



REED COLLEGE

May 20, 2014

OFFICE OF
THE PRESIDENT

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Dear Members of the Alumni Sexual Assault Task Force,

Thank you for your letter. Sexual assault is one of the most serious problems on college and university campuses across the country. These cases are tragic and heartbreaking and I am deeply committed to doing everything I can to ensure that survivors are treated with respect and compassion. I actively welcome your participation in our efforts to provide the Reed community with a safe and supportive campus environment.

I hope you will agree that the issue of sexual assault is sufficiently grave and complex to warrant a discussion, and I invite you to join key members of my staff and me to determine the best ways to work together. In the meantime, I will briefly address the issues you raise.

First, in response to your assertion that students involved in alcohol-related cases are disciplined in a more aggressive manner than those who are found guilty of sexual assault at Reed, I must say that this is simply not true. Each disciplinary case, whether it pertains to alcohol and other drugs, sexual assault, or any other serious student-conduct issue, carries its own set of unique circumstances, and the disciplinary sanctions that result are commensurate with the violations in question. Sexual assault represents a far more serious offense than does minor in possession, and the associated sanctions are of course more severe.

Many who have signed the letter have been away from Reed for a while, so I thought I would outline some significant changes the college has made over the past few years. We have created the position of assistant dean of sexual assault prevention & response; we have specially trained a group of faculty, staff, and students who serve on the Sexual Misconduct Board; we have substantially updated our sexual assault and harassment policy; we have increased education and prevention efforts; and we have an incredibly well-trained and dedicated group of peer advocates.

Reed staff members are working with the Oregon governor's task force, state and local law enforcement, and leading experts in the field to ensure that Reed's education, prevention, response and enforcement are aligned with best practices. Members of our staff have begun to attract the interest of counterparts at other institutions seeking to emulate some of our most promising prevention and response practices.

In your letter, you call for "openness, honesty and consistency surrounding exclusion and penalty policy." I see this as a combination of two related requests: First, you ask for a pledge from me that either I, or a designee with ample training in and sensitivity to the issue of sexual assault, will respond in a timely manner to requests made by survivors. Second, you seek a clarification of policies and procedures related to exclusions and other penalties.

To address your first request, I agree that it is vitally important that any student who expresses a serious concern to the college receives a timely response. We will work hard to make sure that happens.

To address your second question, there are two primary processes by which the college determines whether students should be excluded from campus. The first process constitutes an action on the part of the dean of students or the president, in accordance with the Judicial Board Code, Section 3B:

"The Dean of Student Services, or in case of his or her absence, the President of the College may, in case of emergency, take immediate action against a student for an alleged violation as specified in paragraph A, but must forward a complaint to the Judicial Board or the Sexual Misconduct Board within six working days, counting only days while the college is in session, or be required to withdraw such action. In such cases, the action of the Dean or President shall remain in force until the conclusion of the judicial process."

The determination to exclude is based on a case-by-case assessment of risk to the campus community. This determination derives from careful evaluation of all the available evidence, including but not limited to a threat assessment conducted by trained professionals in community safety.

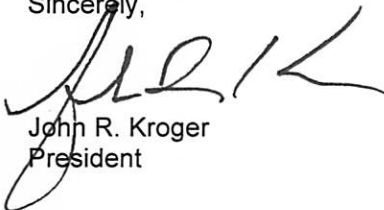
The other mechanism by which a student may be excluded from campus is the established honor process (the Sexual Misconduct Board, Judicial Board, or Alcohol and Other Drug Review Panel, SMB, JBd and AODRP, respectively). These bodies conduct a thorough fact-finding process, and recommend sanctions, per the relevant codes, available on Reed's website: www.reed.edu/honor_principle/j_board/hearing_boards.html#SMB.

The SMB, JBd or AODRP then sends its recommendations to me or to my designee, who in turn evaluates the recommendations and makes a decision. In each case, the student has the right to appeal. Because each case truly is unique, there is no policy, per se, that predetermines the nature or severity of sanctions. Of course, the more egregious violations result in more intensive sanctions. The balance of educational, therapeutic, restorative and punitive sanctions remains an inherently complex consideration. I agree, of course, that the harm caused by sexual assault is often extreme and enduring. It is incumbent upon me to respond appropriately to the behavior that causes such harm, and to mitigate the risk that such harm should reoccur.

I am familiar with the data you cite from Lisak and others, which I find very compelling. That said, due to the wide range of misconduct under the purview of the SMB, I am convinced that expulsion is not always the most appropriate sanction in every case. Instead, each decision is the result of careful consideration of relevant facts, and sanctions are highly intentional in terms of balancing educational, rehabilitative, restorative, and punitive functions.

I understand that these preliminary responses are just the beginning of what I hope will be a productive conversation, the aim of which is to continually improve Reed's prevention of and response to sexual assault. To that end, I invite you to campus to meet with me and key members of my staff to discuss this very important issue.

Sincerely,



John R. Kroger
President