

Year 1 Public Description of Work for
Action Collaborative on Preventing Sexual Harassment in Higher Education

University of Tennessee

Vols A.C.T.

This Action Applies to Rubric Item(s): 2, 3, 4, 5

Description of Work:

Vols A.C.T. Overview

VOLS A.C.T. Active Bystander Training for Faculty & Staff and VOLS A.C.T. Active Bystander Training for Graduate Students was developed, implemented, and evaluated by the Office of Title IX during the 2019-2020 academic year. Vol A.C.T. encompasses three critical steps to being an active bystander:

- 1) Acknowledge the situation;
- 2) Consider your options; and,
- 3) Take action.

VOLS A.C.T. Trainings continue to be offered by the Office of Title IX and can be requested by graduate students, faculty, and staff at any time via the Office of Title IX website or emailing titleix.ukt.edu. For the purposes of this synopsis, both the VOLS A.C.T. Training for Faculty and Staff and VOLS A.C.T. Active Bystander Training for Graduate Students will be referred to as VOLS A.C.T. Trainings. It should be noted, the major difference between the trainings are found in the case studies, and discussion points, as Graduate Students have different roles, and engage, are involved, are supervised, and have a different level of authority (ex. as graduate teaching assistants and graduate research assistants) than university employees.

Vols A.C.T. Development and Launch

In an effort to maintain streamlined call to being an active bystander, The Office of Title IX expanded the Vols A.C.T. campus messaging provided by the Center for Health Education & Wellness for undergraduate students. VOLS A.C.T. program developers (Office of Title IX staff and a first year College of Social Work Graduate Student Intern) utilized research and recommendations outlined in the Consensus Study Report Sexual Harassment of Women: Climate, Culture, and Consequences in Academic Sciences, Engineering, and Medicine (2018) to provide context, data, and evidence for the program. While the Consensus Study focused on women's experience, the Vols A.C.T. trainings acknowledge that sexual harassment does not only happen to women.

VOLS A.C.T. Trainings are two-hour interactive trainings developed by the Office of Title IX. VOLS A.C.T. is a co-facilitated training designed to give faculty and staff evidenced based

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prevention and action steps to prevent and respond to sexual harassment in the workplace. VOLS A.C.T. Trainings were developed to accommodate up to 50-participants in-person for two-hours. The VOLS A.C.T. Trainings were set to launch during April 2020, during Sexual Assault Awareness Month. Due to the impact of COVID-19, VOLS A.C.T. Trainings were modified and offered via Zoom. With the move to a synchronous online learning environment, the maximum number of participants who could attend each session remained limited to 50-participants. Limiting the number of attendees allowed for breakout groups, discussion, and sharing with the larger group. Continuing to allow for participant engagement was essential so there was time for individuals to practice potential real-world situations in which they could find themselves. Therefore, program developers intentionally made time in the training for participants to consider how they could respond individually, work in a group to develop the best response, and A.C.T.

Vols A.C.T. Learning Objectives

By the conclusion of the VOLS A.C.T. Training participants should be able to:

- identify sexual harassing behaviors and red flags;
- understand the effects of sexual harassment in academia;
- apply the role of active bystander;
- apply VOLS A.C.T. training to real world situations; and,
- use training information to create a respectful and positive climate in your department, college, and across the university.

Vols A.C.T. Evaluation Results

Since April 2020, four VOLS A.C.T trainings were hosted via Zoom.

Forty-one participants (4 faculty, 31 staff, and 6 graduate students) participated in the training. Twenty participants (4 faculty, 14 staff, and 2 graduate students) completed the anonymous VOLS A.C.T. assessment.

VOLS A.C.T. Quantitative Results

- 100% of respondents agreed or strongly agreed “I know where to seek support if there are sexual harassing behaviors in my workplace.”
- 100% of respondents agreed or strongly agreed “Following this training I can identify behaviors that are red flags for sexual harassment.”
- 84% of respondents agreed or strongly agreed “Following this training I feel confident that I ACT to low level behaviors in my department that may not rise to a policy violation.” 16 % of respondents were neutral.
- 100% of respondents agreed or strongly agreed “The VOLS ACT training was interactive and engaging.”
- 100% of respondents agreed or strongly agreed “The presenters were effective in presenting the material and information.”

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- 100% of respondents agreed or strongly agreed “The training design was cohesive.”
- 100% of respondents agreed or strongly agreed “The training environment was a safe space in which I could share easily.”
- 100% of respondents agreed or strongly agreed “I would recommend this training to a colleague.”
- 80% of respondents rated their overall experience of the training as “excellent,” 20% rated their overall experience as “good”
- 100% of respondents were able to correctly define A.C.T.

VOLS A.C.T. Qualitative Results

100% of respondents listed three ways in which they could A.C.T. in the workplace. Response themes included:

- Pay attention to inappropriate behaviors, red flags, and how colleagues are treating each other
- Address the behavior directly, enlist help, disrupt the behavior even if it is awkward or uncomfortable
- If you feel safe step in
- Speak with supervisor
- Refer colleague to campus resources
- Focus on changing office culture, create a safe work environment by making this training mandatory for each person in department so they are educated and prepared

Use of VOLS A.C.T Training

100% of respondents shared how they would use the VOLS A.C.T. training to better the area in which they work at UT. Response direct quotes included:

- Act with intention and get involved if I see something that is wrong.
- Being more open and aware.
- By raising awareness when situations arise
- I am better equipped to deal with situations that arise unexpectedly. I have a tendency to freeze and I realize that it is important to act. Now I have more tools to do so.
- I can help bring awareness to this issue and the many different facets of harassing behavior.
- I plan to share this training with others so they have the opportunity to take it in the future.
- I will be more brave about stepping in when I feel something is wrong
- I will encourage others to participate in the training.
- I will help my students understand if they are experiencing harassing behaviors in their academic work.

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- I'm going to advocate for everyone that I know/come in contact with to take the in-person training and become better educated on sexual harassment. I am going to ensure that my team is trained and ensure that we receive the coaching we need so that we are ready to ACT.
- Keep aware of what is going on in the college/workplace.
- Not hesitate to ACT in one way or another.
- Pay attention to my surroundings and speak of if something isn't appropriate or follow up afterwards either with the individuals involved or someone in authority.
- Speaking up and offering support
- Learning that your office [Office of Title IX] can talk in hypotheticals and help us walk through paths to de-escalate the situation or reach out to the ombuds office is useful information everyone should have. I do not remember seeing it in the Title IX training, but that does not mean it was not there. The assumption is generally that everything has to go through the chain of command, including through OED, all of which seem more concerned about whether something is illegal (can be proven in court) than something that needs to be stopped before it gets to that point.
- This is a nice complementary training to the STRIDE diversity training that many of us have had. I may be able to bring up some of these topics in a faculty meeting or faculty retreat.
- This training has given more knowledge to better understand and notice biases that are not outright discriminatory. being able to notice smaller acts of discrimination can assist with getting rid of it.
- To be more proactive with low level behaviors
- When I hear words or see something that is not appropriate I can talk with the person or report them.
- Will probably add it to our Diversity Action Plan. Will be a better active bystander. Will recommend the training to others.

Additional Comments About VOLS A.C.T. Training

Fourteen participants offered additional comments and feedback about the VOLS A.C.T. training. Response direct quotes included:

- Great job! Especially with the shift to online courses.
- I appreciated the interactive nature of this training and the breakout rooms.
- I really liked the breakout rooms!!
- Always a struggle in a workshop to find enough time. If time were not a factor, I'd recommend some actual role playing, where each person gets to practice being an active bystander. This was part of a different training I received and was very helpful in being able to be prepared to act in the future. Thank you very much for the workshop. It was very well done and a big help.

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- I would appreciate additional opportunities to hear specific ways to act/respond in these situations
- I would have liked to talk through the scenarios
- It was a great adaptation to Zoom!
- May want to cut down on the breakout rooms, we ran out of time! Great training otherwise :)
- Thank you all for this training -
- Thank you for this important training
- Thanks again for the class. It was awesome.
- The interactive format worked well over zoom. Great job adapting it to this situation!
- The training was great! Thank you for providing the training.
- Well done, Title IX! Great information and delivery as usual.

Vols A.C.T. Next Steps

Moving forward, there are a number of next steps that the Office of Title IX sees as opportunities in which Vols A.C.T. trainings can be improved and expanded upon.

- Plans to promote and offer Vols A.C.T. Trainings are being developed. Currently the Vols A.C.T. Trainings are being promoted via communications to the campus from the Office of Title IX. Other ways in which Vols A.C.T. Trainings will be promoted are through campus-wide email newsletters and updates, social media, directed emails to College Deans and Department Heads, and through our partners at the graduate school. To date, two Vols A.C.T. Trainings are scheduled for September.
- Create a second 2-hour Vols A.C.T. training, so the training has a Part 1 and Part 2. Expanding the training into a two-part series will allow for participants to delve deeper into the material and engage in role-play activities that can allow for them to practice A.C.T.ing in a safe environment. Expanding the training into a two-part series will also allow for less content to be in Part 1, so there is ample time for breakout room discussion and sharing back with the larger group. Individuals who complete both parts of the training could receive a Vols A.C.T. certification, and campus departments who complete both trainings could be certified as Vols A.C.T. departments.

Website for further information (if applicable): <https://titleix.utk.edu/>

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