

2025 Public Description of Work for Action Collaborative on Preventing Sexual Harassment in Higher Education

University of Tennessee, Knoxville

Vols Walk for Sexual Assault Awareness Month

Relevant Rubric Area(s): Prevention, Response, Remediation

1. Prevention: Identifying and Reinforcing Community Values
2. Response: Improved Communication and Increased Transparency
3. Remediation: Other efforts to remediate the harm of sexual harassment and/or support those that experience sexual harassment

Description of Work

Purpose and Goals

Annually in April, the University of Tennessee, Knoxville, observes Sexual Assault Awareness Month (SAAM) through a series of prevention- and education-focused initiatives. The signature event of the month is the annual Vols Walk for SAAM. This campus-wide event brings together students, faculty, staff, and the greater Knoxville community. It is a demonstration of our commitment to raising awareness, supporting survivors, ending sexual violence, cultivating a culture of consent, and promoting the university's ongoing work to foster a safe and respectful learning environment.

As in years past, the 3rd annual Vols Walk for SAAM allows for the creation of a highly visible and accessible entry point for engagement, particularly for students and employees who may not otherwise interact with sexual assault prevention programming. The event begins with the Chancellor and Title IX Coordinator welcoming attendees and briefly sharing the importance of sexual assault prevention work on a college campus and creating an engaged and informed community. In 2025, the Student Government President also spoke before the walk began and led the walk alongside the Chancellor, other student leaders, and participants. The walk ended with participants being invited to engage in educational activities from over twenty-five campus and community organizations. Lunch was provided for all attendees along with a Vols Walk for SAAM t-shirt and tote bag.

This event invites the campus community to participate in a public display of support and awareness, helping to raise awareness and highlight the institution's commitment to prevention, bystander engagement, and trauma-informed care.

The goals of this project are to:

- Communicate the University of Tennessee's commitment to prevention and response to sexual assault
- Increase awareness of sexual assault and misconduct, and what constitutes misconduct
- Normalize conversations about consent, boundaries, and healthy relationships
- Promote access to campus and community-based support resources
- Reinforce our collective responsibility for preventing sexual harassment and misconduct

Development Process

Vols Walk for SAAM is organized by the Center for Health Education & Wellness (CHEW) in partnership

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with the Office of Title IX. The event is planned with intentional collaboration to ensure it is inclusive, educational, and survivor-centered.

Annual planning includes developing companion educational materials, campus-wide communications, opportunities for student involvement as speakers, volunteers, peer educators, and education and awareness via community partners.

The impact of Vols Walk for SAAM is grounded in its ability to promote awareness and culture change through collective visibility and action. The event:

- Provides students and employees with tangible ways to demonstrate allyship and support
- Sparks conversations around sexual violence, prevention, and response
- Normalizes engagement with sexual assault prevention outside of formal training contexts

Evaluation Plan

To assess the event's reach and effectiveness, the following evaluation strategies are employed:

- Tracking attendance and participation
- Collecting post-event feedback through short surveys and focus groups to assess awareness, satisfaction, and future interest
- Using informal feedback to shape future programming and improve inclusivity and impact

Next Steps

Planned next steps include:

- Expanding outreach efforts and sending personalized invitations to campus units and departments not yet involved in the event
- Creating a follow-up engagement plan to maintain momentum and encourage continued participation beyond the event
- Offering incentives or recognition for groups and/or departments that actively participate or support the event

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