

## Emerging Leaders-SIM U

This is a simulation that was originally developed for the 2015 Emerging Leaders Cohort at George Mason University. It is meant to help students understand the way decisions are made about difficult situations, particularly in the university setting. Each student is provided with a role in the university and must use their knowledge of both the role and the situation in order to assist in solving the problem.

### Instructions for Facilitation

**Time:** 45 Minutes

**Number Participants:** 10-20

#### Supplies

- Scenario print outs
- Role print outs (either 1 per group or 1 per person in each group)

#### Instructions

- Tell the group that they will be participating in a simulation. Hand out the scenario sheets (not the roles yet) and read the scenario out loud.
- Inform them that they will have to come up with a response to the scenario. Each person must represent the interests of the office or department that they are assigned.
  - **Note:** It is very important to mention that, regardless of one's personal stance on the issue, they must represent what their office would want from the situation. That may or may not be in line with what the participant believes.
- Hand out the various roles. Depending on group size, you can have 1-4 people per group. It is best to have at least 2 people in each group so that they can discuss the various perspectives that the role might have.
- Give them about 10-15 minutes to read through the information. No one should announce right away who they are. During this time they should read their role, re-read the scenario, and start to figure out their initial response or beliefs.
- Once the allotted time is up, ask each person to introduce themselves and the role that they are playing.
  - **Note:** The facilitator of this activity should act as the Vice President of Student Affairs-they will run the meeting and guide the direction of it.
  - Ask each person to share their initial response/suggestions and go around the table.
  - Each person has information that another group doesn't. They will start to understand more as each group tells their part.
- Conversation will start to flourish as people agree/disagree. Allow it to flow if it is going well. If you find that it is not, you can add in twists to the story.
  - **Example:** With the scenario provided, we added that ESPN had called and said one of the accused students was nominated for the Heisman

Trophy. We also added that the Feminist Student Organization and the Student Body President had released a statement.

- Anything you can add to the scenario to help keep the conversation both interesting and difficult will help your case. If you notice that most of the group is leaning to one side, add information that will sway people to a different side or more neutral.
- After about 10-15 minutes of discussion (or during a seemingly good time), break again so that the groups can discuss their next response.
  - Remind the group that there are limitations to certain roles. For instance, the Title IX Coordinator can only investigate. Sexual Assault Prevention can advise, and PR can suggest what is good for the school. Student Conduct and Athletics are the only entities that can enforce discipline.
- Try to urge the group to come up with charges and/or disciplinary action for the students. They may be able to before time is up. If they don't, cut it off whenever you'd like.
- Debrief with the group.
  - Suggested questions
    - One word check in-have the group describe their feelings in one words directly after the activity.
    - How did you feel during this activity?
    - How did you feel representing your role?
    - Did you agree with the stance you took for your role?
    - If you had to play your role in a real world situation, do you think you would act differently?
    - What did you learn about responding to situations?
    - Do you have anything else to add?

## Scenario

At SIM University, three underage student athletes on the football team were at an off campus party that involved drinking. The party was at a house leased by fraternity members and many were in attendance. A recording has been released online of the football students leading a chant that encourages rape culture and sexual assault. The person who released the video has included information that the party was a SIM U event and the video is clear enough to show exactly who is chanting. The video is being circulated on multiple websites and some smaller news networks have written articles about it. Many students are outraged and calling for the expulsion of these students.

You each play a very important role at SIM U and have been called together to respond to the situation in the most responsible manner. It is important that this gets solved carefully so that the school does not receive any further negative publicity after what it has already received.

At this meeting, you have a few things to figure out:

- What, if any, repercussions should the football players leading the chant face?
- What, if any, repercussions should any of the students that joined the chant face?
- What, if any, policies should be developed to assist in further responding to the situation?

Important things to consider:

- What prior image has the school created for itself and how will the action you choose either affirm or contradict that image?
- Can students be punished for off campus behaviors?
- Would this be the same action if the video had not gone viral, or if there had been no video (but administration still knew about it)?
- What do current policies specifically state about this situation? Is there any room for policy reform?

## **Sexual Assault Prevention and Response**

The Office of Sexual Assault Prevention & Response promotes the compassionate, culturally competent, and just treatment of survivors, their friends, and significant others. It fosters collaborative relationships between campus and community systems, and affects attitudinal and behavioral changes on campus as we work toward the elimination of sexual violence against all people.

As employees of the office, you have the responsibility to respond to issues that relate to sexual violence or rape culture in a quick and responsible manner. With the recent growth of Sexual Assault Prevention awareness at the federal level, more eyes have been on your office to set the tone for how the University should respond to various situations. Also, the President of the University has been consulting you as they have been serving on the statewide Task Force on Sexual Assault.

In the past year, the football team has been required by their coach to attend your Sexual Assault workshops and signed the Pledge Against Sexual Violence. They even participated in an "It's On Us" video campaign produced by your school that promotes an end to sexual assault and everyone taking responsibility for issues of gender-based violence. However, there was also accusations the year prior towards one of the football players about a potential incident of sexual violence. All eyes are on your office for how you respond to the situation, especially because the video has gone viral.

The Office of Sexual Assault Prevention & Response includes in its definition of Sexual Harassment:

- Sexual comments, jokes, or propositions for social or sexual activities
- Requests or demands for sexual favors tied to work or academics

## **Athletics**

As the Athletics Office, you are particularly concerned about the growth of SIM U Athletics at the national level. This has been one of the best Football seasons in ten years, and you have been preparing for the team to make it to the NCAA Championships. The three football players in question are some of your best players, and losing them could mean a major loss for the school.

Not only does school pride come into question, but the amount of potential money that could come in if the team wins or even makes it to the final round of the championships is huge. The school has been needing this opportunity to get back on the map and this is the prime moment. If the players are not there, the chances of the team making it far in the championships is highly reduced.

The team has done a lot for the Sexual Assault Prevention and Response Office. They have attended workshops about ending sexual violence and rape culture and even participated in an "It's On Us" video campaign produced by your school that promotes an end to sexual assault and everyone taking responsibility for issues of gender-based violence. They have clearly showed their allegiance to the mission of ending sexual violence, so you think this may just be something that requires an educational reminder to the whole team. Besides, why punish the whole school for the actions of a few?

As a reference, below are the policies on the consumption of alcohol, the responsible use of social media by student athletes, and sexual harassment and assault.

### **Alcohol and Other Substances:**

*Level 1-Minor Misconduct Offenses:* Underage possession or consumption of an alcoholic beverage; Inappropriate language or verbal provocation while under the influence of alcohol; Use of false identification to obtain an alcoholic beverage.

### **Internet Usage and Social Networking Sites:**

*Level 1-Minor Misconduct:* Making Internet postings that reflect negatively on an individual or group.

### **Sexual Harassment/Sexual Assault:**

*Level 1-Minor Misconduct:* Inappropriate language or gestures of a sexual nature not directed at an individual Supporting or encouraging the use of inappropriate language of a sexual nature

*Level 2-Serious Misconduct:* Inappropriate language or gestures of a sexual nature directed at an individual; Threat or intent to harm an individual in a way which is perceived to be or is of a sexual nature; Unwanted physical contact of a sexual nature

## **Student Conduct**

It is the mission of the Office of Student Conduct and the Student Conduct System at SIM U to turn potential incidents of misconduct into opportunities for the facilitation of education and student development. It is our goal that as students make their way through the adjudication process, they will leave that process as better educated students, better all around members of the University community, and better global citizens. In addition to these educational opportunities, Student Conduct is responsible for ensuring the safety of all students across campus by enforcing the current policies so that they are being upheld in the interest of safety across campus. Below is the policy on Sexual Misconduct at SIM U.

### **Resolution of Alleged Sexual Misconduct**

It is the policy of the University (Policy 1202) to provide an academic and work environment free from sexual harassment. Sexual harassment, a form of gender discrimination, is contrary to the standards and mission of the University. Sexual harassment is illegal and will not be tolerated. Each member of the University community has a responsibility to maintain an academic and work environment free from sexual harassment. The University will take whatever action necessary to prevent, stop, correct, or discipline harassing behavior. Same-sex sexual harassment violates this policy and is subject to discipline under the same procedures. Sexual harassment does not include verbal expression or written material that is relevant to course subject matter or curriculum and this policy shall not abridge academic freedom or George Mason University's educational mission.

Sexual harassment is defined by law as unwelcome sexual advances, requests for sexual favors, and other verbal, physical, or other forms of expressive communication of a sexual nature, when submission to or rejection of such conduct is used as a basis for employment or academic decisions, or such conduct has the purpose or effect of unreasonably interfering with an individual's work or academic performance or creating an intimidating, hostile, or sexually offensive work or academic environment.

Also, as stated in the original story, there were cases of underage drinking. This included the football students and other students present at the party. The video makes it clear which students were drinking during this event. Cases of underage drinking are usually followed by educational sessions meant to provide learning opportunities to the students involved.

## **Office of Media and Public Relations**

The SIM U Office of Media and Public Relations represents and promotes the university and its faculty, students, and programs to a variety of internal and external audiences. The office serves as a liaison between news media reporters and Mason representatives.

The professional staff is prepared to assist and advise all members of the university community. We encourage faculty and staff members to contact us with story ideas, to keep us informed of current research and to seek our assistance in responding to media inquiries.

### **General advice by the OMPR:**

Be accurate. Make sure that you have all the facts before you post. It's better to verify information with a source first than to have to post a correction or retraction later. Cite and link to your sources whenever possible; after all, that's how you build community. If you make an error, correct it quickly and visibly. This will earn you respect in the online community.

Thoroughly and consistently monitor the site:

- Do not host or share confidential or proprietary university information.
- Provide only information that can be verified. Do not present false or misleading information. Include links and references to other websites where appropriate.

Be respectful. You are more likely to achieve your goals or sway others to your beliefs if you are constructive and respectful while discussing a bad experience or disagreeing with a concept or person. Think before you post. There's no such thing as a "private" social media site. Search engines can turn up posts years after the publication date. Comments can be forwarded or copied. Archival systems save information even if you delete a post. Always remember to follow good practices:

- Contact your supervisor when discussions involve sensitive subjects.
- Obtain appropriate written permission before publishing, transmitting, or storing copyrighted or intellectual property content on a University Affiliated Site.
- Quickly recall a post or respond quickly when asked for correction when you make a mistake.
- Apply common sense and exercise good judgment, discretion, and thoughtfulness when posting content on social media channels. Strive for high quality in content.
- Be respectful of comments received. Listen and read them carefully before posting your responses.
- Use social media channels responsibly; you are representing SIM U
- Moderate your site to make sure nothing is posted by others that violates confidentiality, policies, or laws.
- Be aware that information conveyed on an Affiliated University Site are statements of the University, and be cognizant of how that information will be perceived by all readers.

All posted content is subject to review. Be aware that:

- Everything online has the potential to become public.
- Use of Social Media Sites that are not Affiliate University Sites is personal use, and is governed by University policies regarding use of state equipment, time, and resources.
- Privacy policies change often. It is your responsibility to be informed about and regularly review the privacy policies of the social media you are using.

## **Title IX Coordinator**

Title IX of the Education Amendments of 1972 prohibits discrimination on the basis of sex under any education program or activity receiving federal financial aid. Sexual assault and sexual harassment is a form of sex discrimination prohibited by Title IX.

SIM U is committed to providing a learning, living and working environment free from discrimination. Any gender based discrimination, including sexual misconduct which includes but is not limited to, sexual assault, sexual harassment, stalking relationship violence and sexual exploitation committed by SIM U students, staff or faculty will not be tolerated. This applies to academic, educational, athletic, residential and other University operated programs. SIM U encourages individuals who believe they have been sexually harassed, assaulted or subjected to sexual misconduct by a SIM U student or employee to seek assistance.

Any student, faculty or staff member, or applicant who has concerns about sex discrimination or sexual misconduct is encouraged to seek the assistance of the Title IX coordinator.

Contact the coordinator if you:

- Wish to understand your options if you think you may have encountered sex discrimination or sexual misconduct (sexual assault, sexual harassment, stalking and relationship violence)
- Need help on how to handle a situation by which you are indirectly affected
- Learn of a situation that you feel may warrant a University investigation
- Seek guidance on possible informal remedies or administrative measures to de-escalate or alleviate a difficult situation
- Have questions about SIM U's policies and procedures

What are a school's responsibilities to address sexual harassment and sexual violence?

- A school has a responsibility to respond promptly and effectively. If a school knows or reasonably should know about sexual harassment or sexual violence that creates a hostile environment, the school must take immediate action to eliminate the sexual harassment or sexual violence, prevent its recurrence, and address its effects.
- Even if a student or his or her parent does not want to file a complaint or does not request that the school take any action on the student's behalf, if a school knows or reasonably should know about possible sexual harassment or sexual violence, it must promptly investigate to determine what occurred and then take appropriate steps to resolve the situation.
- A criminal investigation into allegations of sexual harassment or sexual violence does not relieve the school of its duty under Title IX to resolve complaints promptly and equitably.