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**RESIDENT ASSISTANTS AND TITLE IX: THE HYPOCRISY OF COMPELLED
DISCLOSURE**

by

Samantha Contrini

A Thesis
Submitted to the
Department of Educational Services and Leadership
College of Education
In partial fulfillment of the requirement
For the degree of
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at
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Thesis Chair: Raquel Wright-Mair, Ph.D.

Committee Members:
Dianna Dale, Ph.D.
Tyrone McCombs, Ph.D.

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Dedication

This project is dedicated to every Resident Assistant and Assistant Resident Director at Rowan University who sacrifices part of their college experience to better the lives of their community. The work you do is often difficult and draining, thank you for your time and effort.

For every student who is a survivor of sexual violence, you matter.

Acknowledgements

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Abstract

Samantha Contrini
RESIDENT ASSISTANTS AND TITLE IX: THE HYPOCRISY OF COMPELLED
DISCLOSURE

2020-2021

Raquel Wright-Mair, PhD
Master of Arts in Higher Education

Resident Assistants juggle various roles as student staff members to ensure residents are supported and safe. Yet, RAs are widely considered to be some of the most under-trained and ill-prepared employees on college campuses (Letarte, 2012). At many institutions, RAs are considered Responsible Employees under Title IX which means they are required to report instances of sexual misconduct when they are made aware of them. Often times, this is done against the will of the survivor; a phenomenon referred to as compelled disclosure (Holland et al., 2018). The purpose of this study was to explore the potential harm caused to survivors of sexual misconduct by putting such great responsibility into undergraduate student staff. As a researcher, I conducted a survey of residential students and RAs at Rowan University to determine the effect this dynamic has on RAs' ability to build relationships with their residents. Additionally, I sought to determine the level of knowledge Rowan's RAs had of mandatory reporting requirements and whether the training they receive is effective. The results of this study provide support for the need of further research to be done as the current literature is limited on such a severely important and prevalent topic.

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Chapter I

Introduction

Title IX of the Higher Education Amendments of 1972 prohibits sex discrimination in federally funded educational settings and requires university officials to respond to acts of sex discrimination that occur (Newins et al., 2018). In 1990, the Clery Act, in response to the sexual assault and murder of Jeanne Clery at Lehigh University, was passed to require all college campuses to report their yearly crime statistics and security information to provide current and prospective students with accurate information about criminal activity on campus (Letarte, 2012). The “Dear Colleague Letter,” written by the Department of Education, laid out the expectations and requirements of federally-funded institutions under Title IX for reporting sexual misconduct, harassment, and violence (Ali, 2011). The document explains that immediate action by the institution is required for incidents related to Title IX that the university knows about or reasonably should know about. The goal for universities’ Title IX compliance is to ensure that all complaints are followed up on and to provide resources for the involved parties in investigations (Holland et al., 2018).

According to a 2019 study conducted by the Association of American Universities (AAU), 13% of student participants across 33 universities reported experiencing nonconsensual sexual contact since enrolling at their institution (Cantor et al., 2020). Out of the undergraduate students surveyed, women reported at 25.9%, men at 6.8%, and transgender/non-binary/queer-identifying students at 22.8% (Cantor et al., 2020). The potential harmfulness of compelled disclosure related to Title IX incidents on college campuses is an extremely concerning factor in discussions about the

implementation of mandatory reporting. Compelled disclosure is considered to be institutional policy that mandates the reporting of student disclosure related to sexual misconduct with or without the survivor's consent (Holland et al., 2018). Research shows that, for many reasons, mandated reporting by faculty, professionals, and student staff has a negative connotation for students and can prevent sexual misconduct victims from seeking support, as well as hinder their ability to heal (Ahrens et al., 2010). Specifically, the expectation that Resident Assistants (RAs) report their residents, who are their peers, against the will of the survivor is especially harmful.

RAs are too often under-trained, overworked, and ill-equipped to handle the severity of sexual assault disclosure (Letarte, 2012). It is the onus of the university to provide a safe environment in which students can learn and grow. University officials owe their students more than improperly trained, often immature, undergraduate students as the first-line of defense in moments of crisis. However, university officials also owe their student staff more than holding them to exceedingly high standards while providing insufficient training and no recognition of the incredible sacrifice Resident Assistants make to perform in that role. Residence life departments across the country need to take a deeper look at what it currently means to be an RA and rework those expectations to better meet the needs of students and staff, as well as protect themselves from institutional liability concerns.

Purpose of the Study

Resident Assistants are on the front lines of crisis response in residence halls across the country yet, they are seldom supported staff members on college campuses (Letarte, 2012). In a topic as severe and recurrent as sexual assault, it is shocking that

there is not regulated, basic training for RAs that would provide consistent, widespread support for residents regardless of institutional oversight. Therefore, it is up to the individual university officials to ensure RAs are properly trained in handling sexual assault disclosures, a task often unfulfilled (Letarte, 2012). The limited literature that is available on the subject discusses the large gap between what RAs should know and what they do know related to Title IX reporting requirements (Holland & Cortina, 2017; Letarte, 2012). The results of this study will further provide data on institutional failure or success, specifically at Rowan University, to ensure student staff have accurate knowledge of policy requirements as Holland and Cortina (2017) did in their study of Resident Assistants' knowledge and opinions of campus resources. I will seek to determine if Rowan's RAs' views of mandatory reporting requirements and institutional ability to support survivors affects their willingness to follow protocol. Furthermore, the recommendations made will take into consideration survey data from current residential students, some of whom may have experienced sexual assault, and their opinions on mandatory reporting requirements; specifically considering the responses of survivors who either did or did not report to their Resident Assistant.

Research Questions

1. Are Resident Assistants an effective resource for residents, specifically those who are survivors of sexual misconduct, while holding the title of Responsible Employee?
 - a. Is it perceived to be more beneficial to the safety and security of residents that Resident Assistants not be seen as individuals with such great authority?

2. What percentage of Title IX training is retained by Rowan's residential staff?

Operational Definitions of Important Terms

- *Sexual misconduct*: sexual acts perpetrated against a person's will or where a person is incapable of giving consent (due to use of drugs/alcohol, intellectual or other disability, incapacitation, etc.), includes rape, sexual battery, sexual assault, sexual harassment, and sexual coercion (Ali, 2011).
- *Resident Assistant (RA)*: undergraduate student staff member who oversees a residential student population. RAs operate in a myriad of roles, including resource, support system, crisis responder, etc. and are held to various reporting requirements under Title IX and the Clery Act (Letarte, 2012).
- *Responsible Employee*: under Title IX, any staff member deemed appropriate by an individual university who is required to report any disclosures of sexual misconduct (Ali, 2011). At Rowan University, all employees who are not confidential resources (counselors, medical personnel) are considered Responsible Employees.
- *Campus Security Authority (CSA)*: under the Clery Act, specific groups of employees are required to report crimes they are made aware of in their official capacity. They are not required to report when they come across these incidents through informal channels. Also, contrary to Responsible Employees, CSAs are not required to disclose personal, identifying information (Holland et al., 2018).
- *Compelled disclosure*: institutional policy that mandates the reporting of student disclosure related to sexual assault with or without the survivor's consent (Holland et al., 2018).

- *Institutional betrayal*: negative reactions committed by an institution (university officials, criminal justice system, etc.) against those who are dependent on it, which result in survivors feeling blamed, traumatized, and often stops them from seeking further help (Holland et al., 2018).
- *Rape myth acceptance*: an individual's likelihood to believe false or stereotypical rape myths, such as women want to be raped, men cannot control their aggressive sexual behavior, etc. (Newins & White, 2018).

Assumptions and Limitations

Through assessing my experience in residence life and incorporating the findings of the limited literature available on the subject, some assumptions can be made. Widely, Resident Assistants are under-trained and ill-prepared to respond to Title IX-related crises and disclosures (Holland and Bedera, 2020; Holland et al., 2018; Letarte, 2012). Too often, RA training is a mere two weeks in the summer where years of accumulated, experiential knowledge is packed into short, lecture-style presentations. Additionally, as the governmental bodies who regulate these policies do not provide a basic structure or outline of what Title IX or Clery Act training must incorporate, how RAs are trained and much of the content that is included is entirely up to the institution they serve (Letarte, 2012). Therefore, the knowledge of Resident Assistants at Rowan University compared to the results of similar studies at different institutions will be difficult to draw conclusions to the broader issue at hand as training and protocol vary across the board. Yet, it is assumed that the results will show similar gaps in knowledge of Rowan University's RA staff regarding Title IX reporting requirements as Holland and Cortina (2017) found in their study.

As a Resident Director, I oversaw a staff of Resident Assistants at Rowan and often observed RAs expressing their discomfort in balancing the need to be both a supporter and a reporter. Therefore, it is likely that I will find evidence in the survey data that supports this experience. Putting such great responsibility into the hands of immature, inexperienced undergraduate students is a recipe for disaster. It is likely some of the residential students who will report having disclosed an act of sexual misconduct to their RA will consider that experience to be negative and harmful. Similarly, I believe some RAs will admit to not reporting a disclosure against the will of the survivor as their fear of damaging the relationship with their resident and desire to support a survivor's wishes outweighed their commitment to following policy.

Currently, institutions are overhauling these Title IX policies to align with the new regulations submitted by former Secretary of Education Betsy DeVos. In her time as Secretary of Education, she also rescinded the Dear Colleague Letter (Ali, 2011) that is often referenced by relevant researchers. However, as the Resident Assistants that are surveyed have been trained under the former Title IX policy regulations, it is imperative that I judge their findings against the previous rules. It is important to include this distinction as Secretary DeVos's regulations have drastically changed the scope of Title IX and institutions' responsibilities to report and resolve complaints. Additionally, as President Biden's administration has just named Miguel Cardona as the new Secretary of Education it is likely these regulations will change again in the near future. These changes convey the chaos that is Title IX and provide evidence for the argument that expecting RAs to handle such a complex issue is too demanding and unrealistic.

Overview of the Study

Chapter II provides a review of the current literature surrounding the effect disclosure has on survivors of sexual misconduct, the role Resident Assistants play as mandatory reporters under Title IX, and general perceptions of university students and staff on reporting requirements.

Chapter III discusses the methods used to conduct the study of Rowan University's Resident Assistants and residential students' views of mandatory reporting requirements.

Chapter IV reports the findings of the study through the lens of the research questions.

Chapter V provides a summary of the research, as well as recommendations for future studies on this topic and best practices to support the findings of this study.

Chapter II

Review of Literature

This chapter serves as a review of the current literature on this area of study and will shed light on the lack of concern scholars have for this topic. It will provide background information in the form of results and conclusions the discussed researchers have made by analyzing surveys conducted of Resident Assistants, sexual misconduct survivors, and other relevant populations.

Survivors and Disclosure

For the number of acts of sexual misconduct that occur on college campuses, there has not been enough research into the effects negative disclosure experiences with university employees can have on survivors of sexual assault. The resulting harms of students experiencing sexual violence can be psychological, physical, behavioral, and academic (Holland et al., 2018). The experience a survivor has in their disclosure process can largely affect their ability to cope with the lasting traumas (Ahrens et al., 2010). Proponents of mandatory reporting, which is referred to as “compelled disclosure” by Holland et al. (2018), argue that its greatest benefit is the ability to investigate and remedy more cases, as well as provide the discloser with support. However, there does not seem to be any empirical evidence to support these claims. In that light, Holland et al. (2018) sought to evaluate these assumptions through a review of the literature available at that time.

The idea of compelled disclosure is not a new phenomenon; there have been state laws in place for a long time to protect children and the elderly from sexual violence. These protected citizens have been determined to be unable to make reasonable and

rational decisions for themselves regarding instances of victimization. Holland et al. (2018) pointed out that college students are, with few exceptions, not children and, therefore, are reasonably competent enough to make their own decisions. On college campuses, the expectation of mandatory reporting by Resident Assistants against the will of the survivor has largely negative connotations. By operating against the wishes of the survivor, the institution is re-victimizing them and causing more harm than good. The irony of teaching the importance of consent in freshmen orientation presentations and then training RAs to report disclosures of sexual assault regardless of whether or not they receive consent from the survivor is disturbing and calls into question just who exactly is benefiting from mandatory reporting requirements.

In “To Tell or Not to Tell,” Ahrens et al. (2010) conveyed the impact that disclosure has on a survivor’s ability to recover from their trauma. The researchers categorized four different kinds of disclosers: nondisclosers (survivors who have never disclosed), slow starters (survivors who delayed their disclosure), crisis disclosers (survivors who immediately disclosed but then stopped), and on-going disclosers (survivors who have continuously disclosed over time). Ahrens et al. (2010) conducted interviews of 103 female sexual assault survivors who were systematically sampled by advertising in locations frequented by women. The women were asked a variety of questions to gauge their assault experiences, disclosure history, social reactions, as well as their experiences with depression and PTSD, and their overall physical health (Ahrens et al., 2010).

Their research proves that those who are on the receiving end of sexual misconduct disclosure have a strong effect on a survivor’s ability to recover from their

trauma (Ahrens et al., 2010). Therefore, improperly trained student staff can have an extremely negative impact on students' lives should a student choose to disclose to an RA. Furthermore, they can even hinder a survivor's desire to continue to disclose to others (i.e., the staff member's supervisor, the police, medical professionals, their family, etc.). This study shows that nondisclosers, survivors who never disclose their assault, experience poorer psychological health compared to those who have at some point disclosed. Ahrens et al. (2010) stated that this is due to the freeing up of the sustained mental energy survivors use to suppress thoughts of their trauma which can suppress their immune system and, therefore, overall health. However, there is evidence that suggests the psychological benefits of disclosing only affect those who were met with positive emotional words. Therefore, experiencing negative social reactions when disclosing can negate the positive effects of disclosure (Ahrens et al., 2010).

In their article, Holland et al. (2018) cited the National Alliance to End Sexual Violence's (NAESV) survey which found that 88% of survivors surveyed believed mandatory reporting requirements would lessen the likelihood of disclosure. The research that often supports mandatory reporting requirements is based on surveys conducted of entire campus populations, not limited to survivors of sexual assault, which indicates the data that shows positive attitudes of these policies are largely flawed (Holland et al., 2018). The researchers argued that assuming survivors will benefit from compelled disclosure is also assuming that their interactions with university officials and the police will be positive experiences, which Ahrens et al. (2010) proved is not necessarily a given (Holland et al., 2018). In line with the findings of Ahrens et al. (2010), Holland et al. (2018) found that survivors who experience institutional betrayal, which is considered

wrongdoings committed by university officials against its dependents, are more likely to experience posttraumatic symptoms. These researchers have shown that the negative effects of a poor disclosure experience can severely harm a survivor's ability to heal from their trauma. Therefore, it is imperative that university officials be well-trained and prepared to provide support in the event of a sexual assault disclosure.

Resident Assistants and Title IX

Wiersma-Mosley and Diloreto (2018) discussed the role of Title IX Coordinators on college campuses of two-year institutions as well as both public and private four-year institutions. Their goal was to discover the types of administrators holding this position, how they feel about the training they receive and give to campus employees/students, as well as the details of their hearing processes. In their research, Wiersma-Mosley and Diloreto (2018) found several discrepancies in how schools carry out the responsibilities of the Title IX Coordinator role. Areas such as investigation methods, confidence in training, training requirements for employees, case resolution methods, etc. are handled differently across the country. The role of a Title IX Coordinator is an extremely important one, yet this full-time commitment is often operated by an administrator who is also balancing a second role at the institution (e.g. student affairs, human resources, etc.) (Wiersma-Mosley & Diloreto, 2018). Therefore, full attention is often not given to the cases reported, training and efficacy of Responsible Employees, and upkeep of constantly evolving expectations set forth by the state and federal governments. Wiersma-Mosley and Diloreto (2018) found most of the coordinators struggled in keeping up with the complex issues of Title IX and its changing regulations. Professionals whose sole responsibility is maintaining campus compliance with Title IX often struggle doing just

that. While it is true that there is a great deal of responsibility and stress placed on Title IX Coordinators and their office, the immediate response at the residential setting falls to the role of Resident Assistants.

In “The Evolving Landscape of Title IX,” Holland and Cortina’s (2017) study of Resident Assistants at a large Midwestern university shows how important it is to understand the effects of RAs’ knowledge, trust, and perception regarding Title IX’s mandatory reporting requirements. As there is no legal basis for universities to assess the efficacy of RA training, many institutions are not providing their student staff with the appropriate tools to best help survivors. While the passing of the Campus Sexual Violence Elimination Act (SaVE) of 2013 required institutions to provide sexual assault prevention/awareness programs for all new students or employees, there is currently nothing in place that provides regulations and requirements for mandatory reporter training (Holland & Cortina, 2017). The responsibilities that come with being an RA are incredibly demanding and have direct effects on residents’ lives, yet they are often some of the most under-trained campus employees. There is significant danger in putting that much responsibility into the hands of inexperienced undergraduate students as many institutions today classify RAs similarly to professional administrators in their crisis response capacity (Letarte, 2012).

In Holland and Cortina’s (2017) article, the study they conducted used quantitative methods as each section required a numerical ranking dependent upon the RAs’ agreement with the statement or personal ranking of understanding. They divided the survey into five themes: Knowledge, Trust, Perceptions of responsibilities, Likelihood to report, and Likelihood to refer. The 305 RAs surveyed were asked two sets

of 12 questions related to their knowledge of the reporting process and their knowledge of the resources provided by the campus sexual assault center (SAC). The average RA who responded to the survey knew only half of the correct responses related to the university's sexual misconduct mandatory reporting requirements and 7 out of 12 correct answers related to the resources offered by the SAC (Holland & Cortina, 2017). On a scale of 1-5, the data showed that the RAs expressed significantly greater trust in the SAC's ability to handle a report of sexual violence (mean score of 4.39) compared to their department's official reporting channels (mean score of 3.64) (Holland & Cortina, 2017). The data also showed that their role as Responsible Employees challenges the two integral aspects of the RA role: community building and developing trust. The results conveyed that the RAs perceived those responsibilities as a hindrance to their ability to develop trust with their residents. This is a huge concern because if RAs are not able to gain their residents' trust, then they are not able to do all aspects of their jobs effectively. These findings not only mean that survivors are then unable to find support in their RA, but they are also losing out on being connected to other on-campus resources that could help them heal from their trauma.

In the article, "Call for Help Immediately: A Discourse Analysis of Resident Assistants' Responses to Sexual Assault Disclosures," Holland and Bedera (2020) use the survey data from Holland and Cortina's (2017) study to identify four categories of discourse RAs fall into when responding to sexual misconduct disclosure. According to Holland and Bedera (2020), RAs' responses can be categorized as gatekeeping, minimizing, controlling, or empowering. By analyzing RAs' qualitative responses to what they would say in various and diverse sexual misconduct situations, the researchers

were able to create a scale that defined which category the individual RA's response would be considered.

The two underlying dimensions they used to categorize each RA's approach were the RA's (un)certainty as to whether or not the survivor's experience deemed a need for resources offered and to which party the RA deemed in control of the use of those resources - themselves or the survivor (Holland & Bedera, 2020). Those who showed an inclination toward using gatekeeping discourse (4% of the 305 respondents) were more uncertain about the survivor's need for resources and controlled the use of those resources (Holland & Bedera, 2020). These RAs commonly claimed they would ask the survivor for more personal details of the assault in order for them to determine if the experience was worthy of external help (Holland & Bedera, 2020). Holland and Bedera (2020) found that RAs who approached the hypothetical scenarios with a minimizing response (20%) expressed low certainty in the survivor's experience as requiring a need for resources, but "communicated that a survivor could choose to access resources if they *really* needed it" (p. 1391). These kinds of responses make the survivor question their own feelings and delegitimize the authenticity of their experience (Holland & Bedera, 2020). This finding revealed that RAs who were categorized as using minimizing discourse were not likely to find harm in every facet of sexual misconduct and likely have high beliefs in rape myth acceptance, which is considered an individual's likelihood to believe false or stereotypical rape myths (Newins & White, 2018).

Unlike the former two categories of discourse, the latter show a high level of certainty of the need for resources, but differ in where they place control of access to those resources which significantly changes the effect of the interaction. Controlling

discourse (45%) was characterized by high certainty of need and the placement of control of using the resources in the RA. In their response, RAs who were considered to approach the disclosure in a controlling manner included specific resource referrals, but denied the survivor agency in whether those resources could be used as they took a high level of personal control in how the resources would be accessed (Holland & Bedera, 2020). Respondents who expressed an approach that was more empowering (18%) were highly empathetic, certain the survivor needed access to resources and communicated the importance for the survivor to be in control of how and when the resources were used (Holland & Bedera, 2020). The remaining 13% of respondents expressed use of multiple discourses and were categorized as mixed (Holland & Bedera, 2020). These results are concerning because their form of approach contradicted itself which is likely confusing and frustrating for survivors who disclose to them. For example, one RA seemed both controlling and empowering as they expressed they would encourage the resident to report the incident (impacting the survivor's decision making) and claimed they would guide the resident to a resource center (allowing the survivor to make the choice) (Holland & Bedera, 2020). Similarly to Ahrens et al. (2010), Holland and Bedera's (2020) literature shows the incredible impact a survivor's disclosure process has on their ability to heal from their trauma, while highlighting the inconsistencies in training and RA knowledge of how to best handle the discourse of disclosure.

Holland and Cortina (2017) and Holland and Bedera (2020) provide direct evidence that RAs' knowledge of their university reporting requirements and their perception of those responsibilities affects their likelihood to report. Not only do RAs need to be adequately trained in Title IX compliance, but they must understand the

process that takes place after their report. For RAs to positively perceive their role in mandatory reporting, the department must be more transparent and explain the importance of what it means to be a Responsible Employee under Title IX. In her article, “Keepers of the Night,” Letarte (2012) emphasized the importance of appropriate and continual training that provides RAs with accurate knowledge, as well as follow-up to ensure proper execution of enforcing policies. By evaluating three cases that call into question institutional liability, Letarte (2012) argued that universities are opening themselves up to legal action in giving RAs such great responsibility with no protections. Letarte (2012) discussed the multi-faceted and ever-changing nature of what it means to be a Resident Assistant as they juggle multiple, contradicting roles (policy enforcer, caregiver, cheerleader, counselor, tutor, etc.) as well as being a student and having a personal life of their own.

The role of Resident Assistant is, in itself, too much for undergraduates and needs to be re-evaluated to not only ensure protocol is properly understood and followed, but also to protect RAs and the institution from liability claims. Furthermore, without proper assurances that RAs comprehend the accurate and proper training they should be receiving, higher education professionals are not maintaining promises of safe campus environments and are putting residential students at risk (Holland and Bedera, 2020). Resident Assistants, in their role as first responders, can negatively or positively impact a survivor’s healing process in their disclosure experience (Ahrens et al., 2010). By neglecting to critically analyze the effectiveness of Responsible Employee training, university officials are risking the well-being of every survivor who has been taught their

RA is a reliable resource and is then re-victimized in disclosure when their RA is ill-prepared to help them.

Perceptions of Mandatory Reporting

The reporting requirements of Title IX created by the issuing of the Dear Colleague Letter are inherently contradictory. Newins and White (2018), in their article “Title IX Sexual Violence Reporting Requirements,” argued that these requirements cause strife with feminist ideals as some scholars believe compelled disclosure increases the protection from sexual misconduct and others believe taking power away from the survivor through compelled disclosure is more harmful to their recovery. To determine the perceptions of mandatory reporting requirements by faculty and students, Newins and White (2018) conducted two surveys at an unnamed university. The first study surveyed 114 employees’ knowledge of Title IX and what it requires of them; the other surveyed 845 students’ knowledge and opinions of these requirements. Similarly to Ahrens et al.’s (2010) study, Newins and White (2018) asked the students several questions related to their personal history of sexual victimization as it has been shown that revictimization and a survivor’s experience during previous disclosures affects their likelihood to disclose again. Additionally, the students were asked about their beliefs surrounding rape myths and feminist ideology to determine their rape myth acceptance (RMA). RMA is determined by an individual’s likelihood to believe false or stereotypical rape myths. Among college students specifically, RMA can influence an individual’s likelihood of disclosure to university officials. In an article by Newins et al., (2018), “Title IX Mandated Reporting: The Views of University Employees and Students,” the researchers explained RMA further by citing some examples of common beliefs, such as the idea that

women want to be raped, men cannot control their violent sexual impulses, and that many reports of rape are false accusations by bitter women (Newins et al., 2018). Therefore, individuals with higher levels of RMA may be more likely to have negative opinions regarding mandatory reporting requirements as they may see less of a need to address non-stereotypical forms of sexual misconduct (Newins et al., 2018).

The results of Newins and White's (2018) study showed that more university employees strongly agreed with the need to report despite students' wishes when the perpetrator was allegedly a faculty member compared to a student. Additionally, 10 employees claimed they would not report and 14 said they were unsure if they would report. Faculty members also more strongly agreed that they should report against students' wishes when dealing with disclosures of rape as opposed to sexual harassment. These findings show that thoughts like this perpetuate RMA and the misconception that certain types of sexual misconduct are more serious than others.

The second study surveyed students taking the Introduction to Psychology course at the same university. The researchers used a convenience sampling strategy and collected the data via an anonymous online survey. According to Newins and White (2018), out of the 845 students who participated, 193 (22.8%) students said they would not disclose their sexual assault to a faculty member, while 312 (36.9%) answered that they were unsure. 126 (14.9%) students specifically claimed Title IX requirements made it less likely that they would report to a faculty member if they were sexually assaulted (Newins & White, 2018). Interestingly, students overall were more likely to report an incident of sexual assault that involved someone else to a faculty member than their own,

indicating the possibility of subconscious skepticism surrounding beliefs of actual reporting benefits.

In their article “Mandatory Reporting of Sexual Misconduct at College: A Critical Perspective,” Weiss and Lasky (2017) examined the unintentional consequences of compelled disclosure under Title IX, specifically three key issues: ambiguous definitions, reporting risks, and faculty’s role in disclosure. The authors related the adapting reporting requirements at institutions to what primary/secondary schools experienced in the early 1990s with anti-bullying policies. The broad definitions used in these vague policies make it difficult for officials to properly identify incidents of sexual misconduct and often conflates minor offensive issues with larger reportable incidents by grouping them under a wide net to protect the university from liability. While the purpose of mandatory reporting requirements is often lauded as beneficial to survivors who need resources and who seek justice, Weiss and Lasky (2017) argued that there is a need to distinguish between what it means to disclose to a trusted university employee compared to reporting to a legal authority. Reporting a crime to a police officer is a direct act of seeking some sort of legal action. Disclosing trauma to a confidant is usually motivated by a want to vent to someone who will listen and provide emotional support (Weiss & Lasky, 2017). Responsible Employees must break the trust they have developed with students who went to them for comfort. In doing so, they not only re-traumatize the victims, but also assume that the survivors do not know what is best for themselves and cannot be trusted to make appropriate decisions.

Weiss and Lasky (2017) discussed common criticisms of mandatory reporting that have been explored by other researchers; namely, the negative effects of over-reporting,

the resulting “anti-cooperative effect” that comes from victim skepticism, and the paternalism in taking agency away from college students. They argued the idea of mandatory reporting scares students out of talking to trusted advisors and student staff, therefore taking away what may be their only support system. Additionally, the authors discussed the creation of a coddling culture in which legal adults, who are not considered a protected class of individuals like children and the elderly, are no longer able to make their own decisions, much like Holland et al. (2018) argued in their study. By taking away the agency of college students to make their own decisions based on their wants and needs, mandatory reporting policies are re-victimizing survivors and furthering their trauma.

Mancini et al. (2016) analyzed the historic usage of mandatory reporting compared to its use in today’s collegiate context. Through the use of a convenience sampling at a large, public northeast institution, the researchers surveyed 397 undergraduate students to determine their perceptions of the new laws. They found that a majority of the students were in support of mandated reporting, with over 66% being in favor; notably, this percentage was less than that of a survey done of the general public in Virginia a year prior (92%). The results were largely positive; the students reported feeling that the laws would increase university accountability and provide better victim assistance. However, there was a significant discrepancy in that 56% reported they would feel more comfortable reporting to a faculty member, but 62% believed their peers would be less likely to report. Contradictory to what Newins and White (2018) found, this study suggests that the students who were surveyed had less confidence in the laws to support their fellow students which, therefore, may indicate their own hesitance. While both

studies revealed subconscious skepticism in the reporting process, Newins and White's (2018) students responded more positively to their likelihood of reporting Title IX incidents of others, while Mancini et al.'s (2016) students were more skeptical of the university's ability to help their peers who may disclose. Overall, these results show the presence of mistrust in the student body of each institution's capacity to provide support for student survivors of sexual misconduct. However, they also showed that the majority of respondents had positive reactions to the general premise of institutional reporting requirements (Mancini et al., 2016; Newins & White, 2018).

Much of the research done in this area is repetitive as very few scholars have looked into what compelled disclosure does to a survivor's experience in the college setting. Even less attention has been paid to the incredible role Resident Assistants play in the Title IX reporting process as Responsible Employees. However, the lack of literature available shows the inherent hypocrisy of claiming compelled disclosure policies are for the benefit of the survivor. Critics of mandatory reporting have found evidence of the re-traumatization of survivors who disclose and experience negative social reactions, fear by survivors of confiding in trusted university employees (institutional betrayal), and the re-victimization in taking away a survivor's agency to make decisions for themselves. Specifically, research shows the powerful effect the first disclosure experience has on a survivor's ability to recover from their trauma. Scholars implore universities to ensure Responsible Employees are well-equipped and properly trained to handle sexual misconduct disclosures (Letarte, 2012). Therefore, categorizing RAs as Responsible Employees is extremely dangerous as they are undergraduate students who often do not have the maturity to handle those situations effectively.

Considering most are also not given proper training due to Title IX lacking any basis for training requirements, student staff are not even provided the tools needed to succeed. Universities are doing their students a disservice by placing such great responsibility into the hands of RAs who, through no fault of their own, are not equipped to handle such momentous situations.

Chapter III

Methodology

Context of the Study

This study was designed as an explanatory, quantitative survey of residential students and Resident Assistants on Rowan University's Glassboro, New Jersey campus. Rowan University is a Carnegie-classified high research activity (R2) institution that was founded as a normal school in 1923 and has since become one of the fastest-growing public schools in the country (Fast Facts, 2021). Rowan is a primarily white institution (PWI). At the time of this study, I was a graduate student and a Resident Director for the Office of Residential Learning and University Housing. The Rowan University Institutional Review Board approved all of the study procedures.

Participants were recruited via email using residence hall listservs. I was granted access to the listservs by the institution's housing department. Two surveys were created to complete this research. The first, entitled "Resident Assistants and Title IX," aimed to determine the approximate percentage of Title IX mandatory reporting training that is retained by Rowan's RAs. Additionally, it consisted of questions that gathered RAs' opinions on both the federally mandated reporting requirements and the university's ability to handle incidents of sexual misconduct. The second survey was designed to determine Rowan's residential students' opinions/awareness of mandatory reporting requirements, as well as their likelihood to report instances of sexual misconduct due to those opinions.

Research Questions

1. Are Resident Assistants an effective resource for residents, specifically those who are survivors of sexual misconduct, while holding the title of Responsible Employee?
 - a. Is it perceived to be more beneficial to the safety and security of residents that Resident Assistants not be seen as individuals with such great authority?
2. What percentage of Title IX training is retained by Rowan's residential staff?

Population and Sampling

Resident Assistants and Title IX

At Rowan, the department that oversees the training, supervision, and accountability of Resident Assistants is the Office of Residential Learning and University Housing (RLUH). Due to lower housing capacity as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic, there were 119 RAs who worked on campus at the time of this study. All of the Resident Assistants in the department were undergraduate students between the ages of 18 and 24. RLUH had 12 student staff members that held the position of Assistant Resident Director, which is a steppingstone between a Resident Assistant and a Graduate Resident Director. However, Assistant Resident Directors received the same training as RAs and were, themselves, previously RAs as a requirement to move up to the next position. This study considered their expected knowledge-level equivalent to that of Resident Assistants. The total number of RLUH student staff members who could have participated in this study was 131.

Residents' Views of Mandatory Reporting Requirements

Rowan University has the capacity to house over 7,000 residents, but at the time of this study was at about 50% occupancy due to the COVID-19 pandemic. The age range of the respondents was unknown as any full-time students at Rowan can apply to live on-campus. However, part of the respondents' consents to take the survey included acknowledging they were at least 18 years old (see Appendix B).

Data Collection

The surveys were conducted anonymously through Qualtrics to lessen the possibility of students and staff members not responding due to fear of retaliation or unwanted reporting. No personal identifying information of the respondents was obtained during data collection. The surveys were designed to take respondents approximately 10 to 15 minutes to complete (see Appendix E). Each survey included questions related to demographics of the respondents, such as gender identity and ethnicity. The RA survey asked the staff member to identify their role in the department, first-year Resident Assistant, returner Resident Assistant, or Assistant Resident Director. The residential student survey asked respondents to identify the type of residence hall they live in (traditional or apartment complex).

Resident Assistants and Title IX

The relevant literature influencing this study's research questions mainly utilized survey data from single institutions to draw conclusions and generalizations for the United States' system of higher education (Holland & Cortina, 2017; Holland & Bedera, 2020). The most effective studies related to this topic consist of surveys conducted with

Resident Assistants on a particular campus in order to gauge their knowledge of mandatory reporting requirements and on their role in the Title IX reporting process (Holland & Cortina, 2017). Similarly, one goal of this study was to understand how much of Title IX training is retained by Rowan University's Resident Assistants. The survey style used by Holland and Cortina (2017) largely influenced the survey used for Rowan's RA staff in this study. However, this study's survey of RAs also included opinion based questions on how Rowan University's Office of Residential Learning and University Housing can improve its training effectiveness. Unlike Holland and Cortina (2017), there was not an option to choose "unsure" for any knowledge questions in the RA survey. I believed it would have provided respondents with false sense of security that choosing "unsure" would make them neither right nor wrong, which would then skew the accuracy of actual knowledge. Therefore, it is more likely that the RAs provided what they believed to be the correct answer.

The survey consisted mainly of quantitative responses, but some questions allowed space for respondents to qualify their answers. The ten knowledge-based questions were true/false. The opinion based questions were multiple choice. Some of the opinion choices were yes/no, others allowed respondents to rank their agreement with the statement provided, and a few included some predetermined responses with the option to select "other" and fill in their own opinion.

Residents' Views of Mandatory Reporting Requirements

For this study, I surveyed the residential population on Rowan University's main Glassboro, New Jersey campus. Similar to the studies conducted by Newins and White (2018) and Ahrens et al. (2010), all residential students at Rowan had the option to

complete a survey that would gauge their attitudes toward mandatory reporting policies. However, there was also a distinction in questions for respondents who identified as having, at some point, disclosed to an RA an incident of sexual misconduct compared to those who have never reported an incident of sexual misconduct to an RA. Additionally, the survey was designed to gauge residents' trust in the institution's ability to properly handle Title IX cases. The purpose of this survey was to determine if students, specifically those who are survivors of sexual misconduct, are actually benefiting from these policies and how reporting requirements affect a survivor's likelihood to report to their Resident Assistant.

The survey consisted of quantitative responses and included some questions that allowed space for respondents to qualify their answers. The part of the survey that respondents who have never disclosed an incident of sexual misconduct to an RA included questions that allowed respondents to rank their level of likelihood to report under different circumstances. It also included yes/no questions to gauge their opinions on the university's process and the mandatory reporting requirements that are in place. The part of the survey that was designed for residents who have disclosed also included questions relative to the respondent's personal experience which sometimes provided space if the respondent selected "Other" to include additional information.

Data Analysis

This study was conducted over the span of three months to allow adequate time to receive IRB approval, recruit participants, and analyze the data. One independent variable in this study, as related to either survey, are the respondents' views of mandatory reporting requirements and the perceived abilities of the institution to both handle

incidents related to Title IX as well as provide on-campus resources to support survivors. When considering the RAs, another independent variable is their knowledge of policy and the protocols in place when residents disclose to them. The dependent variable as a result of all of these factors is then the respondent's likelihood to report. Data collected from the surveys were analyzed using Qualtrics and Microsoft Excel.

Using descriptive statistics I evaluated the patterns in responses to the surveys. I was able to draw conclusions to answer the research questions. To determine whether RAs are an effective resource for residential students who are survivors of sexual misconduct, I analyzed the survey data to identify how likely residents are to report instances of sexual misconduct to their RA and then compared that data to how likely RAs are to report those disclosures through the proper reporting channels. For the purpose of this study, an effective resource was an RA who would be considered to be approachable by their residents and who would have a high level of knowledge related to mandatory reporting requirements with the competency to handle disclosure well (Ahrens et al., 2010; Letarte, 2012; Newins & White, 2018).

Additionally, I utilized the responses from residents' opinions of mandatory reporting requirements to provide further support for these findings. To determine what percentage of Title IX training is retained by the RAs, I identified the amount of correct responses to the true/false questions that RAs submitted and found the corresponding mean of the overall respondents' scores. This allowed me to draw conclusions as to the accuracy and efficacy of Title IX training for student staff members and how well it prepared them for their role as mandatory reporters.

Ethical Considerations

Before collecting any data and to ensure the protection of all respondents, IRB approval was received to conduct this study. In order to minimize potential harm for respondents who were survivors of sexual misconduct, I refrained from including questions that were invasive or personal that could have potentially triggered individuals. Additionally, the surveys included informed consent forms on the first prompt of the Qualtrics survey that respondents had to acknowledge agreement to in order to move on to the questions (see Appendix B). The consent form laid out the contents of the survey and explained the purpose of surveying opinions on mandatory reporting requirements, specifically for the residential student survey in which the questions were more personalized to their own experiences. Those who did not select the acknowledgment statement in either case were brought to the end of the survey.

Chapter IV

Findings

Profile of the Sample

Resident Assistants and Title IX

The participants of this survey consisted of undergraduate student staff members for the Office of Residential Learning and University Housing (RLUH) at Rowan University. The survey was distributed via email using the department's roster of current staff members on February 17, 2021 and was closed on March 22, 2021. The survey was distributed to 131 undergraduate student staff members and received a total of 23 responses, 22 of which were completed. This yields a response rate of 16.79% and results in a usable $n = 22$. Due to the small sample size, the data collected should be seen as a foundation for which to build upon in future research.

Out of the 22 respondents, 12 identified as female (54.54%) and 10 identified as male (45.46%). None of the respondents identified themselves as non-binary or selected the other options of "Prefer not to say" or "Other." Identifying as White were 16 respondents (72.72%), three as Black or African American (13.63%), one as Asian (4.55%), and two as other (9.09%). It should be noted that I failed to provide a text box option for the "other" selection in the ethnicity demographic question, so the two who selected "other" were not able to provide more information. "American Indian or Alaska Native" and "Native Hawaiian or Pacific Islander" were also available as options, but none of the respondents selected these choices. The participants were also required to identify the type of RLUH staff member they were (Assistant Resident Director, Returner Resident Assistant, or First-Year Resident Assistant) to help form context from the

respondents' answers. Six staff members identified themselves as a First-Year RA (meaning they are in their first year in the role), 11 identified as a Returner RA (meaning they have been in the role for longer than one academic year), and five respondents identified as an Assistant Resident Director (undergraduate staff member who was previously an RA, but is now in a supervisory role on their hall staff). Table 1 shows the complete, intersectional distribution of the respondents' demographics.

Table 1

Sample Demographics: Resident Assistants (n = 22)

Variable	f	%
First-Year RA	6	27.27
White Male	2	9.09
White Female	2	9.09
Black/African American Female	2	9.09
Returner RA	11	50
White Male	5	22.72
White Female	3	13.63
Black/African American Male	1	4.54
Asian Female	1	4.54
Other Female	1	4.54
Assistant Resident Director	5	22.72
White Male	1	4.54
White Female	3	13.63
Other Male	1	4.54

Residents' Views of Mandatory Reporting Requirements

The participants of this survey consisted of current residents on Rowan's Glassboro, NJ campus. The survey was distributed via the students' emails using

Rowan's residence hall listservs that I was given approval to use to contact residents. The survey opened on February 17, 2021 and closed on March 22, 2021. The survey was distributed to approximately 3,500 on-campus residents. Of those 3,500 residents, 231 responses were recorded, but only 204 respondents acknowledged the online consent form. However, only 157 of those respondents completed the entire survey, yielding a 4.5% response rate.

Out of the 157 respondents, 60 identified themselves as males (38.21%), 93 as females (59.23%), three as non-binary (1.91%), and one selected they would prefer not to say (0.64%). Of the 157 respondents, 123 identified as White (78.34%), 12 as Black/African American (7.6%), one as American Indian/Alaska Native (0.64%), 13 identified as Asian (8.28%), and eight selected "other" (5.1%). Three out of the eight respondents who selected "other" wrote in the provided text box that they identified as: Hispanic, Middle Eastern, or Latinx. Four of the respondents did not include anything in the text box. One of them wrote that they would prefer not to say their ethnicity. The survey did not include a "Prefer not to say" option for ethnicity in either of the surveys.

Additionally, the respondents were required to identify which type of residence hall they lived in, either a first-year/traditional hall or an apartment-style building. By splitting up the data in this way, traditional halls indicated a response from a first-year student and apartment-style buildings indicated an upperclassmen respondent. Of the 157 respondents, 58 said they lived in a first-year/traditional hall (36.9%), which includes Holly Pointe Commons and Magnolia, Evergreen, Mimosa, and Chestnut halls. The remaining 99 respondents said they lived in an apartment-style building (63.1%), which includes the Whitney Center, International House, Townhouses Complex, and Rowan

Boulevard, Edgewood Park, and Nexus apartments. Table 2 shows the complete, intersectional distribution of the of the residents' demographics.

Table 2

Sample Demographics: Residential Students (n = 157)

Variable	f	%
First-year/traditional halls	58	36.9
<i>Male</i>	23	14.65
White	18	11.46
Black/African American	1	0.64
Asian	3	1.91
Other	1	0.64
<i>Female</i>	34	21.66
White	29	18.47
Black/African American	5	3.18
<i>Non-binary</i>	1	0.64
Asian		
Apartment-style buildings	99	63.1
<i>Male</i>	37	23.57
White	31	19.75
Black/African American	2	1.27
American Indian/Alaska Native	1	0.64
Asian	3	1.91
<i>Female</i>	59	37.58
White	43	27.39
Black/African American	4	2.55
Asian	6	3.82
Other	6	3.82
<i>Non-binary</i>	2	1.27
White		
<i>Prefer not to say</i>	1	0.64
Other		

Analysis of the Data

Resident Assistants and Title IX

Overall, the RAs in this study scored higher than the RAs in the comparable study conducted by Holland & Cortina (2017). Generally, the participants of this study had positive views of mandatory reporting requirements. The questions that drew the biggest differences of opinion were the ones related to RLUH training and the institution's ability to handle Title IX incidents. These findings are consistent with my earlier assumptions.

Knowledge. The respondents were asked ten knowledge-based questions to gauge the approximate level of Title IX training retained by student staff. The questions tested RAs' knowledge of proper protocol to follow when they are handling a Title IX incident, as well as their understanding of basic Title IX information. Out of ten possible correct answers, the mean score was 8.77 ($SD = 1.38$). Nine of the 22 participants received a perfect score, seven RAs scored below the average and the lowest among them got only half of the answers correct. However, compared to Holland & Cortina's (2017) study, the RAs in this study scored much higher and showed a generally good understanding of Title IX and its reporting requirements. The average participant in their survey knew only half of the correct answers, but for this study the RA who scored that low should be considered an outlier.

The proportion of incorrect responses was fairly even between male and female RAs. The female respondents accounted for 51.85% of the incorrect responses, which is consistent with the proportion of females who responded to the survey (54.54%). Therefore, gender identity was not a contributing factor to the RA's level of training retention. However, the Asian female who scored the lowest of the respondents

accounted for over 35% of the incorrect female responses and 18.51% of the overall incorrect responses. This is in stark contrast to the 4.5% of the data population for which she is accounted. Conversely, while white RAs made up over 72% of the respondents, only 12 of the 27 (44.4%) incorrect responses were attributed to them. Of those 12 incorrect responses, ten (83.3%) were made by white, male staff members though white males only accounted for approximately 50% of the sample that identified as white. These findings suggest that white, male RAs are much less likely to handle sexual misconduct disclosures properly compared to white females. As Rowan is a primarily white institution, these findings are concerning because many of the department's student staff members identify as white males.

Black staff members ($n = 3$) made up 13.63% of respondents; two were female and one was male. Similar to the white staff members, the Black male scored lower than the Black females did proportionately. While the one Black male and two Black females both submitted three incorrect responses, the Black male accounted for less of the sample (4.54%) and, therefore, received a lower total score. The individual Black male accounted for 11.11% of the incorrect responses and the Black females in the sample accounted for 11.11% of the incorrect responses. While the data shows that gender, alone, does not affect knowledge, there seems to be a relationship between gender/ethnicity and knowledge. Table 3 shows the complete breakdown of the demographics of the RAs who submitted incorrect responses.

Table 3*Demographics: Incorrect Responses (n = 27)*

Variable	f	%
First-Year RA	7	25.93
White Male	3	11.11
White Female	1	3.7
Black/African American Female	3	11.11
Returner RA	18	66.67
White Male	7	25.93
Black/African American Male	3	11.11
Asian Female	5	18.52
Other Female	3	11.11
Assistant Resident Director	2	7.41
White Female		

The only question that received a correct response rate of 100% asked if survivors can refuse to report to the police (they can). This result is promising as it shows how the department has instilled in the RAs that survivors do have some agency in the mandatory reporting process. While RA staff are required to report, survivors are not. Other questions that received high response rates (21 correct out of 22) asked about Emergency Medical Services requirements, who in the department to call when there is an incident, and how to act when responding to a disclosure. Of the 22 responding staff, 21 (95.45%) responded correctly to each of these questions. In each question, a different RA answered the question incorrectly.

The question related to how to handle responding to disclosures asked the RAs if it is necessary to question survivors for specific details. Rowan's protocol is that the RAs are not investigators. Therefore, it is necessary to call Public Safety and/or the

professional staff member on-call immediately after the survivor discloses to allow someone with more experience to handle the rest of the situation. This result shows that most respondents knew that asking questions is invasive to the survivor, but also simply not their responsibility as a student staff member.

There was one question that overwhelmingly received the highest incorrect response rate. Eight out of 22 (36.36%) respondents did not recognize the Office of Student Equity and Compliance (OSEC) as the department that handles Title IX investigations. This result is consistent with my assumption that OSEC is not well known to the RAs as the office has not been involved with Title IX training for student staff. Additionally, it supports the notion that the appropriate people, the Title IX Coordinator and investigators, are not ensuring that the institution's mandatory reporters are properly trained and receiving the most accurate information.

After the knowledge questions, participants were asked if they felt confident in their ability to handle Title IX disclosures. Even though seven staff members scored below the average (meaning they selected two or more incorrect answers), only five staff members stated they were not confident in their abilities. The participant who scored the lowest also claimed to be confident in their ability to handle these types of incidents. This means that this RA is not aware that they have little knowledge of protocol related to Title IX and, therefore, is potentially a danger to survivors who go to them for support. Research has shown how critical the experience of disclosure is for survivors of sexual misconduct (Ahrens et al., 2010). An RA who not only is unaware of what incidents are considered to be Title IX but also who is not sure of what protocol to follow in that moment is a danger to the survivor. An improperly trained RA stands in the way of a

survivor's ability to be put in contact with resources that are in place to provide necessary support and is then lessening the likelihood the survivor will be able to properly heal from their trauma (Ahrens et al., 2010; Holland & Bedera, 2020; Letarte, 2012).

Opinions. Overall, the RAs had more positive opinions about reporting requirements and the institution's ability to handle Title IX incidents than I initially assumed. However, the only question that had an overwhelmingly positive response (86.36%) asked whether RAs agreed with mandatory reporting requirements. This result compared to the more divisive responses of the other opinion questions means RAs know reporting requirements have the intention to support survivors, but the way the institution and the department enforce them is not always successful in doing so. Nine RAs (40.91%) said that they are not confident in Rowan's ability to investigate Title IX cases. Seven RAs (31.82%) responded that they did not believe RLUH training prepared them for the responsibility of being a Responsible Employee. All respondents were then asked how Title IX training could improve. The survey included three options to choose from (continuous training, different methods of training, and better clarity of information) and the ability to select "Other" with a text box to provide their own answer. Three staff members selected "Other," all of whom were first-year RAs. In the text box, the RAs wrote "all of the above," "different methods AND better clarity," and "hit on Title VI as well because it is disregarded completely." Table 4 shows the data collected from opinion-related questions.

Table 4*RA Responses to Opinion Questions (n = 22)*

Variable	f	%
Do you agree with mandatory reporting requirements?		
Yes	19	86.36
No	3	13.64
Do you feel RLUH training prepared you for these responsibilities?		
Yes	15	68.18
No	7	31.82
What do you think could improve Title IX training?		
Continuous training throughout the year	6	27.27
Different methods of delivering training	9	40.91
Better clarity of the information	4	18.18
Other	3	13.64
Are you confident in Rowan's ability to investigate Title IX cases?		
Yes	13	59.09
No	9	40.91
Does Rowan have sufficient resources to support survivors?		
Yes	15	68.18
No	7	31.82

Disclosure Experiences. The RAs were also asked if a resident had ever disclosed a Title IX incident to them. Out of the 22 respondents, six of them said they had been disclosed to (27.27%). Those six individuals were then asked a few additional questions related to their experience. All of the staff members were white; four (66.67%) were female and two (33.33%) were male. Four of them were returner RAs, one female was a first-year RA and another female was an Assistant Resident Director. The respondents were asked if they had ever decided to not report a Title IX incident. I had assumed that some staff members would have reported that they had decided not to. However, the results showed the opposite; 100% of the staff members who were identified as having

experienced a disclosure said they have never failed to report an incident. The respondents were then asked if their feelings toward Rowan's inability or the wishes of the survivor affected their decision. In response to both questions, three of the staff members said these things had affected them. These findings are inconclusive because I did not provide space for the RAs to elaborate, so it is not clear how it affected them as the data showed none of them have ever decided not to report regardless of personal feelings.

Furthermore, half of the staff members who experienced disclosure reported they then found it difficult to continue a relationship with their resident afterwards. Notably, two of the three respondents who found continuing that relationship difficult were the two male RAs who had identified as having experienced a disclosure. As discussed earlier, the White males in this study had significantly lower knowledge of reporting requirements compared to the white females. All six of the RAs who reported experiencing a disclosure in their role were White. Considering the result that one-third of this sample were male but two-thirds of those who struggled doing their job post-disclosure were male is extremely concerning. While the data did not show a correlation between gender and knowledge, there is clearly an imbalance between the white males and white females of this sample. Therefore, there is some relation between gender/ethnicity and knowledge. Table 5 shows the data collected relative to the experiential disclosure questions.

Table 5*RA Responses to Disclosure Experience Questions (n = 6)*

Variable	f	%
Have you ever decided to not report a Title IX incident?		
Yes	0	0
No	6	100
Have your feelings towards Rowan’s abilities to deal with Title IX cases ever affected your decision to report?		
Yes	1	16.67
No	5	83.33
Have the wishes of the person who disclosed to you ever affected your decision to report?		
Yes	3	50
No	3	50
Have you found it difficult to continue your relationship with a resident after they disclosed to you?		
Yes	3	50
No	3	50

Residents’ Views of Mandatory Reporting Requirements

Overall, residents generally responded positively to questions related to mandatory reporting requirements. Respondents were asked if they believed Title IX requirements are in place to support survivors. Out of the 156 respondents, 138 residents (88.46%) who have never disclosed to an RA stated that they did believe reporting is meant to support students. However, when asked if they believed the requirements at Rowan benefit residential student survivors, 121 (77.56%) selected Yes. This 10.9% difference shows there is less trust in the university’s enforcement of the policies than there is in the existence of the policies themselves. Furthermore, only 129 (82.69%) of respondents reported that they agreed with mandatory reporting requirements. These

results suggest that there are residents who believe these policies are in place to support students, but they do not agree with the existence of the policies in the first place.

While the general consensus was positive, the question that received the most negative responses was related to Rowan’s availability of appropriate resources to support survivors. The lowest percentage of respondents selected Yes for this question, 73.08% (114 out of 156), compared to the other similar questions. This question had the highest negative response from female residents (23 out of 92) and is the only question like this to which non-binary residents responded negatively (2 out of 3). Male participants responded more negatively to one other question which was whether they believed reporting requirements benefit survivors. Specifically, 17 males (10.9%) responded negatively to the resources questions compared to 18 (11.54%) for the benefits question. Out of 122 negative responses, 60 (49.18%) of those were reported by male respondents. However, male participants account for only 38.22% of the sample. These results suggest Rowan’s male students have more negative perceptions of mandatory reporting requirements. Table 6 shows the data collected from the opinion based questions.

Table 6

Residents’ Views of Mandatory Reporting (n = 156)

Variable	f	%
Do reporting requirements support survivors?		
<i>Yes</i>	138	88.46
Male	49	31.41
Female	85	54.49
Non-binary	3	1.92

Variable	f	%
	1	0.64
<i>No</i>	18	11.54
Male	11	7.05
Female	7	4.49
Do Rowan's reporting requirements benefit survivors?		
<i>Yes</i>	121	77.56
Male	42	26.92
Female	75	48.08
Non-binary	3	1.92
Prefer not to say	1	0.64
<i>No</i>	35	22.44
Male	18	11.54
Female	17	10.9
Do you agree with reporting requirements?		
<i>Yes</i>	129	82.69
Male	46	29.49
Female	79	50.64
Non-binary	3	7.92
Prefer not to say	1	0.64
<i>No</i>	27	17.31
Male	14	8.97
Female	13	8.33
Does Rowan have appropriate resources in place to support survivors?		
<i>Yes</i>	114	73.08
Male	43	27.56
Female	69	44.23
Non-binary	1	0.64
Prefer not to say	1	0.64
<i>No</i>	42	26.92
Male	17	10.9
Female	23	14.74
Non-binary	2	1.28

Likelihood to Report. Respondents were also asked two questions related to their likelihood to report to an RA. Overall, these results were largely positive. Of the 156

respondents, 21 (13.46%) rated their likelihood to report an incident themselves as somewhat unlikely or extremely unlikely and 13 residents (8.33%) rated their likelihood to encourage someone else who was a survivor of sexual misconduct as somewhat unlikely or extremely unlikely. These results were unexpected, especially when considering many more participants responded negatively to the opinion questions. This discrepancy may be due to the neutral choice that was provided as an option since a significant amount of residents chose it. These findings are consistent with Newins and White’s (2018) study that also found students were more likely to have positive responses to other people reporting to faculty/staff as compared to their own likelihood to report. This suggests the benefits of reporting are perceived by an individual to be greater when considered objectively (no personal investment) rather than subjectively (when they are the victim). Unlike Newins and White (2018), I did not survey for rape myth acceptance and, therefore, cannot provide more context as to the sample’s biases. Table 7 shows the breakdown of residents’ likelihood to report an incident themselves compared to their likelihood to encourage another resident to report.

Table 7

Residents’ Likelihood to Report (n = 156)

Variable	Extremely Likely	Somewhat Likely	Neither Likely nor Unlikely	Somewhat Unlikely	Extremely Unlikely
How likely are you to report an instance of sexual misconduct to an RA in the future?					
Male	24	19	6	5	6
Female	38	30	14	6	4
Non-binary	1	0	2	0	0
Prefer not to say	0	1	0	0	0

Variable	Extremely Likely	Somewhat Likely	Neither Likely nor Unlikely	Somewhat Unlikely	Extremely Unlikely
How likely are you to encourage another resident who is a survivor of sexual misconduct to disclose to their RA?					
Male	27	18	9	3	3
Female	41	29	15	6	1
Non-binary	2	0	1	0	0
Prefer not to say	0	1	0	0	0

Residential student participants were asked to select what would potentially prevent them from reporting to an RA from five options: fear of reporting repercussions, lack of trust in their RA, confusion about the reporting process, other (with space to elaborate), and does not apply. The survey included an option to report that the question did not apply for those who believed they would report to an RA without hesitation. Of the respondents reporting 48 (30.8%) indicated that the question did not apply to them. That choice was the highest selected out of the five options provided. The other choices received a fairly evenly dispersed response rate, 33 (21.2%) chose fear of repercussions, 23 (14.7%) chose lack of trust, 24 (15.4%) chose confusion, and 28 (17.9%) chose other.

The last question participants were asked was to gauge their confidence in Rowan's ability to investigate Title IX incidents. The respondents were given three choices to select from: very confident, somewhat confident, or not confident at all. Out of 156 respondents, 44 (28.2%) reported they were very confident, 93 (59.6%) reported they were somewhat confident, and 19 (12.2%) reported they were not confident at all.

Sole Disclosure. Out of 157 respondents who completed the entire survey, only one identified themselves as having reported a Title IX incident to an RA. Five additional respondents had claimed they had as well, but none of them continued onto the opinions

portion of the survey so their responses have not been included in this study. This individual identified herself as a female upperclassman and selected “other” for ethnicity, but did not include additional information in the provided text box. Her experience was generally positive. She reported that her RA was helpful as they provided her with the appropriate resources. She believes mandatory reporting requirements are in place to support survivors and agrees with the need for them. Her experience with the university, however, was much more negative. She reported that a lack of trust in the university’s abilities would prevent her from reporting in the future. Additionally, she responded negatively to whether the university had appropriate resources in place to support survivors. For the last question, she reported that she is not at all confident in Rowan’s ability to investigate Title IX cases. This experiential data differs drastically from the data provided by participants who have never disclosed to an RA. Whereas 12% of the other participants reported low confidence in the university, the one participant who has experienced the situation first-hand reported largely negative experiences with the university. However, these findings are limited as the sample size is not statistically significant and only one respondent comprised this portion of the data.

Research Questions

Resident Assistants as Resources for Survivors

Out of the 28 respondents who chose “other” when asked what would prevent them from reporting to their RA, 27 provided additional reasoning in the available text box. Three respondents stated a combination of the provided choices (fear, lack of trust, and confusion) would prevent them from reporting. Much of the provided additional reasoning was similar in nature and able to be grouped together into relative categories.

For example, seven respondents claimed they would seek out the police or similar authority rather than tell an RA. Six respondents reported they likely would not report because of their lack of a relationship with their RA or they did not consider the RA as a reasonable resource for this type of situation. Three residents said they would not report because they would be embarrassed and feel ashamed to tell someone else.

Six residents had a direct issue with the requirement that RAs have to report disclosures and the uncertainty of how/if the case would be handled properly by the university or other authorities. One participant wrote, “We should be able to talk to [RAs] in confidence without making a whole big scene with the university. That's ridiculous, if I wanted the university involved I would tell them myself.” Another participant wrote that mandatory reporting requirements take “the decision out of the hands of the victim.” Someone else wrote, “Fear of undue stress on the victim with possibility of no resolution brought about by reporting.” These six participants, while only 3.85% of the total sample, directly support the initial claims that mandatory reporting requirements re-victimize survivors and damage an RA’s ability to develop trust with their residents. Outside of the 48 participants who reported that this question did not apply to them, 108 (69.23%) respondents selected at least one reason why they would not feel comfortable reporting to an RA if they were a victim of sexual misconduct. If this sample is representative of Rowan’s residential population, then over two-thirds of residents are prevented from seeking out their RA as a resource for support because they are considered mandatory reporters.

Resident Assistants' Training Retention and Knowledge

The results of the first survey show that Rowan's Resident Assistants have generally high levels of knowledge related to Title IX mandatory reporting requirements. Out of ten possible correct answers, the mean score was 8.77 ($SD = 1.38$). Nine of the 22 participants received a perfect score and only seven RAs (31.81%) scored below the average, meaning they got two or more answers wrong. Survey results showed one-third of participants stated they did not feel as though RLUH training prepared them for their role as a mandatory reporter. However, the seven lowest scorers were not the entirety of the sample that reported not feeling prepared. This means that some staff members gained knowledge from hands-on experience in the role that training did not provide for, but also that some staff members are not aware that they are not properly trained to handle Title IX incidents.

Respondents were also asked how they believed RLUH training could be improved. Six respondents (27.27%) chose continuous training, nine (40.91%) chose different methods, and four (18.18%) chose better clarity. At the time of this study, staff members had gone through about two weeks of training at the beginning of the fall semester before residents moved in and then a few days of refresher training in the winter before the spring semester began. These training days are often packed in with large amounts of information presented in a lecture-style format. The RAs are typically in these sessions back-to-back for several hours at a time. During the academic year, the department holds monthly in-services that sometimes can involve a training element. Often, these sessions have been used to discuss monthly processes or topical issues that are relevant to the student staff members. It would have been more beneficial if there was

an option for staff members to choose that the question did not apply to them to gauge the accurate number of participants who believed training needs to be improved. These results may be skewed because respondents were forced to pick one of the options.

Limitations

Sample Size

Rowan University currently houses about 3,500 residents on its Glassboro, NJ campus. All of these students received several emails to participate in this study. However, only 157 residents completed the survey and out of those only one resident identified themselves as having ever disclosed a Title IX incident to their Resident Assistant. The sample size severely hindered the statistical relevance of this study. Therefore, while each student's experience is valid and unique, it is not realistic to generalize an entire campus population based on a sample size of 4.49%. Similarly, at the time of this study, RLUH consisted of 131 student staff members. With a sample of 22 RAs (16.79%), the population cannot be reasonably generalized. Therefore, it is necessary for more research to be conducted to further provide evidence in this area.

Logistics

An unforeseen limitation to this study was the possibility that staff members would take the survey together. I witnessed multiple groups of staff members take part in the survey at the same time. This may have led the RAs to discuss the questions amongst themselves and taint the accuracy of the data. Furthermore, I did not take into account that RAs, as they are residents of their respective residence halls, are also included in the listserv emails. At least one RA took part in the residential survey as they identified

themselves as such in one of the questions. Other RAs may have made the same mistake and responded to the wrong survey.

Lack of Context

A thorough study of this topic cannot be done without using qualitative methods. Therefore, I was limited in my ability to generate contextual information from the survey data. For example, the RAs who were identified as having experienced a disclosure claimed they had never failed to report a Title IX incident, but also reported that their feelings about the university and the wishes of the survivor affected their decision to report. Without more context, it is not reasonable to conclude how and what about the experiences specifically affected the RAs.

Additionally, as Newins and White (2018) found, several participants responses seemed to be influenced by rape myth acceptance (RMA). However, I did not utilize any questions in either survey to gauge participants' levels of RMA, so it is unclear whether some data is affected by this phenomenon.

Chapter V

Summary, Discussion, Conclusion, and Recommendations

Summary of the Study

At many institutions, Resident Assistants are on the front-line of crisis response and hold great responsibility in their residence halls (Letarte, 2012). They are undergraduate students who oversee their peers and often take on the role of security, police, counselor, educator, friend, mentor, and many other roles in between (Letarte, 2012). Yet, they are consistently under-trained, unqualified, and often too immature to handle the severity of incidents they are expected to (Holland & Cortina, 2017; Letarte, 2012). The purpose of this study was to investigate the level of knowledge held by Rowan University's Resident Assistants, their views on their role as Responsible Employees, and residential students' opinions on mandatory reporting requirements as it relates to benefiting survivors of sexual misconduct.

Literature Overview

The limited availability of research on this topic is concerning as it means scholars are not paying attention to this problem. Poorly trained student-staff members put student survivors at risk of being harmed and the institution at risk for liability (Ahrens et al., 2010; Holland & Bedera, 2020; Letarte, 2012). If mandatory reporting requirements are meant to benefit survivors of sexual misconduct, then it is necessary to look at the reality of the harm they are causing and re-evaluate Title IX's implementation on college campuses. Much of the research that is available highlights the revictimization caused by compelled disclosure (Ahrens et al., 2010; Holland et al., 2018).

The disclosure experience that a survivor goes through has a large effect on their ability to heal from their trauma (Ahrens et al., 2010). As RAs are designated resources in their halls, training them on how to interact with a survivor is necessary but seldom taught effectively (Holland et al., 2018). In their study, Holland et al. (2018), categorized the four types of RA responses to disclosure: gatekeeping, controlling, minimizing, and empowering. These categories were dependent on how the RA tended to react to the disclosure and to whom they gave the power (themselves or the survivor). The importance of this interaction is proven to be detrimental to a survivor's health and still RA training barely scratches the surface of the seriousness of handling Title IX incidents (Holland & Cortina, 2017; Letarte, 2012).

Furthermore, research shows that faculty/staff and students on college campuses associate negatively with mandatory reporting requirements (Newins et al., 2018; Newins & White, 2018; Weiss & Lasky, 2017). While respondents often report positive views of the need for the existence of reporting requirements, many take issue with their institution's implementation of them and often report a hesitance in their likelihood to seek support from Responsible Employees, who are considered mandatory reporters under Title IX (Newins and White, 2018). Much of the research conducted to gauge students' perspectives of mandatory reporting does not take into account the difference in relevance between students who have gone through the reporting process at their institutions and those who have not. The perceived likelihood of what a person may do if they are victimized cannot be compared equally to an actual experience.

Other critics of mandatory reporting call into question the paternalistic audacity of taking away the agency of a trauma victim. The reality is that college students are, in

most cases, legal adults who do not qualify as a protected class like the elderly or minors (Holland et al., 2018; Weiss & Lasky, 2017). Survivors who seek out university employees, like professors or RAs, are consciously choosing not to report to the police at that moment. Weiss and Lasky (2017) argued that college students have the right to seek support at their institutions that does not require further authorities to become involved against their will. There is a difference between wanting to vent to someone they trust and wanting to take legal action (Weiss & Lasky, 2017). Compelled disclosure revictimizes survivors of sexual misconduct in the name of protecting them (Holland et al., 2018).

Discussion of the Findings

Overall, many of the assumptions I made were not supported by the survey results. The data showed much more positive views of mandatory reporting requirements by both residents and RAs than was anticipated. I also expected more residents to have identified as utilizing their RA as a resource for sexual misconduct incidents. However, the results did show that student staff members did not feel prepared for the responsibilities of being a mandatory reporter after completing RLUH training. Additionally, as Holland and Cortina (2017) found, the participants in this study reported their views of the university's ability to handle Title IX cases and the wishes of the survivor affected their likelihood to report. Due to the small sample size of respondents compared to the overall population, the results may not be representative of the whole.

Research Question 1

Are Resident Assistants an effective resource for residents, specifically those who are survivors of sexual misconduct, while holding the title of Responsible Employee?

Specifically, is it perceived to be more beneficial to the safety and security of residents that Resident Assistants not be seen as individuals with such great authority?

The findings of the residential student survey showed how unlikely respondents were to consider their RA to be an effective resource for Title IX incidents. Some respondents did not believe their RA was an appropriate resource and that they would much rather go to the police. Some said their relationship with their RA was not strong so they would not feel comfortable disclosing to them. Others cited a direct issue with the fact that RAs are mandatory reporters and would have to report the incident even if the respondent did not want them to. These results show that, for various reasons, it is not beneficial for RAs to be considered mandatory reporters. It hinders residents' abilities to trust their RAs if they are worried that something they say in confidence will trigger a need to report them. RAs who are unable to build trust and community with their residents are then security officers whose sole responsibility is to police their halls. Survivors who do not have other support systems on campus are then missing out on necessary resources their RAs can provide them.

However, these responses were from residents who had never disclosed an incident of sexual misconduct to their RA, and they are inconsistent with the results from the one respondent who identified as having done so. The respondent reported that their RA was helpful as they provided the resident with appropriate resources. The resident's issue was with the university's handling of the incident, not the RA. As this participant was the only part of the sample who was able to provide views on first-hand experience, it is not possible to draw statistically relevant conclusions on RAs' abilities to handle Title IX incidents. Yet, if RAs are generally not perceived by residents to be a reliable

resource for survivors of sexual misconduct then it is unlikely those students will seek them out for support should they need to. Categorizing RAs as mandatory reporters is then more likely to prevent residents who are weary of being reported against their will from developing relationships with student staff members.

Research Question 2

What percentage of Title IX training is retained by Rowan's residential staff?

As a researcher, I sought to discover how well Resident Assistants at Rowan University understood Title IX policies and protocols based upon the information provided to them during RA training. The RA survey data showed that student staff members' levels of knowledge of mandatory reporting requirements were higher than was anticipated. Compared to Holland and Cortina's (2017) study, the participants of this study had a much stronger understanding of Title IX background and different protocols associated with disclosure. Out of ten possible correct answers, the mean score among the 22 participants was 8.77 ($SD = 1.38$). However, several of the respondents stated that they did not feel RA training prepared them for their role as mandatory reporters. There is a disconnect between what RLUH is providing RAs during training and what they need to be successful as mandatory reporters. This means that student staff are learning the procedures through hands-on experience, likely through trial and error when they respond to these incidents and find out later when they did something wrong.

Conclusion

Categorizing Resident Assistants as mandatory reporters is damaging to the relationships they are meant to build with their residents on campus, especially when RAs are not properly and continuously trained on the intricacies of Title IX. The effects on a

survivor of sexual misconduct's ability to heal from their trauma is too reliant upon their disclosure experience to be put in the hands of under-trained and ill-prepared undergraduate students (Ahrens et al., 2010; Letarte, 2012). This study aimed to shed light on an extremely important issue that impacts residential students, Resident Assistants, and survivors of sexual misconduct, but has had little research conducted to determine how to better support these individuals. Through surveying residents and RAs at Rowan University, I found that respondents generally agreed with the need for reporting requirements, but did not necessarily agree with the institution's implementation of these policies.

It is necessary for higher education professionals to re-evaluate what it currently means to be a Resident Assistant and how unrealistic it is to place so much responsibility into the hands of undergraduate students without giving them the means to be successful in their role. Institutional administrators owe their student staff more than that, but they also owe their residential students more than inexperienced peers at the front-line of crisis incidents. While RAs at Rowan had a much higher knowledge of Title IX mandatory reporting requirements than was anticipated, they also reported feeling unprepared to be successful in their role after going through RA training. Similarly, resident participants agreed with the need for reporting requirements to benefit survivors, but reported a lack of trust in the university's ability to handle sexual misconduct incidents. There is clearly a disconnect between what administrators believe their students and student staff are experiencing and the reality of what is going on in the residence halls. The results of this study provide evidence of the need for further research and consideration of this issue.

Recommendations for Practice

The following recommendations are based on the findings of this study and relevant literature the Resident Assistant role as it relates to mandatory reporting requirements.

Resident Assistant Training

1. The Office of Residential Learning and University Housing (RLUH) should utilize continuous training throughout the year to ensure RAs are consistently challenged to recall the procedures that are required when they experience sexual misconduct disclosures. Each residence hall staff could dedicate time during their weekly staff meetings to go over relevant and up-to-date information on Title IX. At least one monthly in-service training each semester should focus on discussing issues RAs are experiencing related to providing support to survivors of sexual misconduct. Specifically, there should be an open space to talk about how to continue developing relationships with residents who the RA may have reported against their will due to their requirements as mandatory reporters.
2. The current state of RA training at many institutions is not effective as it is typically packed into two weeks prior to the beginning of the semester and delivered in a lecture-style format (Letarte, 2012). This study shows that many staff members learn more from hands-on experience than from formal presentations. Therefore, it is necessary to incorporate more opportunities for staff to practice how to respond to survivors who are in crisis and in need of support. Training should consistently include mock scenarios of these situations so staff members are not waiting to get that hands-on experience until they are in a real

crisis. In my experience, some institutions, including Rowan, have implemented this type of training as a special day dedicated to practicing all of the different situations RAs may encounter. However, it needs to be more often and more consistent. One day of the year to practice these scenarios is not enough.

3. As Title IX is mandated by the government, there needs to be a basis for Responsible Employee training so what staff are trained on is more consistent across the country. Specifically, each federally funded institution is responsible for deciding how it implements Title IX so what it means to be a mandatory reporter is not clear. At Rowan, RLUH works with the Office of Student Equity and Compliance (OSEC) to create Title IX training for RAs. However, as this study has shown, RAs were not clear on what office is responsible for managing Title IX incidents. This means the relationship between the two departments is not strong enough and they are not working together to ensure student staff are being trained on the most accurate information. In the future, OSEC should be more involved in Title IX training for the RAs so they get the information directly from the office that is responsible for its compliance.

Alternatives to the Role

1. As discussed earlier, RAs are also considered Campus Security Authorities (CSAs) under the Clery Act. The Clery Act reporting process is different as CSAs are required to report incidents they come across in their role, but do not have to provide identifying information or specific details (Letarte, 2012). Responsible Employees under Title IX are required to provide specific, identifying information that they come across in any capacity on campus, not only when they

are acting in their role as an RA. A blend of CSA and Responsible Employee requirements may make residents feel more comfortable going to their RA as a resource if they know only minimal information will be reported or that the RA does not have to call the police. There could be a condition that the RA only has to report specific information if the survivor was in need of medical assistance or immediate danger from the perpetrator. As shown in the survey data, there was generally a positive view of the need for mandatory reporting, but the implementation of those requirements needs to be re-evaluated.

2. At Rowan University, graduate students directly supervise Resident Assistants, enforce institutional policies, and provide administrative support to RLUH. This type of position is common at many universities nationwide. It could be beneficial to residents and RAs if graduate students took on the role of sole policy enforcer, conducting nightly building walks, serving on the building duty rotation, etc. This would allow for RAs to focus on community building and developing relationships with their residents, rather than failing to balance policy enforcement/mandatory reporting requirements with being a support system for residents. This could be combined with the idea of RAs solely being Campus Security Authorities, that way if they come across an incident they are still required to report it but the reporting looks different. This allows the graduate students, likely more mature individuals with more experience and training, to be on the front-line of where crises happen and the RAs to provide a fun and safe community for their residents.

Recommendations for Future Research

The following recommendations for future research are based upon the lack of available research on the topic of this study and the findings.

1. This study would have benefited more from a mixed-methods approach. Future researchers should conduct surveys to gauge general trends on campus and then use purposeful sampling to interview respondents. Specifically, respondents who seemed to have differing opinions than the consensus and those who have disclosed to their RA previously. Including qualitative data would provide for a richer understanding of how residents view mandatory reporting requirements.
2. A study that compares multiple institutions would be able to draw deeper conclusions as to whether RAs as Responsible Employees benefit residential students who are survivors of sexual misconduct. It would be interesting to see how private institutions follow Title IX regulations compared to public institutions in their reporting structure.
3. Researchers should also consider the evolution of Title IX stemming from inequality in sports and the effect the Clery Act had on institutional liability to report crime on campus, specifically as it relates to sexual misconduct and compelled disclosure. College students, generally, are adults who do not fall under a protected class of citizens. The paternalism of forced reporting and how that intersects with the current implementation of the Clery Act and Title IX may provide more context as to how to protect students without revictimizing them.

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Appendix A Institutional Review Board Approval

Date: 4-8-2021

IRB #: PRO-2020-207
Title: Resident Assistants and Title IX: The Hypocrisy of Compelled Disclosure
Creation Date: 12-2-2020
End Date: 2-2-2022
Status: **Approved**
Principal Investigator: Raquel Wright-Mair
Review Board: Glassboro/CMSRU
Sponsor:

Study History

Submission Type	Initial	Review Type	Expedited	Decision	Approved
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Key Study Contacts

Member	Raquel Wright-Mair	Role	Principal Investigator	Contact	wrightmair@rowan.edu
Member	Samantha Contrini	Role	Primary Contact	Contact	contri25@rowan.edu

Appendix B

Alternate Consent Forms

ONLINE SURVEY (ALTERNATE CONSENT)

You are invited to participate in this online research survey entitled “Resident Assistants and Title IX.” You are included in this survey because you are currently a Resident Assistant or Assistant Resident Director on Rowan University’s campus. The number of subjects to be enrolled in the study will be approximately 100.

The survey may take approximately 20 minutes to complete. Your participation is voluntary. If you do not wish to participate in this survey, do not respond to this online survey. Completing this survey indicates that you are voluntarily giving consent to participate in the survey.

The purpose of this research study is to determine the effectiveness of RA training related to Title IX mandatory reporting requirements and gauge the level of knowledge in available resources for sexual misconduct survivors that RAs possess. Additionally, we aim to provide insight into the effects these requirements have on RAs’ abilities to effectively develop communities on campus.

There are no risks or discomforts associated with this survey. There may be no direct benefit to you, however, you may help us further understand the gap between what federally-funded universities expect of their RAs and where training on Title IX reporting requirements lacks in preparing you to do your job. Furthermore, this survey may shed light on how RAs feel about reporting requirements and whether or not it affects their ability to properly report and refer.

Your response will be kept confidential. We will not be collecting any personal data from you. Any part of the research that is published as part of this study will not include your individual information. If you have any questions about the survey, you can contact Dr. Raquel Wright-Mair or Samantha Contrini at the information provided below, but you do not have to give your personal identification.

Dr. Raquel Wright-Mair, wrightmair@rowan.edu
Samantha Contrini, contri25@rowan.edu

Disclaimer

Please be advised that this research study is focused on certain topics, such as sexual or gender-based bullying, discrimination, harassment, and/or violence. This disclaimer is to inform you that an exception to mandatory Title IX reporting applies, with respect to these topics, when disclosures are made in the context of human subjects research that is under the oversight of the Rowan University Institutional Review Board (IRB). Except in rare circumstances, researchers will not share information with Rowan University’s Title IX Coordinator that may be disclosed in the course of this study

relating to sexual or gender-based bullying, discrimination, harassment, and/or violence (which may normally be required to report to the Title IX Coordinator). Accordingly, any such disclosures made by research participants during any interviews, surveys, focus groups, or other participation in the study, will not trigger a report to the Title IX Coordinator for purposes of informing the participant about available resources and assessing whether a Title IX investigation is warranted.

Notwithstanding, the identity of Rowan University's Title IX Coordinator, and website for the list of additional resources, is as follows:

TITLE IX COORDINATOR

Monise Princilus, Ed.S.
Associate Vice President and
Title IX Coordinator
Division of Diversity, Equity
and Inclusion
Office of Student Equity &
Compliance
Savitz Hall, Suite 203
princilus@rowan.edu / 856-
256-5440

RESOURCES WEBSITE

<https://sites.rowan.edu/diversity-equity-inclusion/departments/osec/titleix/ix-resources/index.html>

If you have any questions about your rights as a research subject, please contact the Office of Research Compliance at (856) 256-4078– Glassboro/CMSRU.

This study has been approved by the Rowan IRB, Pro 2020-207.

Please complete the checkboxes below.

To participate in this survey, you must be 18 years or older and a current Resident Assistant or Assistant Resident Director for RLUH.

Completing this survey indicates that you are voluntarily giving consent to participate in the survey

ONLINE SURVEY (ALTERNATE CONSENT)

You are invited to participate in this online research survey entitled “Residential Students and Title IX.” You are included in this survey because you are currently an on-campus resident of Rowan University. The number of subjects to be enrolled in the study will be approximately 3,000.

The survey may take approximately 10 minutes to complete. Your participation is voluntary. If you do not wish to participate in this survey, do not respond to this online survey. Completing this survey indicates that you are voluntarily giving consent to participate in the survey.

The purpose of this research study is to understand residents’ opinions on mandatory reporting requirements and whether these requirements affect their likelihood to report instances of sexual misconduct. Additionally, the researchers seek to find out the experiences residential students who have experienced sexual misconduct have had when disclosing these incidents to their RA.

There are no risks or discomforts associated with this survey. There may be no direct benefit to you, however, by participating in this study, you may help us further provide insight into the needs of residential students and the level of trust in reporting processes in place due to mandatory reporting requirements. Furthermore, this survey may shed light on how residential students feel about reporting requirements and whether or not regulations in place are actually helping our students in need.

Your response will be kept confidential. We will not be collecting any personal data from you. Any part of the research that is published as part of this study will not include your individual information. If you have any questions about the survey, you can contact Dr. Raquel Wright-Mair or Samantha Contrini at the address provided below, but you do not have to give your personal identification.

Dr. Raquel Wright-Mair, wrightmair@rowan.edu
Samantha Contrini, contri25@rowan.edu

Disclaimer

Please be advised that this research study is focused on certain topics, such as sexual or gender-based bullying, discrimination, harassment, and/or violence. This disclaimer is to inform you that an exception to mandatory Title IX reporting applies, with respect to these topics, when disclosures are made in the context of human subjects research that is under the oversight of the Rowan University Institutional Review Board (IRB). Except in rare circumstances, researchers will not share information with Rowan University’s Title IX Coordinator that may be disclosed in the course of this study relating to sexual or gender-based bullying, discrimination, harassment, and/or violence (which may normally be required to report to the Title IX Coordinator). Accordingly, any such disclosures made by research participants during any interviews, surveys, focus groups, or other participation in the study, will not trigger a report to the Title IX

Coordinator for purposes of informing the participant about available resources and assessing whether a Title IX investigation is warranted. Notwithstanding, the identity of Rowan University's Title IX Coordinator, and website for the list of additional resources, is as follows:

TITLE IX COORDINATOR

Monise Princilus, Ed.S.
Associate Vice President and
Title IX Coordinator
Division of Diversity, Equity
and Inclusion
Office of Student Equity &
Compliance
Savitz Hall, Suite 203
princilus@rowan.edu / 856-
256-5440

RESOURCES WEBSITE

<https://sites.rowan.edu/diversity-equity-inclusion/departments/osec/titleix/ix-resources/index.html>

If you have any questions about your rights as a research subject, please contact the Office of Research Compliance at (856) 256-4078– Glassboro/CMSRU.

This study has been approved by the Rowan IRB, Pro 2020-207.

Appendix C

Recruitment Emails

Resident Assistants and Title IX

Volunteers are needed for a research study that will survey the level of knowledge Rowan University's Resident Assistants and Assistant Resident Directors have on Title IX reporting requirements, as well as their opinions on mandatory reporting.

Are you 18 years or older?

Are you currently a Resident Assistant (RA) or Assistant Resident Director (ARD) for Rowan University?

The purpose of this study is to determine the effectiveness of RA training related to Title IX mandatory reporting requirements and gauge the level of knowledge in available resources for sexual misconduct survivors that RAs possess. Additionally, we aim to provide insight into the effects these requirements have on RAs' abilities to effectively develop communities on campus.

This study will take approximately 20 minutes to complete and will involve knowledge- and experience-based questions.

This study will take place at Rowan University via an online Qualtrics survey.

Please direct any questions you may have to:

- Dr. Raquel Wright-Mair, wrightmair@rowan.edu
- Samantha Contrini, contri25@rowan.edu

This study has been approved by Rowan University's IRB (Study # Pro 2020-207).

Resident Assistants and Title IX

Be part of an important study that will assess the level of trust Rowan's on-campus residents have in Resident Assistants and other Responsible Employees, classified under the Title IX of the Education Amendments Act of 1972. This study is 100% voluntary and will require participants to fill out a Qualtrics survey.

Are you 18 years or older?

Are you currently a Rowan student?

Do you currently live on campus?

Have you ever disclosed an incident of sexual misconduct (involving you or someone else) to a Resident Assistant (RA)?

Have you decided not to report something to your RA out of fear of repercussions?

We aim to discover how mandatory reporting policies on campus affect an RA's ability to develop trusting relationships with their residents and, therefore, build community in their halls. This study will also provide insight into the potential effects of mandatory reporting requirements on sexual violence survivors' ability to seek support on campus.

This study will take roughly 15 minutes to complete and is made up of opinion- and experience-based questions.

The study will be conducted at Rowan University via an online Qualtrics survey.

Please direct any questions you may have to:

- Dr. Raquel Wright-Mair, wrightmair@rowan.edu
- Samantha Contrini, contri25@rowan.edu

This study has been approved by Rowan University's IRB (Study # Pro 2020-207)

Appendix D

Survey 1 Questions

Demographics:

1. What is your gender identity? a) Male b) Female c) Non-binary d) Prefer not to say e) Other
2. What is your ethnicity? a) White b) Black or African American c) American Indian or Alaska Native d) Asian e) Native Hawaiian or Pacific Islander f) Other
3. Please select which title most accurately applies to you. a) First-year Resident Assistant b) Returner Resident Assistant c) Assistant Resident Director

Knowledge Questions:

1. Survivors of sexual misconduct can refuse to report to the police.
 - True
 - False
2. Stalking is considered sexual misconduct under Title IX.
 - True
 - False
3. Under Title IX, there are some incidents of sexual misconduct that are more important to report than others.
 - True
 - False
4. Rowan University's Office of Student Equity and Compliance (OSEC) is the department responsible for investigating reports of Title IX incidents.
 - True

- False
- 5. The "Grad on Call (GOC)" must be informed when a Title IX incident is reported to you.
 - True
 - False
- 6. Violence between roommates is considered domestic violence under Title IX.
 - True
 - False
- 7. As an RLUH staff member, you are considered a "confidential" resource.
 - True
 - False
- 8. If a survivor of sexual misconduct is in need of immediate medical attention, you must call for Emergency Medical Services (EMS).
 - True
 - False
- 9. The "On Call Coordinator (OCC)" must be informed when a Title IX incident is reported to you.
 - True
 - False
- 10. When a survivor of sexual misconduct discloses their experience to you, it is necessary to question them for details related to the incident.
 - True
 - False

11. Do you feel confident in your knowledge of how to properly handle Title IX disclosures?

- Yes
- No

Opinion/Experience

1. What residential population does your community serve? a) First-year students b) Upperclassmen c) Both
2. Do you agree with the mandatory reporting requirements you have to abide by as a “Responsible Employee” under Title IX? a) Yes b) No
3. Do you feel as though RLUH training prepared you for the responsibilities of a mandatory reporter? a) Yes b) No
4. What do you think could improve the Title IX training given to RLUH undergraduate staff? a) Continuous training throughout the year b) Different methods of delivering the training c) Better clarity of information d) Other
5. Are you confident in Rowan’s ability to investigate Title IX cases? a) Yes b) No
6. Do you believe Rowan has sufficient resources in place to support survivors of sexual misconduct? a) Yes b) No
7. Has a resident ever disclosed a Title IX incident to you? a) Yes b) No

If yes:

1. Have you ever decided to not report a Title IX incident? a) Yes b) No
2. Have your feelings towards Rowan’s abilities in dealing with Title IX cases ever affected your decision to report? a) Yes b) No

3. Have the wishes of the person who disclosed to you ever affected your decision to report? a) Yes b) No
4. Have you found it difficult to continue your relationship with a resident after they disclosed to you? a) Yes b) No

Appendix E

Survey 2 Questions

Demographics:

1. What is your gender identify? a) Male b) Female c) Non-binary d) Prefer not to say e) Other
2. What is your ethnicity? a) White b) Black or African American c) American Indian or Alaska Native d) Asian e) Native Hawaiian or Pacific Islander f) Other
3. What type of residence hall do you live in? a) First-year/traditional hall (Magnolia, Evergreen, Chestnut, Holly Pointe, Mimosa) b) Apartment-style building (Edgewood Park, Townhouses, Rowan Boulevard, Nexus, Whitney, International House)
4. Prior to taking this survey, were you aware that Resident Assistant are required to report disclosures related to Title IX violations (sexual assault, stalking, sexual harassment, dating violence, etc.) to the university? a) Yes b) No
5. Have you ever disclosed an incident of sexual misconduct to a Resident Assistant? a) Yes b) No

If yes (disclosed):

1. When you disclosed to the RA, was that experience helpful for you? a) Yes b) No c) Other
2. If you responded “yes,” what was most helpful about the experience? a) I felt supported b) My RA connected me with resources I needed c) Other d) Does not apply

3. If you responded “no,” what was least helpful about the experience? a) I didn’t feel supported b) I didn’t want them to report it c) My RA didn’t connect me to resources I needed d) Other e) Does not apply
4. Did your experience affect your relationship with the RA? a) Yes, in a positive way b) Yes, in a negative way c) No
5. After your past experience, how likely are you to report Title IX related incidents to an RA again in the future? a) Extremely likely b) Somewhat likely c) Neither likely nor unlikely d) Somewhat unlikely e) Extremely unlikely
6. In the future, what may prevent you from reporting Title IX violations to an RA? a) Fear of reporting repercussions b) Lack of trust in my RA c) Lack of trust in the university d) Other e) Does not apply
7. Do you believe mandatory reporting requirements at Rowan benefit residential student survivors of sexual misconduct? a) Yes b) No
8. How likely are you to encourage another resident who is a survivor of sexual misconduct to disclose to their RA? a) Extremely likely b) Somewhat likely c) Neither likely nor unlikely d) Somewhat unlikely e) Extremely unlikely
9. Do you agree with Title IX mandated reporting requirements? a) Yes b) No
10. Do you believe Title IX mandated reporting requirements are in place to support survivors of sexual misconduct? a) Yes b) No
11. Do you believe the university has appropriate resources in place to support survivors of sexual misconduct? a) Yes b) No

12. How confident are you in Rowan University's ability to investigate reports of Title IX incidents? a) Very confident b) Somewhat confident c) Not confident at all

If no (never disclosed):

1. With your knowledge of RA reporting requirements, how likely are you to report an instance of sexual misconduct to an RA in the future? a) Extremely likely b) Somewhat likely c) Neither likely nor unlikely d) Somewhat unlikely e) Extremely unlikely
2. What would potentially prevent you from reporting Title IX violations to an RA? a) Fear of reporting repercussions b) Lack of trust in my RA c) Lack of trust in the university d) Other e) Does not apply
3. Do you believe mandatory reporting requirements at Rowan benefit residential student survivors of sexual misconduct? a) Yes b) No
4. How likely are you to encourage another resident who is a survivor of sexual misconduct to disclose to their RA? a) Extremely likely b) Somewhat likely c) Neither likely nor unlikely d) Somewhat unlikely e) Extremely unlikely
5. Do you agree with Title IX mandated reporting requirements? a) Yes b) No
6. Do you believe Title IX mandated reporting requirements are in place to support survivors of sexual misconduct? a) Yes b) No
7. Do you believe the university has appropriate resources in place to support survivors of sexual misconduct? a) Yes b) No

8. How confident are you in Rowan University's ability to investigate reports of Title IX incidents? a) Very confident b) Somewhat confident c) Not confident at all