Resolution # 71-08
The Graduate and Professional Student Association (GPSA)
The Pennsylvania State University

of the 71st Assembly
November 10th, 2021

Be it decided by the Assembly of Elected Delegates,

Support of the Schreyer Gender Equity Coalition’s Sexual Misconduct Survey Recommendations
(Decided: [ Y / N / A ])

Nature of the Situation:

On October 5, 2021, the Schreyer Gender Equity Coalition released a critical analysis of the 2018 Sexual Misconduct Survey Report. This critical analysis detailed criticisms of the survey process and instrument; scrutinized the ways results were reported; and proposed several recommendations for future survey administrations. Key concerns detailed in this report surrounded the survey’s failure to address the experiences of BIPOC and LGBTQ+ students appropriately, the failure to release comprehensive survey data, and the time it took to release the 2018 Survey Report — three years.

The recommendations made by the Schreyer Gender Equity Coalition include the recommendation that Penn State begin participating in the Association of American

2Ibid, p. 5-6.
3Ibid, p. 3-4.
Universities (AAU) Sexual Misconduct Survey and include questions about sexual misconduct and power-based personal violence in future iterations of the Penn State Campus Climate Survey.⁴

The AAU is composed of 66 leading research universities.⁵ In June 2014, the AAU began to design a campus climate survey using the survey instrument developed by the White House Task Force to Protect Students from Sexual Assault.⁶ Since then, the survey has been administered twice — in 2015 and in 2019 — with its primary goal to “provide participating institutions of higher education with information to inform policies to prevent and respond to sexual assault and misconduct.”⁷

As the Schreyer Gender Equity Coalition outlined, many of our peer institutions participated in the AAU survey. In 2019, participants included the University of Pittsburgh, the University of Michigan, the University of Minnesota (Twin Cities), Iowa State University, the Ohio State University, the University of Wisconsin (Madison), and the University of North Carolina (Chapel Hill).⁸ According to the Coalition, participation in this survey would enable greater university transparency:

“If Student Affairs Research and Assessment is so understaffed that completing a sexual misconduct climate survey report requires over three years (including 15 months pre-COVID), it is integral that we seek alternatives to enable greater university transparency. Many of our peer institutions, including Ohio State, the University of Wisconsin, and the University of Pittsburgh, participate in the AAU’s sexual misconduct campus climate survey. This survey was administered in 2015 and in 2019. Penn State should commit to participate in the next iteration of this survey to expedite the sharing of survey results and remove the bias that occurs when surveys are administered internally.”⁹

Further, the Schreyer Gender Equity Coalition noted their belief that participation in the AAU survey is insufficient and introduced the second facet of this recommendation:

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“We acknowledge, however, that the AAU’s survey does not cover all of our recommendations nor provide a comprehensive analysis of every factor we think should be considered to address sexual misconduct at Penn State. This fact, in combination with the success of Penn State’s 2020 Community Climate Survey indicates an additional opportunity. We believe the framework created by the Office of Planning, Assessment, and Institutional Research (OPAIR) can be leveraged to survey students on sexual misconduct and interpersonal violence. As such, we recommend that Penn State, between administrations of the AAU survey, integrate questions about sexual misconduct and interpersonal violence into subsequent community climate surveys.”

The method of surveying — participating in the AAU’s Survey and still administering internal surveys — is one that peer institution Ohio State engages in, completing an internal survey every year between the 2015 and 2019 AAU surveys.\textsuperscript{11}

The Schreyer Gender Equity Coalition notes that “the recommendations that we made in our open letter apply to the questions we would like to see integrated into community climate surveys.”\textsuperscript{12} These recommendations are:

- Empower a diverse group of students from student advocacy organizations and student governments and staff from the Gender Equity Center, the Center for Sexual and Gender Diversity, and the Paul Robeson Cultural Center\textsuperscript{13} to participate in the creation and approval of the survey instrument.
- Ensure the survey instrument assesses the experiences of students with marginalized identities, especially students with disabilities and students who are intersex, LGBTQ+ (especially trans and non-binary students), and BIPOC in an inclusive and meaningful way. The survey should assess the following:
  - students’ knowledge of available confidential resources
  - students’ familiarity with the Title IX reporting processes at Penn State
  - students’ understandings of consent, rape culture, and other pertinent topics
  - the prevalence of misconceptions and myths about sexual violence
  - the prevalence of sex work amongst Penn State students\textsuperscript{14}

\textsuperscript{10}Ibid, p. 21.
\textsuperscript{11}Ohio State University. (2019, Oct. 15). Ohio State Releases Latest Campus Climate Survey Results. \textit{The Ohio State University}. Accessed Oct. 21, 2021 from news.osu.edu
\textsuperscript{13}The PRCC was not included in the initial Open Letter, but after critical conversations following the release of the letter, the Coalition endorses their inclusion.
Recommended Course of Action:

The Graduate and Professional Student Association, on behalf of the graduate and professional student body at University Park, endorses the Schreyer Gender Equity Coalition’s recommendations that are listed above: Penn State should participate in the AAU’s sexual misconduct survey, integrating questions about sexual misconduct into future iterations of community climate surveys between the AAU administrations — these questions and the process of creating these questions should align with the Coalition’s recommendations.

The GPSA acknowledges the importance of the research and advocacy work of the Schreyer Gender Equity Coalitions.

Respectfully submitted,

Claire Kelling
Graduate Council Student Caucus Chair

President ________________________________ Affirm

Veto

The Graduate and Professional Student Association