [inaudible 01:25:28] the counseling department, I had been staff in the counseling department. I miss being there. I wish I'd never left. I will 100, 200 support the fact that they need staff. I was front line. I had the phone. I had the calls, there's no appointment. You have to wait three weeks. When I came for my interview, I asked where's the counseling center. There's many people, didn't know where it was. So, I think I really, the services, the existence, and the support for the counseling department is very important.

R. Spada: 01:26:10 It's critical.

Eva: 01:26:11 Now sharing your story on campus, maybe you talked to one department. You don't realize, oh, this wasn't confidential. I'm a member of CCW, Committee on Conference of Women. And we've been educated on that say this department, the students need to know if they divulge an assault to you, that you are a mandated reporter. In my position, I don't know. But as a staff person, it's my understanding, yes. But you come out with, let the student know it's not confidential.

R. Spada: 01:26:48 Sure.
Eva: 01:26:48 But do they know the counseling center exists to get the confidential support and chance to vent that information? My final piece, I'm very interested in finding out about that blue ribbon thing. This one piece of it. I had asked for information to be put out for a certain category of students that are protected status, and the response was there's so many special interest groups, we cannot support them all. So, this little piece of information ended up being funneled into a complaint that went into the blue ribbon diversity committee. I don't know, part of the rumor mill, I well, no. I'll just say that one person got blamed for a debt that didn't even make sense. When you had someone else saying, we're now putting this information out.

R. Spada: 01:26:48 Okay.

Eva: 01:27:57 Okay? So, that's it. Accountability and other communication.

R. Spada: 01:28:01 Yes. Thank you, Eva, I appreciate it.

Eva: 01:28:01 Thank you.

R. Spada: 01:28:04 Thank you for speaking up. No, thank you very much. You raise a point that's very, one of the things that's very important to me is really understanding the code of conduct here on campus. Students, faculty, staff code of conduct, and what are the codes of conduct? Codes, whatever have you. And what are the implications of not living up to the behaviors which are associated with that? And I know that's something that we'll be looking into from an accountability perspective. So, thank you for that. Thank you for sharing your story.

Hi.

Olga: 01:28:34 Hi, good afternoon. My name's Olga. I'm the university assistant at the Women's Center. One big point that I want to bring up is the lack if inclusion of these centers, as mentioned as counselor wellness, but also even the Women's Center when it comes to things like orientation, various training, even tours. Both of our offices, I think, to that nature are not common stops. I understand it's not as entertaining to students. But as we see, these are necessities, areas that do need an increase in staffing. And we need to be included more often. Even if that includes including our names on fliers, including stops for tours. That needs to occur, because that's why people don't know where these resources are located. And in order for these resources to be effective, for lack of better term, they need to be known. So, just the lack of inclusion needs to be addressed big time.
R. Spada: 01:29:42 Thank you, Olga. And that's a really important point about inclusion. So, thank you very much. I'm sorry.

R. Spada: 01:29:50 That's okay.

R. Spada: 01:29:52 This is all good. There's nothing bad on this one. I just want you to know that [inaudible 01:30:00] social worker, but what I could do after this experience that I went through, I noticed a complete lack of the counseling.

R. Spada: 01:30:08 A lack of what?

R. Spada: 01:30:09 Counseling.

R. Spada: 01:30:11 Oh, sure.

R. Spada: 01:30:11 Yeah. And then the different counselors that you go to try to get fitted, I just want you to know that we started a nonprofit organization. And it's specifically right now for the school, for your students. Anybody who's been sexually assaulted, we had a donation, it's a nonprofit, it's called Finding My Way Back. The Board of Directors, we have, myself, Sarah Dodd, and also . And we are the board of directors. We have a donation of, right now $5,000, but we're giving out for you to go to whatever counselor that you want to, you just go through, we'll do the paperwork, and you go where you want to, and we'll give you the money. We don't want anything back.

What I'd like for the school, if we could possibly at some point, do a fundraiser. Because I don't think a victim should have to pay for their counseling for an act that was committed against them. To me, that is absurd and it's disgusting. And so, that's what our group is about. So, I'm going to give you a card, and I hope you take advantage of it. Okay. Thank you very much.

R. Spada: 01:31:29 Thank you, .

R. Spada: 01:31:29 And good luck with that. Thank you. Hi, you get the final voice. [crosstalk 01:31:38]

: 01:31:37 That's a lot. My name is , and I'm a student.

I guess I want to put out some banner statements. Does the left hand know what the right hand is doing? This is a public commission. Your finding is public. But does your commission know what else is going on on this campus right now, cases actively happening now? Or happened recently? You mentioned you're looking back five or ten years. You don't have to go so far back.


And I appreciate the other alumni talking about what happened to her 20 years ago. Yes, we need to go back as far as possible. Let's go back 100 years if we need to. Because what the professor had said about history is important. But you can look to today.


You can look to three weeks ago, three months ago, six months ago, a year ago. We're in 2018, and don't act like this is not happening now. I had a professor tell the entire class that they should be afraid of black students, of black people. This is happening now. I had a professor put his crotch in my face. This is happening now. This is not historical information that we're talking about. This has real world application. So, my question to you is does the left hand know what the right hand it doing? Now, what's happening now? Why is this task force different? The professor mentioned a blue ribbon commission ten years ago or however long ago. That's appalling to me.

Why is this task force different? I appreciate the fact that you're here dealing with this now. Yes, we have a new president, but explain to us or show to us why this is different. Why can't this be the last time? It's not the first time. Why can't it be the last time? Why is this task force different? What are you doing to make this different? So that we don't go another ten years and we're discussing the same things, the same issues, the same coverups that is so much a part of this campus climate. That's embarrassing to me as a student, that my university covers up something like this. What is a real world application of your findings? This is happening now. Students are abused now. Why do we have to wait six months, three weeks, three months, for the findings of the commission to have real world application of what your finding is happening now to students? There is information from tonight that this university can adopt and say these are good suggestions. We're going to run with it. We don't need to wait for the 30-page report, the 20-page report,
the book, to sit on a shelf, to be distributed to whoever. To gather dust. We know enough now. We’re disturbed by what we heard now. We’re not going to let it go further. We’re serious. Privately, you said the president is accommodating and open to hearing what staff say. Where’s a real world application now? I should never have a teacher that I’m supposed to learn from tell other students they should be afraid of me because of my skin color. I should never have a teacher say to me because you sit in the back of the class, you’re less capable of learning, because students who sit in the back don’t learn well. This is happening now. Why is this commission different?

R. Spada: 01:35:40 Thank you, you asked, again, three very important, very important questions. Does the left hand know what the right hand is doing? We’re trying to figure that out. And that’s what we’re here about, and we’re trying to figure that out. And why go back far when we have current data? I could tell you that we received a binder this big from the Office of Victim Advocacy and Diversity and Equity, and in there it has statistics, it has information about investigations for the past 18 months. We looked at them today. And we’re saying we need to dive deeper and we need to understand them, as well as going further back. So, that’s an important part. We will be looking at those.

I can’t tell you how this task force is different than the blue ribbon panel, because I don’t know. But that’s something for us to look at. I can tell you one of the things that I feel personally as a chair of this, we have got external people on this, and we bring a very different perspective than the colleagues here who are faculty, staff and students. And I know that. And I see it. And I sense it. And our thinking is different. The way we view the world, the processes, we look at things from a corporate point of view. And I’ll tell you in many corporations, some of the things that you’re talking about would never be tolerated. So, I tell you, that’s something different, that we’re bringing in those lenses when we talk about these things. And we’re challenging from a best practice perspective to look outside of colleges and universities to find out how organizations and institutions deal with these things to create safe and inclusive environments. And that’s a big piece.

And the real world application of our findings, we’re acting as fast as we can. I mean, we are all volunteers. The three of us are volunteers. Ululy comes up from New York City. I come up from Boston. Bill’s local. Florida now. We’re volunteering. We’re stepping up. We believe in this charge, the three of us do is all
of the 15 of us, on this. And I have to tell you, I've done task force work before, and one of the things that's different for me is that I feel the level of commitment of every one of the 15 people on this task force. They have showed up. It takes, pardon the pun, it takes a village, but everybody has stepped up, and they continue to step up, which is they're here. Right? And I feel good about that.

And I do feel that Dr. Toro is open. And when we go back to her, we're going to plan on giving her a shot list of things you can do now to respond. Quick wins. Low-hanging fruit we call it in the low-quality management role. Right? The low hanging things that can happen that have impact now as well as longer-term sustainable things. Looping back to what some of you said earlier, culture. Culture, bullying, sexual harassment. They're big buckets that take a lot of energy and a lot of effort to impact change. Right? And it takes a lot of resources to impact those things, to understand them and impact them. And we're going to go back to Dr. Toro. Some of us talked about it today, and we're like, we're going to put some really far-reaching things out there for the university to consider.

Our goal, as I said earlier today, is that we will have our report, our target is on December 10th to present that to Dr. Toro with our findings. And I hope that with your continued interest and input, and we will reach back out to those of you that, as we look through these transcripts to get a better understanding from your points of view. We would like to reach out to you. Please, you can continue to reach out to us. You can reach out to me. The website, I'm going back right there. The, where is it? Right there. Ccsu.edu/culturetaskforce/ is a way to continue to provide input. And when the survey comes out on October 1, please give more input. I know we're taking that information seriously. And you can reach out to anyone here. You certainly can.

Oh, Kristina wants to say something, and then Shelley.

K. Rodriguez: 01:40:10 All right. Hi, I'm Kristina Rodriguez again. I'm one of the student reps for the task force. My own personal answer to why are we different, I'm only a third semester student, but what we really want to remember at all times, is that we have to care for the victims. We have to prioritize them as well. It's not just the institution. It's not protect the abuser. It's protect the victim, and make sure that the policies can do that. That's why we focus on the policy, the procedure, the best practices. Because
without the words to say what to do, we can't say this is what we do to take care of you.

And if that helps you, just my splur to understand why we are here, we really, really do actually care what you say. It's not just an act. I know from my own personal life, I am supporting other people myself, friends. This is an actual problem that we have to face. And we want to change it. It's not the end. It's not just a step. It's the start. There's probably been false starts. I have not been here long enough to say. But this is a start in the right direction. Because we want to be in the right direction. So, whatever's happening over out in the world, it's saying we shouldn't or we don't have to, we want to step in the right direction. That's all I have to say.


Shelley Jones: 01:41:43 So, I can say that I'm hopeful, because I've heard a lot of stories and things that I didn't personally know about, tucked in my corner in the math department. And of you're not a victim or a survivor, or if you don't work in one of the offices, if you're just in the academic departments, sometimes you don't know about what's going on on campus. But I'll say why are we different? First of all, we all have a CCSU connection. We're either staff, students, faculty, or alumni. And we care about what happens at CCSU and guess what? We don't like what we're hearing. I don't like my university to be on the news. And so, we care.

Also, it matters who you're reporting to. Right? And so, I feel very comfortable reporting to Dr. Toro. In fact, that's why bullying was added because she kept hearing about bullying and rumors and this and that. And so, instead of waiting, she did something immediately. She came back to the task force and said, you need to include bullying. And although it means we have more to look at, she saw that it was a need, and she immediately added it. And so, that's why. So, although it means we have more work, and so that's why we're different. I think because we actually care, and I think we're going to do something about it.

R. Spada: 01:43:04 Thank you. I would like to end by saying, June, Gladys, Yvette, Jacqueline, Harry, Iwelda, David, I'm going down my list here, Eva, Olga. I think I captured everybody. Thank you. Thank you for feeling safe to speak up and speak out. Because that's a big first step in our work that we're doing. We need to hear from you. We're grateful to have heard from you. And please continue to speak
up and speak out. Do it constructively, because constructive discourse is important in this, because it's so deep. It's so emotional. And it's important that we try to respectfully respond and act. And I hope you feel that we have your interests at heart here as we go forward. And I want to thank all my colleagues on the task force.

We have another one of these tomorrow. So if you want more, come back tomorrow. Tomorrow we are going to be in the mid-campus multi-purpose room at the same time. And that will also be recorded, and that will also be transcribed, and that will also be available within this, I believe it's the seven-day window that we're required to post our notes.

So, on that note, thank you very much. Have a good evening, and we're really grateful that you were here. Thank you.