White House moves to combat campus rapes

The Obama administration sets guidelines for colleges on how to respond to and prevent sexual assaults.

BY JENNIFER SHARPE

The Associated Press

WASHINGTON — Releasing a series of highly publicized guidelines on how to respond to and prevent sexual assaults, the White House is increasing the pressure on colleges and universities to aggressively combat sexual assaults on campus.

Administration officials released guidelines that colleges and universities can follow to make their campuses safer and to protect victims. The guidelines are the culmination of a presidential memorandum issued last September that ordered officials to develop the guidelines and implement the recommendations that administration officials made last year to the presses on sexual assault.

The guidelines are designed in part to protect the White House's federal budget and to ensure that sexual assault reports received by the White House are not safeguarded. The guidelines also aim to ensure that colleges and universities are not vulnerable to criticism from conservatives who argue that criticism of the White House is a form of harassment.

The guidelines call for institutions to take a number of steps to combat sexual assault, including:

- Providing training for students, faculty and staff on how to respond to sexual assault.
- Creating a plan to address sexual assault on campus that includes:
  - Developing a process for responding to sexual assault reports.
  - Providing support services for victims of sexual assault.
  - Developing a policy for handling sexual assault reports, including:
    - Establishing a standard of review for sexual assault reports.
    - Developing a process for determining whether sexual assault occurred.

The guidelines also call for institutions to:

- Develop a plan to prevent sexual assault.
- Develop a plan to educate students, faculty and staff on how to respond to sexual assault.
- Develop a plan to address sexual assault on campus that includes:
  - Providing training for students, faculty and staff on how to respond to sexual assault.
  - Developing a plan to address sexual assault on campus that includes:
    - Providing support services for victims of sexual assault.
    - Developing a process for handling sexual assault reports.

The guidelines also call for institutions to:

- Provide advertising.
- Provide training for students, faculty and staff on how to respond to sexual assault.
- Develop a plan to address sexual assault on campus that includes:
  - Providing support services for victims of sexual assault.
  - Developing a process for handling sexual assault reports.

Violations of the guidelines could lead to investigations and the withholding of federal funds.

White House press secretary Jay Carney said the guidelines were designed to help prevent sexual assault on college campuses.

The guidelines also include a provision that allows victims of sexual assault to file complaints with the Department of Education.

The Department of Education is required to investigate any complaints it receives.

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