



# COUNCIL ON SOCIAL WORK EDUCATION

STRENGTHENING THE PROFESSION OF SOCIAL WORK

*Leadership in Research, Career Advancement, and Education*

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The Honorable Claire McCaskill  
United States Senate  
Hart Senate Office Building, SH-506  
Washington, DC 20510

June 25, 2014

Dear Senator McCaskill:

On behalf of the Council on Social Work Education (CSWE), I write to thank you for your leadership on issues relating to sexual assault on college campuses. I am especially supportive of the growing emphasis on an interdisciplinary approach to sexual assault counseling, and I hope that you will consider ways that social workers can play an integral role in assisting students who have experienced sexual assault on campuses in future legislation.

CSWE is a nonprofit national association representing more than 2,500 individual members and more than 700 masters and baccalaureate programs of professional social work education. Social work education prepares students for leadership and professional interdisciplinary practice with individuals, families, groups, and communities in a wide array of service sectors, including health, mental health, adult and juvenile justice, child welfare, and others. Social workers are on the front lines, touching many Americans' lives through work in university counseling centers, public schools, veterans' hospitals, general and special service health care facilities, substance abuse prevention and treatment programs, and family service settings.

Your recent panels on addressing sexual assault on college campuses have brought increased attention to a serious problem. As you examine means of addressing and preventing sexual assault in these settings, I urge you to consider the important role that social workers can play in college counseling centers to help empower, protect, and educate victims of violence. By including social workers in every campus health and counseling center, we can offer a significant service to survivors of sexual assault.

The following universities provide only a few examples of how social workers can make a difference on campuses:

- The University of California, Berkeley, provides fellowships in clinical social work at University Health Services (Tang Center) where fellows practice their clinical and consultation skills, focusing particularly on campus-centered issues such as domestic violence. These fellows are highly trained in specific areas of crisis intervention, counseling for individuals and couples, groups and workshops, and consultation and outreach. They encounter the full range of student problems in a university setting, and participate in staff meetings, training, conferences and development exercises. Given their training and expertise, they are a valuable addition to a team addressing the needs of victims of sexual assault.



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- At Northern Kentucky University, the Social Work and Counseling programs received a three-year grant from the Department of Justice Office on Violence Against Women to develop and strengthen effective responses to violence against women. The Norse Violence Prevention Grant empowers social workers on campus with tools to eradicate campus violence through collaboration with university police in an interdisciplinary approach to violence against women.
- The School of Social Work at Texas A&M University has begun Project RESPECT (Respond, Empower, Support, Protect, Educate, Coordinate, and Train), a program that partners with students, university departments, community victim services, and criminal justice entities to develop means of stopping violence against women on campus and in the community. Through this partnership, the School of Social Work uses their expertise across different disciplines to provide all those involved in sexual assault counseling with the skills necessary in adequately addressing sexual assault.

Thank you again for all of your efforts to streamline and simplify federal regulations governing sexual assault on college campuses. We are optimistic that these efforts will result in better services and reduced stigma for students who have experienced sexual violence or assault on college campuses. CSWE looks forward to serving as a resource on the role and importance of social workers in college counseling centers.

We look forward to working with you and your staff in combating campus sexual assault together. Please do not hesitate to contact me if we can be of assistance.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads 'Darla Spence Coffey'. The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Darla Spence Coffey  
President and Chief Executive Officer  
Council on Social Work Education