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## BU to create campus crisis center focusing on rape, sexual assault, hazing prevention

Posted by Matt Rocheleau April 30, 2012 02:23 PM

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By Matt Rocheleau, Town Correspondent

Boston University said today it will create a campus crisis center that will focus rape and sexual assault prevention and support for victims of such acts as well as other forms of physical abuse, such as hazing.

The [announcement](#) came in the wake of two alleged sexual assaults, two reported hazing episodes, and several dormitory shower peeping incidents this academic year.

President Robert A. Brown said those recent events “have lent a focus to our discussions” about establishing the center, “but they are not solely responsible for it.”

“Boston University can learn from what we have experienced this spring and become a better community for living and learning,” Brown wrote in a letter to the campus community. “I believe that the vitality of our community depends on individual actions and the responsibility we take for ourselves and for

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on individual actions and the responsibility we take for ourselves and for others.”

The university plans to open the center in the fall at a location that has not yet been determined, he said.

Student activists had advocated for an on-campus rape crisis center even before the recent string of reported physical abuse, and pressed the university again when they met with Brown in March, school officials said.

Brown said in his letter he is “grateful to members of our community, including members of student groups, who have provided information and insightful suggestions about how we might improve our services.”

The center will be overseen by the university’s student health services department, according to the letter that was [first reported on](#) by the university’s news website, BU Today.

While not finalized, staffing at the center is expected to include at least three full-time clinical staff, who are specifically training in crisis and sexual assault counseling, according to Brown. There will also be one full-time nonclinical “prevention specialist” to help with training, outreach, and referrals.

Beyond the new crisis center, Brown said the university is working in other ways to change how students interact with one other. The school has introduced and plans to expand training that aims to teach students to look for warning signs of excessive alcohol consumption and predatory behavior and how to intervene in those situations.

“Looking out for each other—intervening in thoughtful, effective ways—is an important piece of civility on campus,” Brown said. “It’s important to know that our BU police are there to help. When a fellow student is in trouble, calling BUPD can make a life or death difference.”

“We are committed to working to ensure that our academic community is one in which uncivil, violent, or abusive treatment of others is not tolerated,” Brown wrote in his letter, “and that we have the appropriate means in place both to reduce the likelihood of such events and to provide strong support to those affected when, despite our best efforts, such events occur.”

The day the new center was announced, campus police and a university spokesman also confirmed that a woman had reported on Saturday evening that she had been inappropriately touched by a man while getting off of an elevator in a BU dormitory. An alert about the alleged indecent assault was sent to the campus community.

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