

Dear St. Mary's College Community,

Welcome or welcome back! It is wonderful to have the energy that a full complement of students, faculty, and staff bring to the campus at the beginning of the school year. I've missed you this summer.

So many wonderful things happen at the beginning of the academic year. Unfortunately, there is the potential for negative things to happen as well. This email highlights one of them. Power-based personal violence (sexual violence, rape, partner violence, stalking, or sexual harassment) does happen in our community. Thankfully, it is also preventable if we join together and are willing to intervene where we see someone in a high-risk situation. We have made significant changes to our [policies](#) regarding sexual misconduct for the 2011-2012 academic year to better protect the St. Mary's community. I ask that you take a few moments to become familiar with the positive changes.

During the first six weeks of class, students are at their greatest risk for sexual violence. Incidents may occur throughout the year, but studies have shown that the first six weeks is the most high risk time for sexual violence on college campuses, especially for new students. By looking out for each other, trusting your gut instinct in uncomfortable situations, and getting others to help when you see a potentially dangerous situation, you can help reduce this risk.

Many (but not all) incidents of power-based personal violence include the prior use of alcohol or other drugs (including date rape drugs). If a person is incapacitated (i.e. incapable of sound decision making due to circumstances such as excessive drinking, drug use or other circumstances), he or she is unable to consent to sexual activity and is at increased risk for experiencing sexual violence. By helping fellow students or non-students who are incapacitated find their friends, giving them some water to sober up, watching their drink while they go to the bathroom, not letting them pass out in some else's room, or by calling for help, you can significantly reduce the chance that these individuals will become a victim of sexual violence.

Many more incidents of sexual violence involve someone known to the victim (classmate or acquaintance) than situations where the person committing the violent act is a complete stranger. The parties involved can be students or non-students, and the person who is attempting to coerce or force an unwanted sexual act may be someone you do or do not know. By making sure you return to your campus residence with every person you went with to the social event, by introducing yourself to the people your friends are talking to, and/or by suggesting to a classmate that he/she call Public Safety for a ride back to their residence instead of walking home alone at night, you help reduce the risk.

Sometimes, sexual violence looks similar to people who are consensually "hooking up" until they are behind closed doors. The difficulty is that by the time most intimidation or sexual violence occurs, there is no longer anyone around to help intervene. By having a conversation with your friends or teammates about your plans for the night, or by telling friends to wait until they are sober to "hook up", or by "accidentally" walking in on your roommate to make sure she/he is safe, you contribute to keeping the overall campus community a safer and more positive social environment.

Trust your instincts. If you see a situation that makes you uncomfortable, intervene (or get other people to intervene). If one method of intervention seems dangerous or awkward for you, try something less direct. Instead of trying to get in the middle of a potentially awkward situation, call for help or be creative – find or make up some reason why one of the parties involved needs to leave the room.

Know your resources and [policies](#). By being aware of how effective consent, (defined as willingly, freely and knowledgeably agreeing to engage in sexual conduct), sexual misconduct, intimate partner violence, and stalking are defined here in our community and the different options for reporting an incident, you are better equipped to prevent these acts from happening. Your actions also help support your classmates and friends as well as yourself from incidents of power-based personal violence. There are several options available to students across campus for getting support or reporting based on requirements set in place by the federal [Clery Act](#) and [Title IX](#).

Resources and reporting options:

1. The [Sexual Assault/Wellness Advocate](#) and [Counseling Services](#) provide professionally trained clinicians to offer advocacy, support, therapy and guidance. Health Services provides medical attention and referral to campus and community resources. To reach Counseling Services and Health Services during regular business hours please call 240-895-4289. During academic terms and after regular business hours, a member of the Counseling or Health Center staffs can be reached by contacting either Public Safety 240-895-4911 or a member of the Residence Life Staff and asking to have the counselor contacted. The Sexual Assault/Wellness Advocate can also be contacted by calling the First Responder Network.

- **Non-reporting on campus.** No requirement that the information result in a Timely Warning. No report is generated nor is the incident included in the campus crime statistics or Clery report unless the survivor desires to.

2. [First Responder Network \(FRN\)](#) is a group of students specially trained in sexual misconduct crisis response protocols who provide on-call services 24 hours a day, 7 days a week when school is in session. FRN can be reached at 301-904-2015 by calling or text message. The FRNs can assist with reporting options, advocacy, on and off campus resources, and accompaniment to the hospital.

- **Anonymous reporting on campus.** A Timely Warning may go out if needed and the incident will be reported to the Sexual Assault/Wellness Advocate.

3. [Residence Life](#) Staff (240-895-4207 or the staff member on duty or on call) and the [Dean of Students Office](#) (240-895-4208) are trained to respond to all kinds of student emergencies, and can quickly connect you to other resources on- and off-campus. All Residential Life and Dean of Students Office staff are required to report any incidents of sexual misconduct to Public Safety. Residential Life and Dean of Students Office Staff can also assist with contacting the FRN, the Sexual Assault/Wellness Advocate, or Counseling and Health Center staff.

- **Confidential reporting on campus.** A Timely Warning may go out and the incident will be included in the Jeanne Clery Act statistics report. The names of the students involved will be kept in the strictest of confidence, shared only with those who need to know to be able to provide support and guidance.

4. [Public Safety](#) (240-895-4911) is a place to file an on-campus report and start an on-campus investigation. Public Safety will contact the First Responder Network or the Sexual Assault/Wellness Advocate when an incident of sexual misconduct is reported. Public safety can assist with contacting the St. Mary's County Sheriff's Office if the survivor requests a criminal investigation to be initiated. If the survivor does not wish for the Sheriff's Office to investigate, Public Safety Officers will notify the Sheriff's office of the incident and the fact the victim requests to remain anonymous (in accord with the

Memorandum of Understand between St. Mary's College of Maryland and Office of Public Safety and the St. Mary's County Sherriff's Office of March, 2011).

- **Confidential reporting on campus.** A Timely Warning may go out and the incident will be included in the Clery statistics. The names of the students involved will be kept in the strictest of confidence, sharing only with those who need to know to be able to provide support and guidance.

5. Campus Security Authorities (CSAs) are campus officials who have significant responsibility for student and campus activities. In addition to Residence Life, the Dean of Students Office, and Public Safety, Campus Security Authorities include: Student Activities, Judicial Affairs, SGA club advisors (faculty/staff), Orientation, Athletics and Recreation (including coaches), International Education, faculty study abroad coordinators, administrators, and Academic Services. CSAs are trained to respond to all kinds of student emergencies, and can quickly connect you to other resources on- and off-campus. CSAs are required to report any incidents of sexual assault to Public Safety. CSAs can also assist with contacting the FRN, the Sexual Assault/Wellness Advocate, or Counseling and Health Center Staffs.

- **Confidential reporting on campus.** A Timely Warning may go out and the incident will be included in the Clery statistics. The names of the students involved will be kept in the strictest of confidence, sharing only with those who need to know to be able to provide support and guidance.

6. The [Walden Sierra](#) 24-hour Crisis Hotline (301-863-6661) can be contacted day or night. Walden Sierra can provide advocacy, accompaniment to the hospital, crisis counseling, or on-going therapeutic support.

- **Anonymous reporting off campus.** No requirement that the information results in a Timely Warning or is included in the campus statistics. Walden Sierra is not required to report the incident to the Sherriff's Office or State Police.

7. [St. Mary's Hospital](#) (301-475-8981) and [Calvert Memorial Hospital](#) (410-535-4000) provide Sexual Assault Forensic Exams. All costs of these exams are free to the survivor and are provided by trained Sexual Assault Nurse Examiners. Neither the Police nor the Sherriff's Office will be contacted by the hospital unless the survivor desires to have them involved. If the survivor desires to obtain an SAFE exam, which is the best method of evidence collection, it is ideal if the survivor does not shower, use the bathroom, clean their body in anyway, and preserves any clothing including undergarments in a paper bag to bring with them to the hospital. The First Responder Network, the Sexual Assault/Wellness Advocate, and Walden Sierra can all provide accompaniment to the hospital. The student should notify the person to who which they are reporting the incident if she or he needs a ride to the hospital.

- **Anonymous reporting off campus.** No requirement that the information results in a Timely Warning or is included in the campus statistics. The hospital is not required to report the incident to the Sheriff's Office or State Police. SAFE exams are anonymous and are kept for the minimum of 90 days as required by law.

8. A report can be filed with the [Maryland State Police](#) (301-475-8955) or St. Mary's [County Sheriff's Office](#) (301-475-8008). These law enforcement agencies will work in conjunction with the College, so the Clery requirements are present. Remember, in filing a criminal report, it is important to preserve criminal evidence and obtain a Sexual Assault Forensic examination at a hospital within 72 hours of the incident. At any time after a report is made, it may be withdrawn from further action at the discretion of the survivor

- **Confidential reporting off campus.** A Timely Warning may go out and the incident will be included in the Clery statistics. The names of the students involved will be kept in the strictest of confidence, sharing only with those who need to know to be able to provide support and guidance.

If you have any questions regarding personal power-based violence, would like to learn more about reactive and proactive ways to reduce sexual violence in our community, the new policy changes, would like resources, or are in need of advocacy or assistance, please contact [me](#) (240-895-4208), [Meghan K. Root](#) (Sexual Assault/Wellness Advocate, 240-895-4289), or [Dr. MJ Raleigh](#) (Director of Counseling Services, 240-895-4289).

Finally, I would like to thank you for embracing the [St. Mary's Way](#) and for your willingness to act to keep our community safe.

Sincerely,

Laura Bayless

Laura A. Bayless, PhD
Dean of Students
St. Mary's College of Maryland
18952 E. Fisher Road
St. Mary's City, MD 20686-3001
labayless@smcm.edu
240.895.4208
www.smcm.edu/studentaffairs/
www.smcm.edu/emergency

