USUSA Student Leader Upstander Training

Description: Requires Student Leaders and their subsequent organizations under Student Affairs to receive *Upstanding: Stepping Up to Prevent Violence in Utah* training during the fall semester of the academic year.

1 WHEREAS Utah State University, its administration, faculty and staff, and student leaders share an absolute commitment to the well-being of its students.

2 WHEREAS each action made by the university is guided by the principle that student welfare, in all aspects, is, and always will be, its most important mission and concern; as stated in an official response to sexual assaults on its campus.

3 WHEREAS sexual assault not only tragically impacts survivors, it also diminishes the strength of our campus community and our student-centered land-grant mission.

4 WHEREAS nationally, one in five college women will experience some form of non-consensual sexual activity by graduation. Additionally, one in 71 men will be raped at some point in their lives.

5 WHEREAS a U.S. Department of Justice study of violent crime showed that third parties – or bystanders – were present during two-thirds of victimizations, including 29 percent of sexual assaults. During that time, bystanders prevented 1.2 million violent victimizations on average each year.

6 WHEREAS Noelle Cockett, USU president and head of the university’s task force on sexual violence stated in 2017 that “student safety and well-being are crucial to ensuring their academic success.”

7 WHEREAS in a news release regarding implementation of USU’s sexual assault preventative measures, President Cockett stated that Aggies pledge to not “tolerate jokes or any behavior that permits sexual assault, step in if they see warning signs of sexual assault, not assume someone else will stop sexual assault and believe and help survivors of sexual assault.”

8 WHEREAS USU implemented a campus-wide bystander intervention training program designed to empower students to step in and help other members of the campus community. This program, *Upstanding: Stepping Up to Prevent Violence in Utah*, hereafter referred to as Upstander Training, targets student leaders, student-athletes, those living in on-campus housing, Residence Life staff, members of Fraternity and Sorority Life organizations and members of sexual minorities.

9 WHEREAS the purpose of Upstander Training is to prepare members of the USU campus community with the skills and knowledge needed to safely and effectively intervene when they sense a threat or potential harm to another.
WHEREAS the implementation of Upstander Training is in complete alliance with the Aggies Think, Care, Act initiative; which immerses students into a community of caring that values human dignity, equality, respect, and safety for each member of the Aggie family.

WHEREAS in fall 2014, the Utah State University Student Association (USUSA) joined the “It’s On Us” national bystander campaign launched by then-Vice President Joe Biden.

BE IT THEREFORE ENACTED THAT the Upstander Training shall be implemented and mandated for all financially compensated student leaders under student affairs and their associated student leader groups at USU (the training being voluntary for all those leaders who serve in a voluntary, uncompensated capacity) for the purpose of effectively training those student leaders in order to uphold those values of human dignity, equality, respect, compassion, and safety for each member of the Aggie family.

WHEREAS USU’s Sexual Assault and Anti-Violence Information office states that all students, but especially freshman and sophomores, are most at risk for being a victim of sexual assault between the beginning of school and the Thanksgiving holiday.

WHEREAS student leaders often propose support in initiatives that seek to prevent sexual assault and rape as well as help victims feel more comfortable coming forward to report a sexual assault or rape.

WHEREAS student leaders are commonly present at large student events and functions where a bystander could step in and aid someone whose health and safety is threatened.

BE IT FURTHER ENACTED THAT the designated USUSA Officer, coordinator, or advisor of each financially compensated student leader organization under student affairs will ensure that every member of their council, committee, or organization receive the opportunity to receive the Upstander training through an office sponsored training under the direction of the Vice President of Student Affairs during the fall semester of the academic year.

WHEREAS some students may wish to opt out of this training due to discomfort with the subject material.

BE IT FURTHER ENACTED that a financially compensated student leader under student affairs may opt out of this training by approval of the coordinator, or advisor of their department or organization and replace it with an additional approved sexual assault prevention training from one of the USU sexual misconduct departments.

Tags: USUSA Student Involvement, Upstander Training, Sexual Assault, USU Aggies Think Care Act (ATCA), President Noelle Cockett, Joe Biden, Student Affairs

Sponsor: Daria Griffith, USUSA Student Alumni Vice President

Co-sponsor: Meghan Tatom, Student Events Vice President
ECR 2019-10/USUSA Student Leader Upstander Training

Policy Paper

Committee: Executive Council
In Attendance: President Jaren Hunsaker, VP Alli Smith, VP Samuel Jackson, VP Bannon Greer, VP Meghan Tatom, VP Joshua Johnson, VP Jenna Stoker, VP Daria Griffith, Senator Kristin Hall, Director Braxton Moon, Assistant Brooke Jorgensen
Absent: None
Result: Passed

History:

Within the last decade, Utah State University has developed many strategies for addressing public concerns of sexual violence on its campus. In light of the Torrey Green sexual assault allegations, President Stan L. Albrecht made this statement on October 14, 2016, “Sexual violence is an extremely important issue to all of us at USU, and it’s something we are addressing head on. We care deeply about the health and safety of our students. There still is much work to be done, and we will continue to work hard on these efforts.” During the fall semester of 2016, Utah State University formed the Sexual Violence Prevention, Education and Training Working Group, established under the direction of President Stan L. Albrecht and Chaired by Dr. Mike Twohig, associate professor in the psychology department. The purpose of this working group was to develop strategies to combat and prevent sexual violence on campus. In spring 2017 this group recommended a comprehensive sexual violence prevention strategy that was comprised of three structures. It included a mandatory program for all incoming students, ongoing prevention programming targeting high-risk groups of students, and social marketing to reinforce messaging students received in both of those efforts.

On January 30, 2017, Utah State University President Noelle Cockett launched the “I Will” pledge campaign as one of her first acts as president. The campaign is part of a series of movements aimed to raise awareness about sexual assault on USU’s campus. President Cockett discussed the recent media attention USU received with regard to its number of sexual assault incidents over the past two years, including the Torrey Green case, stating, “With all the attention that’s going on in the newspapers, my message is: it happens here. USU seems really safe and Logan seems really safe but it still happens here;”

USU launched Upstanding: Stepping Up to Prevent Violence in Utah in the fall semester of 2017 as a pilot for the Utah Department of Health’s Violence and Injury Prevention Program, which developed the program. Upstanding is provided free throughout the state to both communities and schools. It is based on best practices for violence prevention programs, and USU will assess its impact on attitudes and behavior over time. The program in now fully implemented at USU and during the 2017-18 academic year, nearly 3,000 students were trained as Upstanders. The “bystander effect” says that people are less likely to offer help to a victim when other people are present. The greater the number of bystanders, the less likely it is that any one of them will help. But once one person intervenes, others will join them. The Upstanding program teaches bystanders how to become Upstanders. Upstanding emphasizes practicing scenarios to become more prepared to safely step in when there is a threat of harm to another. The
program provides background and skills in four main areas: understanding the bystander effect and diffusion of responsibility in groups, challenging intrinsic biases about gender norms, intervention strategies and skills, and personal safety during intervention.

Purpose:

Due to the identified sexual assault problem on campus, Upstander Training, a resource that is provided for free at USU by multiple agencies, was identified as a possible solution. This legislation tries to extend the impact of bystander intervention trainings by using the significant outreach of USUSA organizations, Interfraternal Council and Panhellenic Council, and Residents Life Association. An additional purpose of this resolution is to provide students the opportunity to learn to be an Upstander and to act upon the training they receive, helping create a more informed student body. It is our hope that in making this legislation we will help create a healthier campus and will combat the sexual assault problem at this University; as well as cultivate an environment where students look out for one another.

Pros:

- Provides training on the following interests of student concern
  - Understanding the bystander effect and diffusion of responsibility in groups
  - Challenging intrinsic biases about gender norms
  - Intervention strategies and skills
  - Personal safety during intervention
- Key element of preventative measures for sexual violence recommended by the Sexual Violence Prevention, Education and Training Working Group
- Targets students most exposed to environments where student health and safety could be threatened
- Inline to the Aggies Think, Care, Act initiative

Cons:

- Additional required training for the fall semester for student leaders
  - Could lose perceived importance due to several required trainings
  - Potentially takes an additional meeting time away from councils
- Technicality of being written into 23 of the 24 USUSA charters