Rationale for these Recommendations

Based upon feedback from multiple sources at MSU including university faculty, the Vice President of Student Affairs, the Registrar, and Detective Sergeant Kennedy, it is evident that there are concerns with classroom and personal safety that sometimes are, and often are not, formally reported or documented within the university, ranging from harassing contacts, threats and intimidation, all the way to physical assault. They also reported that incivility in university classrooms, both at MSU and at our peer institutions, is increasing, which can lead to challenges to classroom safety for students and faculty alike.

Accordingly, we make the following recommendations:

1. Designate and equip a point person for classroom safety: one for MSU employees and one for students

   1. **Purpose/rationale**
      
      a. There are many existing and significant resources and people at MSU that are very valuable for addressing these issues. Unfortunately, it is far from obvious how one (whether instructor or student) would make use of the right resources at the right time, especially when the issue is urgent or emotionally charged. Accordingly, we recommend that point people be identified who would guide members of the MSU community toward the appropriate MSU resources both for prevention of and response to threats and safety in the classroom. The existing resources include but may not be limited to the following:
         
         i. Behavioral Threat Assessment Team: [http://btat.msu.edu/](http://btat.msu.edu/)
         ii. Behavioral Intervention Team
         iii. Student Affairs Office: [http://studentaffairs.msu.edu/](http://studentaffairs.msu.edu/)
         iv. Ombuds office: [https://www.msu.edu/~ombud/](https://www.msu.edu/~ombud/)
            1. Emergency number: 911
            2. Non-emergency number: 517-355-2221
         vi. Specifically for employees:
            1. Relevant F&OD sessions (e.g., “Dealing with Difficult Students”): [http://fod.msu.edu/](http://fod.msu.edu/)

   2. **Ideas for implementation: employee point person**
a. Equip an existing person/office. There are multiple possibilities, including:
   i. Faculty Excellence Advocate
   ii. Ombudsperson
   iii. Faculty Grievance Officer
   iv. Academic HR point person
   v. Student Affairs Office person
b. This person/office would keep appropriate data on contacts and report to the University Committee on Faculty Affairs. In particular, this person/office would keep track of the nature of the concern (e.g., threat, assault, incivility), the office(s) recommended for contact, and the outcome of the concern.

3. Ideas for implementation: student contact point
   a. Possibilities
      i. Ombudsperson (our recommendation)
      ii. Student Affairs Office: [http://studentaffairs.msu.edu/](http://studentaffairs.msu.edu/)
   b. This person/office would keep appropriate data on contacts, and report to the University Committee on Student Affairs.

2. Each semester, highlight these point people
   
   1. Purpose/rationale
      a. As noted above, there are many excellent resources at MSU, yet few of us knew about them, and the differences are not obvious to us, and we expect that this uncertainty is representative of the MSU community. Furthermore, it seems clear that people often ignore resources until there is a need, so periodically bringing these resources to their attention is essential. Accordingly, we recommend that both passive resources and proactive communication be used for both students and employees.
   
   2. Suggestions for implementation: Employees and Students
      a. Create a single webpage with a guide to the appropriate resources for employees and students (as described above)
      b. In the MSU Links of the D2L login page, include a link to the web referenced above
      c. Have a link to this single web page and point persons’ contact information on the emergency sheet that is posted in classrooms
   
   3. Suggestions for implementation: Employees
      a. The point person should communicate this web page and point person’s contact information to each chair at the start of each semester
         i. This communication should also make the suggestion that departments relate departmental/program/college behavioral expectations to these resources. It also should help educate these units regarding behavioral issues at MSU, including the role of the Student Affairs and its relationship to program-based expectations of behavior conduct, as well as confirming understanding regarding that behavioral issues from prior institutions are not included by official transcripts we receive.
b. Recommend that instructors include this link and student's point person's contact information on syllabi

c. Have a link to this single webpage on the instructor menu on registrar's website

4. Ideas for implementation: Students
   a. Have a link to a comparable page for students on the StuInfo site, and on the registrar's page for class registration

3. Foster improved communication & coordination of units related to behavioral concerns in the classroom

   1. Purpose/rationale
      a. Because there are multiple resources and people at MSU who handle different aspects of the concerns raised with classroom safety, communication and coordination of units related to classroom safety is essential. In particular, this increased interaction would enable earlier responses to potentially problematic situations so as to avoid greater difficulty. Based on our conversations, we found that this work currently happens in the minds of people who happen to serve on multiple committees. A more intentional and systematized effort would be more reliable.

   2. Ideas for implementation
      a. We ask the Steering Committee to identify the process for exploring this issue.

References


MSU 2015 Clery Report on 2014

MSU 2016 Clery Log
We note that data regarding the roles in the university environment of victims and perpetrators in threats, harassment, and assaults in the classroom is difficult to collect, analyze, and report because of privacy issues. Individual events sometimes gain a lot of attention, yet these events may or may not be representative of the broader issue.