

Baylor regents approve plan to address sexual violence

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WACO—Four days after Baylor University students and others held a candlelight vigil supporting survivors of sexual assault, the school's board of regents approved an administrative action plan to prevent acts of sexual violence on campus and to improve treatment and services for all those affected by interpersonal violence.

The plan “reflects a commitment to help eliminate incidents of interpersonal violence on the Baylor campus, ensure that incidents of interpersonal violence are reported and investigated promptly, and ensure that the educational, physical, emotional and spiritual needs of victims are given prompt and priority attention,” according to a Baylor public statement.

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Under the plan, Baylor will:

- Dedicate immediate funding to increase the number of professional counseling staff offering services to students, ensuring all students have timely access to counseling.
- Increase the quantity and quality of university space dedicated to

- counseling and the support of victims of interpersonal violence.
- Provide strong measures to address the needs of students who prompt a Title IX investigation, ensuring that those who report sexual, relationship or gender-based harassment or violence can continue their education without impediment.
 - Mandate annual Title IX training for all upper-class and graduate students, expanding the program presently provided to all incoming students.
 - Guarantee that faculty and staff Title IX training will be required annually.
 - Fully fund continuing education for all campus professionals who provide Title IX response, support and counseling to ensure awareness and adherence to nationally recognized trauma-informed practices in the field of interpersonal violence.

“We know we can and must do a better job to confront interpersonal violence in our campus community,” President Ken Starr said. “We will learn many things from the external review that has been commissioned by Baylor regents, and that information will guide our future plans.

“In the meantime, these are important action steps we can take right now to improve our services to students impacted by sexual violence, and we intend to implement these steps immediately.”

On-campus acts of interpersonal violence “break our hearts and contradict everything we believe as those who follow Christ,” Regents Chair Richard Willis said.

“The administration provided us with a plan that responds immediately, directly and effectively to the needs of our students. We approved this program right away to ensure that sexual assault survivors, and those in our community with other critical counseling needs, have access to the best range of counseling services available.

“We know we have more work to do, and we will be eager to take further action once our independent external review is complete.”