

# Message to the University Community

Office of the President  
January 29, 2018

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## Commitment to Campus Sexual Assault Prevention and Education

Over the last week, we have watched with great distress the court proceedings and news reports surrounding the sexual assaults perpetrated by Michigan State University physician Larry Nassar.

Listening and reading the statements from these survivors, it is clear this is a tragedy, and our prayers and support go out to every victim. As we struggle to comprehend how this could have happened, we must also learn from it. After the terrible shootings at Virginia Tech, we reviewed and improved safety on campus. After Penn State, we reviewed and improved the safety of minors on our campus. And from this most recent tragedy, we will review and improve the safety and security of our campus community relative to sexual assault.

At our University, we take all sexual assault claims very seriously and carefully investigate all cases of sexual assault with special concern for the survivor. We also highly value an ethical community on our campuses. It is one of our core values. This means we must actively promote the safety, respect and well-being of our students, our employees and our visitors to campus.

So there is no misunderstanding, we will continue to afford due process to those accused of sexual assault. At the same time, we are firmly committed to creating and maintaining a safe campus for all of our community members. Much significant work has already been accomplished, including a university-wide review in 2014.

At Ferris, we will continue to build a culture of sexual assault prevention and provide immediate response and support for survivors of sexual assault. To that end, I have asked Vice President for Student Affairs Jeanine Ward-Roof to convene and chair a task force that will take a hard look at our current processes, thoroughly examine and review our policies and procedures, and make certain that unequivocally – and without hesitation – we are committed to:

- (1) Preventing sexual assault.
- (2) Investigating and responding to allegations of sexual assault.
- (3) Supporting survivors of sexual assault and ensuring that their rights are protected.
- (4) Educating our campus community on sexual assault prevention, investigation and response, and support for survivors of sexual assault.

Tragedies are a call to action – for our university, for each of us who works here, for every person who pursues their education here, and for anyone who visits here. This week I encourage you to take time to review the information available on our [Title IX website](#). Please read especially the sections entitled File a Complaint, Confidential Support, Reporting Protections, and Policy on Sexual Assault.

Each of us has a responsibility to report sexual assault and to encourage survivors to come forward. If you know someone who is the survivor of sexual assault or who needs additional information or support please help them use these resources. Together we can and will learn from this tragedy to make our University a safer and better place.