



Budget Request Form FY2017

Department should complete one form for each individual request

Department: Offices of the Dean of Student Life (ODSL)

SAFAB Use Only	
YES	NO

Program, Service, or Operation Requested

Student Development Specialist III – Student Conduct Investigator/Officer

General Description:

This position would serve as an “expert investigator” responsible for the investigations of *all* incidents of student misconduct including sexual harassment, sexual assault, domestic violence, dating violence, and stalking. Investigations involving the latter types of violations require specific procedures and specialized skills and are time sensitive. This position will also be used to handle common, low level violations of the Student Conduct Code to alleviate caseloads of the full time Student Conduct staff and afford them the time needed for the more time-consuming panel conferences.

Request Type: Full Increase One-Time Partial/Matching

Type of Funds Requested UAF Other

General Questions:

Why is this important to your department? How does this increase impact students, and what motivated this request?

This request is important to ODSL given the Dean of Students’ role in being the point of contact for all student complaints and reports related to Title IX and VAWA issues and is the individual who initiates investigations into incidents of student misconduct; ODSL is also the home of the Student Conduct Office which adjudicates the cases of student misconduct. A number of reports addressing the issue of sexual violence on college campuses (e.g., White House Sexual Assault Task Force: Not Alone) recommend the improvement of investigative and adjudicative protocols. Our investigations and student conduct processes are under more scrutiny than ever given the national attention to the issues of sexual assault and sexual violence on college campuses. In addition, hazing activities continue to emerge as very serious concerns within student organizations. All of these behaviors are often coupled with alcohol and drug use. **These are often complicated and complex situations that require expert investigators who can provide the needed consistency in investigation protocols and procedures.**

Is it part of your strategic plan? What will be the impact if it is not funded?

This initiative is in line with almost every purpose statement in ODSL's strategic plan:

- Providing space and **resources** for individual student populations.
- Providing programs and **services for students at any time during their university experience.**
- **Equipping students with knowledge and skills to make responsible decisions.**
- Producing and distributing **specialized publications.**
- Providing **individualized assistance and support for students** and families in times of need.
- **Collaborating and consulting with faculty/staff to address student issues.**
- **Establishing and maintaining relationships with internal and external stakeholders.**

Should this position not be funded, the University runs the risk specifically of failing to meet the expectations and certain requirements of Title IX and VAWA. Consequences for failing to be compliant with the guidelines not only jeopardize the University's budget through potential loss of federal funding and/or fines, but could also be damaging to students directly by not providing adequate services. In a recent survey by the Association of American Universities, 73.4% of Texas A&M students surveyed responded that "It is very or extremely likely that the [sexual assault] report would be taken very seriously by campus officials." We want to continue a high level of response to ensure that our students feel supported and reassured that we are responding quickly and effectively to these situations as the legislation requires.

How do other sources of funding (fundraising, sponsorship, reserves, etc.) been considered? Please explain.

The federal mandates of Title IX and VAWA legislation have been unfunded and ODSL has been working to fulfill the mandates the first few years, since the release of the Dear Colleague Letter (DCL) of April 4, 2011, with our own resources—both financial and human. The Office of the Vice President for Student Affairs was able to secure approval for a student conduct investigator position for ODSL this past year.

What sort of input did you receive (student, faculty, staff, other) to determine this need?

There is currently a committee, The Sexual Assault Survivors Services committee, composed of students, staff, and faculty. This committee continues to determine a number of needs regarding requirements and best practices related to the current issues of sexual assault and sexual violence. Furthermore, administrative input has been sought primarily from the perspective that University and Student Affairs administrators have been supportive of the work and know the legal underpinnings that drive it. These administrators are also aware of the everyday work that ODSL performs to support students in all other areas of their lives thereby understanding the need for additional resources to accomplish current mandates.

Division staff who currently work to support students, who find themselves involved in situations involving sexual harassment and sexual violence, are a constant and valuable source of feedback/input. Also, the current list of trained Division investigators provide feedback at every debriefing we hold throughout the year.

Finally, the data that the Student Conduct Office collects with regard to numbers of cases investigated and adjudicated continue to show a rise in need of response to student misconduct at Texas A&M. With the onset of the current University campaign, *Step In. Stand Up.*, we anticipate a continued, steady rise in the number of reports of sexual assault and sexual violence that the department receives.

What actions have you implemented internally to address the identified need?

ODSL staff from various offices have all come together to provide the resources to fulfill the legislative guidance and mandates since April 4, 2011. Additionally, we have used staff from across the Division of Student Affairs to assist in the investigative process of these matters. We have used current staff and current financial resources, that are designated for other services to students, to fill in the gaps over the past four years but each year requires more support from each area.

Generally, what assessment tools will you use to evaluate this program/service?

We anticipate that the University will continue to conduct an annual climate survey which will provide vital information regarding population based effectiveness.

During investigator training and conduct panel member training (that we provide in-house), we ask for and receive feedback from the staff who conduct the investigations and those who use the investigative reports.

Annual performance evaluations.

We continue to explore the idea of soliciting feedback from students who have been directly involved in an incident of sexual harassment or violence with regard to the complaint, investigative and adjudication processes.

Funding Description:

			Dollar Amount
Total Estimated Cost			
SDS III - Student Conduct Investigator/Officer (w/benefits)			\$59,750
<i>Less Estimated Partial/Matching Funds (if applicable)</i>			
TOTAL UAF INCREASE REQUEST			\$59,750.00

SAFAB Comments/Notes:

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