

Teach-In and Listening Session Report

Prepared by the Center for the Study and Prevention of
Gender-Based Violence

December 7, 2021

In response to the horrific case of intimate partner violence that involved two UD students, the Center for the Study and Prevention of Gender-Based Violence hosted a teach-in and listening session on October 20, 2021. More than 200 people participated in the event.

Background

The teach-in portion of the event offered attendees an opportunity to learn more about gender-based violence and provided resources for prevention and support. A panel of nationally recognized experts, including members of the Center as well as advocates from both on and off campus, shared their expertise as it related to various forms of violence, the impacts of violence on communities of color and the LGBTQ+ community, the systemic roots of violence, the role that social movements plays in shaping institutional responses to violence, and the challenges of navigating instances in which the accused abuser is also part of our community.

Feedback on the presentations indicate that it was well-received. Critiques of the presentations focused primarily on the desire for even more information. Given that there is a desire in the community to learn more, and especially to explore in more depth the intersectional nature of gender-based violence, additional teach-ins are a good next step for educating the UD community around prevention and intervention.

The second portion of the event involved a series of listening sessions that were organized around sub-communities at UD (gender-based violence in BIPOC communities, gender-based violence in the LGBTQ+ community, survivor spaces, fraternity/sorority community) as well as offices that are engaged with prevention and intervention (FSLL, Student Conduct, OEI, UDPD, Title IX). Sessions were moderated by panelists as well as professional staff who lead each office, and each session included a note taker. Notes were submitted to the Center, where staff typed them and organized them by theme. Additionally, notes were analyzed by session so that any differences across groups (e.g. BIPOC, LGBTQ+, fraternity/sorority life) could be identified.

Finally, a link on the [Center's website](#) offered UD and community members an opportunity to share their thoughts. At the time of the drafting of the report, 12 people utilized this avenue for providing feedback.

Listening session feedback

More education

Across all sessions, the primary, and most discussed issues that emerged in the listening sessions was the desire for more education. Many students talked about being able to “click through” the online trainings without learning anything and without any real accountability or sanction for not completing the training.

In terms of recommendations, many students indicated that they wanted in person training and that they believed it was more effective. Specifically, students mentioned “bringing back” the bystander intervention training and strengthening the modules in the First Year Experience (FYE). Several students in different listening sessions indicated that they want to know more about the early warning signs of intimate partner violence so that they are better able to intervene when they see unhealthy relationships among their peers. Additionally, students expressed concern with regards to peer mentors leading trainings. Perhaps inspired by the expert panelists, many students indicated that they wanted professional staff and faculty to be more involved in delivering prevention content.

Increased resources to the counseling center

With regards to intervention, several students in different listening sessions expressed concerns that services at the counseling center were inadequate. They mentioned the reduced number of sessions, the length of time to get an appointment, and other frustrations. Some students specifically noted in order to address these concerns, resources to the counseling center needed to be increased.

Addressing Fraternity and Sorority Life

Not surprisingly, because the alleged perpetrator in the precipitating event was active in a fraternity, many students across all of the listening sessions raised concerns about fraternity and sorority life on campus. These concerns were focused on in a listening session specifically devoted to discussing fraternity and sorority life on campus.

Among the most commonly discussed sub-topics was the fraternity culture on campus. In the fraternity/sorority community listening sessions, many students discussed the ways in which the fraternity/sorority system could be used for good, for example, increased in-person training, discussions of toxic masculinity, and chapters upholding standards and holding their members accountable. Others in this session discussed the fact that they felt that “outsiders” need to be better educated about fraternity life. One student asked “how do you get students outside of the fraternity/sorority community to

understand the severity of the problem?” and others desired opportunities to showcase the positive aspects of fraternity and sorority life on campus.

In the other listening sessions, many students expressed concern about the role that fraternities play in normalizing gender-based violence, for which several students across listening sessions demanded that the university hold fraternities (both members and chapters) accountable.

Structural safety

Across several of the listening sessions, students expressed a desire for more structural safety, including more blue lights (especially on north campus) and a better, more reliable escort service. Students raised concerns that they feel unsafe walking on campus and that the wait times for the escort service are too long. Some indicated that they thought it had been discontinued. One student asked “when should I call 9-1-1?”

These issues are important. Students need to feel safe. And, according to reports, these structural concerns have been heard by the upper administration and are being addressed. That being said, our concerns are that students be better educated about their risks for experiencing sexual and intimate partner violence. As scared as they feel, their greatest risk for violence is by someone they know and trust, someone they live with, or hang out with. We suggest that risks for gender-based violence be integrated early and often into all education on prevention and intervention so that students can feel safe on campus and be better able to protect themselves from gender-based violence.

Campus communication

Given the circumstances of the early weeks of October, 2021, it's not surprising that several students in different listening sessions raised concerns about both the emails that are sent to students and the text messages and alerts they receive. We encourage those who prepare this communication to create a special listening session for students to express their concerns so that communications can be better tailored to be both compliant and meet the needs of students, parents, alum, and community members.

Website feedback

Much of the feedback submitted via the website was similar to that provided in the listening sessions. One unique addition was the recommendation that Chanel Miller’s memoir *Know My Name* be selected as next year’s (2022-2023) common read.