

UNIVERSITY OF ILLINOIS URBANA-CHAMPAIGN SENATE
PRE-FILED RESOLUTION
(Final; Action)

RS.20.02 Resolution on Sexual Harassment Reporting

WHEREAS, recent media reports have identified eight members of the faculty and staff on the Urbana-Champaign campus who have been identified as being subject to sexual harassment or assault complaints in recent years not including those who have been accused but the allegations have not been disclosed;

WHEREAS, the Report from the Committee on Faculty Sexual Misconduct stated that only 3.4% of victims of faculty sexual misconduct come forward, in part, out of fears of retaliation;

WHEREAS, NPR Illinois, currently part of the University of Illinois at Springfield, is a journalistic enterprise that has done recent work in bringing many of these sexual harassment and assault cases to light;

WHEREAS, the University of Illinois responded to NPR Illinois reporting by instructing all journalists they were mandatory reporters under current system-wide policies, who had to disclose all conversations with victims to University authorities, thus leading to a formal report of sexual misconduct;

WHEREAS, the federal law known as "Title IX" provides discretion to the University on who is and who is not a "mandatory reporter" (termed "responsible employee" in the law) and the guidelines have recently been relaxed as to mandatory reporter requirements;

WHEREAS, by designating reporters associated with the University as "mandatory reporters" has had, if not by intent than by effect, a "chilling effect" on victims and yet another incentive to not only not report, but not to publicly disclose their experiences;

THEREFORE, be it resolved, that the Senate, in the interest of faculty sexual harassment and assault survivors, formally requests the Chancellor of the Urbana-Champaign and the President of the University of Illinois System to:

1. Explore changing to definition of "mandatory reporter" under internal system-wide policies to explicitly exclude all journalists associated with the University or any of its campuses if the journalists are receiving otherwise reportable information for news purposes and/or on condition of anonymity for a possible publication;

2. Consider requiring journalists to protect the safety and well-being of victims of sexual misconduct in these circumstances, without forcing them to make a formal report, by requiring only a reference to a confidential advisor, who can help with supportive measures and any decision to file a formal report; and
3. Establish a committee at the campus and system levels to review the mandatory reporter policy in a victim-centric way to both protect the rights of victims to be heard and to tell their stories as they see fit, and to inform the Senate of any changes in policy.

Submitted by Student Senator
John Bambenek