

**DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION  
U.S. MERCHANT MARINE ACADEMY  
CULTURE AUDIT**

DELIVERABLE 2. DOCUMENTATION OF SURVEYS  
AND OUTREACH CONDUCTED



DECEMBER 2016

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# Documentation of Surveys and Outreach Conducted

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## INTRODUCTION

LMI conducted interviews to collect and understand the different perspectives, perceptions, and thoughts of the U.S. Merchant Marine Academy (USMMA, Academy) stakeholders as part of the Culture Audit. These stakeholders included Department of Transportation (DOT) senior officials and independent oversight bodies, USMMA staff and faculty, USMMA midshipmen; industry (to include union representatives), and alumni. The purpose of the interviews was to gain a thorough understanding of the USMMA culture and climate, both on campus and at sea contributing to the current climate.

This document provides an overview of the interviews conducted and the guides used to conduct the interviews. Because of the sensitive nature of the subject, we took extreme care to protect the privacy and confidentiality of all interviewees. To that end, we conducted all interviews on a voluntary, not-for-attribution basis.

## PLANNING AND OUTREACH

We prepared for the stakeholder interviews by conferring with the Office of the Secretary of Transportation (OST) to identify the appropriate groups. The following were identified and aligned into five stakeholder groups, as shown in Table 1.

*Table 1. Summary of Stakeholder Groups*

Stakeholder Group	Stakeholder Description
DOT Senior Officials and Independent Oversight Bodies	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>◆ OST senior officials</li><li>◆ MARAD senior officials</li><li>◆ USMMA Advisory Board members</li></ul>
USMMA Staff and Faculty	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>◆ USMMA leadership, staff, and faculty (including some of whom are alumni)</li></ul>
USMMA Midshipmen	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>◆ Midshipmen currently attending the Academy</li></ul>
Industry	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>◆ Industry and union executives, management, staff, and commercial vessel crew members (including some who are alumni)</li></ul>
Alumni	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>◆ Individuals (not included in USMMA Staff and Faculty or Industry groups) who graduated from the Academy between 1991 and 2015</li></ul>

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We developed an interview guide for each stakeholder group. Information gathered during our document review was used to direct guide development. Each guide contains a set of questions designed to gather the specific information required from that stakeholder group. We also developed supplemental questions for particular roles within the stakeholder groups. For example, we developed additional questions for the Sexual Assault Response Coordinator (SARC), who is part of the USMMA Staff and Faculty stakeholder group. Care was taken to ensure the proper linkages between the different guides. The interview guides and supplemental questions are provided in Appendix A, Interview Guides.

Within each stakeholder group, we employed the following methods to select interviewees and coordinate the interviews.

- ◆ *DOT Senior Officials and Independent Oversight Bodies.* For these interviews, we developed a list of roles and responsibilities and worked with DOT personnel to identify the appropriate positions. OST provided a list of names and supported the coordination of these interviews.
- ◆ *USMMA staff and faculty.* We provided a list of key Academy leadership, staff, and faculty roles to OST that we wanted to interview. We worked through OST and MARAD to identify USMMA points of contacts who provided lists of staff and faculty members as potential interviewees given their roles and responsibilities. They also helped to coordinate the site visit. To ensure we had a representative sample of the staff and faculty, we requested interviews with certain specific positions, plus a mix of male and female staff and faculty members. In addition to the staff and faculty members selected to be interviewed, the LMI team held office hours twice per day during the 8 days on campus, permitting additional staff and faculty members to participate on a walk-in basis.
- ◆ *USMMA midshipmen.* Our USMMA points of contact obtained through OST and MARAD provided us with a list of midshipmen who were not at sea and therefore available on campus for interviews. To ensure we had a representative sample of midshipmen, we applied a stratified random sampling procedure to this master list to generate interview candidate lists. The midshipmen were stratified on the basis of gender and class that included male and female midshipmen, so we had 3 females and 3 males from each class. These midshipmen were given the opportunity to participate. If they declined, a replacement interviewee was selected with the same selection criteria. In addition to this random sampling of midshipmen, the LMI team held office hours twice per day during the 8 days on campus, permitting additional midshipmen to participate on a walk-in basis. We also requested a list and contact information for midshipmen in regimental leadership positions from which we randomly selected additional midshipmen interviewees.

- ◆ *Industry.* OST and MARAD leaders provided contact information for shipping industry and union representatives who might be willing to participate. We contacted these individuals, as well as additional individuals provided by some of the initial industry and union interviewees. The LMI team also interviewed shipping company representatives and ship's crew members during four ship visits in port in Baltimore, Newark, Norfolk, and Seattle. MARAD helped coordinate these visits.
- ◆ *Alumni.* We randomly identified alumni across multiple graduation years from the 2016 *Kings Point Log* published by the U.S. Merchant Marine Academy Alumni Association and Foundation. To supplement the interview pool, we requested potential alumni interview names from commercial industry representatives and the Academy's Professional Development and Career Services department. Names of additional alumni interview candidates were provided by interviewees who had been victims of sexual assault or sexual harassment during their time at the Academy.

The LMI team conducted each interview using the appropriate guide for the relevant stakeholder group. During the interview, we did not preclude interviewees from discussing other areas. Most interviews were conducted in-person, with the remainder done by telephone. The first stakeholders interviewed were the DOT senior officials; we conducted these interviews during the first 2 weeks of the assessment. Concurrent with these interviews, we planned our Academy visits to start the second week of the assessment.

Prior to our arrival at the Academy, the Superintendent sent an e-mail to all staff and faculty members and midshipmen announcing the LMI team's arrival on campus and the purpose for the visit. The Office of the Superintendent also sent out the invitations to the staff and faculty selected to be interviewed. Concurrently, we e-mailed the midshipmen randomly selected for the interviews.

Upon arrival at the Academy, we conducted kickoff meetings with Academy leadership, staff and faculty, and midshipmen regimental leadership. In each of these meetings, we discussed the purpose and approach for our visit and provided an overview of our planned interview approach. This included describing the interview construct and timing and explaining that the interviews were not for attribution. In addition to the scheduled interviews, we also established locations and times for walk-in interviews during office hours.

Following the midshipmen regimental leadership kickoff meetings, the midshipmen regimental commander sent an e-mail to all midshipmen encouraging their participation in the interviews. The Academy also provided a list of midshipmen regimental staff officers to be interviewed. Finally, the Office of the Superintendent e-mailed the times and locations for the office hours.

Interviews began immediately after the kickoff meetings. We conducted the interviews in interviewer pairs, with one person asking questions and the other capturing responses. We initiated each interview by providing an overview of the study, stating that we were collecting feedback, both positive and negative, on the culture at the Academy, indicating that the interviews were voluntary, and assuring the interviewee that their responses were on a not for attribution basis. The length of interviews varied, ranging from 30 minutes to 1 hour. We conducted Academy interviews during the second and third weeks of the assessment.

Upon return from the Academy, we conducted interviews with the Industry and Alumni stakeholder groups. With regard to industry, we interviewed leaders in the commercial maritime industry, Military Sealift Command, and maritime labor organizations. We also visited four ships from three different commercial shipping companies and interviewed their officers.

With regard to Alumni, we conducted interviews with individuals working in the industry across a range of companies, the U.S. military, and the Coast Guard, as well as some working outside the maritime industry.

## SUMMARY

Table 2 summarizes the total number interviews conducted during the audit by stakeholder group. It also shows the location and the type of interview. Although some of the staff and faculty and industry interviewees were also Academy alumni, they were not included in the alumni interview counts.

*Table 2. Summary of Culture Audit Interviews*

Stakeholder Group	Number of Interviews			Type of Interview	Location
	Male	Female	Total		
DOT Senior Officials and Independent Oversight Bodies	13	6	19	In person and Telephone	Washington, DC
USMMA Staff and Faculty (broken out below)					
Staff (Leadership and Staff)	29	18	47	In person	Kings Point, NY
Faculty	12	7	19	In person	Kings Point, NY
USMMA Midshipmen	30	18	48	In person	Kings Point, NY
Industry	18	3	21	Telephone, In person	Baltimore, MD Newark, NJ Norfolk, VA Seattle, WA
USMMA Alumni	2	6	8	Telephone E-Mail	N/A
Total Number of Interviews	104	58	162		

# Appendix A

## Interview Guides

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This appendix provides the questions that comprise the interview guides for each of the five stakeholder groups. The guides contain core questions centered around the task areas of the assessment that were relative to that stakeholder group.

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## DOT SENIOR OFFICIALS AND INDEPENDENT OVERSIGHT BODIES

1. Briefly describe your role and involvement with the Academy.
2. Generally speaking, how would you characterize the problem, based on what you know at this time?
3. In your mind, what are the key factors contributing to the persistent rates of sexual assault and sexual harassment incidents at the Academy? At sea?
4. What factors led the Secretary of Transportation standing down the Academy Sea Year Program on commercial ships in the Fall 2016?
5. DOT recently issued a Call to Action to the commercial maritime industry. How would you characterize the discussion? To what extent do you feel it was helpful and why?
6. Why were USMMA midshipmen pulled from commercial ships but re-assigned to federal ships (MSC, RRF, State Maritime Training ships)? Is there sufficient capacity on federal ships to handle all of the USMMA midshipmen?
7. What steps have OST, MARAD, and the Academy taken to improve the Academy's sexual assault and sexual harassment prevention and response policies, practices, and procedures, both on campus and at sea?
8. What steps is MARAD taking with industry to improve the safety of midshipmen with regards to sexual assault and harassment prevention and response at sea?
9. We will be developing a set of indicators in order to assess progress on SA/SH at the Academy in recent years.
  - a. From your perspective, where have you seen improvements?
  - b. What are the challenges that remain?
  - c. What would be the measures of success?
10. What are you most hoping to learn from this assessment?
11. As we proceed with the assessment, what do you think are the most important things we should be looking for? Who or what should be key sources of information?

## USMMA STAFF AND FACILITY

1. Could you briefly describe your role and responsibilities at the Academy?
2. The Middle States Commission on Higher Education placed USMMA on warning that its accreditation is at risk in June 2016 and directed the Academy to take steps to “build a climate of mutual respect and trust on campus and during Sea Year.” How would you characterize the Academy culture and campus climate, in general, and also as it relates to Sexual Assault and Sexual Harassment in particular?
3. The MSCHE also stated “the campus climate and incidence of SH/SA have been a serious problem for over 10 years” and “the pervasiveness of sexual harassment on campus has fostered a hostile environment for many cohorts of midshipmen.” Based on the most recent Academy report to the Secretary of Transportation, although the Academy has deployed reasonable and customary methods used at other institutions of higher education and service academies to prevent sexual harassment and assault, sexual harassment and sexual assault is still occurring at the Academy at alarming rates. In your opinion, what do you see as the key factors contributing to the persistent rates of sexual assault and sexual harassment incidents at the Academy despite efforts to eliminate or reduce them?
4. As you know, the Secretary of Transportation recently ordered a “Stand Down” of Sea Year in response to take steps to improve the safety and climate of respect of midshipmen during sea year. What do you believe are the root causes of the issues of sexual assault and harassment during Sea Year and what is being done or should be done to address them?
5. Are there institutional forces or unique circumstances of the commercial maritime experience that may exacerbate a climate that allows sexual assault or harassment at sea?
6. To the best of your knowledge, how does the USMMA define sexual assault and sexual harassment?
7. Have you ever spoken to any midshipmen about sexual assault or harassment?
8. How confident are you that, if a midshipman reports a sexual assault/sexual harassment incident, that the complaint will be handled appropriately?
9. Recent surveys show a large discrepancy between the number of midshipmen reporting having been sexually assaulted or harassed and the number who actually report these incidents. What factors do you think influence or convince midshipmen to decide not to report sexual assault or sexual harassment incidents to law enforcement or the Academy?

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10. As a leader/faculty member at the Academy, how do you discourage forms of retaliation against midshipmen who report sexual assault and/or harassment? Have you ever seen or been told of this type of retaliation in the past?
  11. Do you know of anyone at the Academy who experienced sexual harassment or a sexual assault either on campus or while at sea? Did they report it to the Academy? To the best of your ability, do you know how they viewed their experience?
  12. Do you know where the USMMA suggests midshipmen go to report an incident of sexual assault or harassment? Who do they go to on campus? At sea?
  13. Do you know what the reporting options for each are for midshipmen on campus and at sea?
  14. What are the reporting options for staff and faculty?
  15. Could you describe the effectiveness of Sexual Assault/Sexual Harassment prevention education and training both at the Academy and for Sea Year?
  16. What can be done to improve Sexual Assault and Sexual Harassment education and training?
  17. The Academy has invested significant resources (people, processes, and systems) to address the issue of sexual assault and harassment in recent years.
    - a. From your perspective, have you seen improvements? Where?
    - b. What are the challenges that remain?
    - c. What are the measures of success?
  18. If you could recommend one action that the Academy could take to improve the culture towards preventing sexual assault or harassment, what would it be and why?
  19. Is there anything we did not discuss today that you would like to add?

## Supplemental Questions by Leadership, Staff and Faculty Categories

### LEADERSHIP

1. What is the Academy's strategy for preventing and responding to incidents of SA/SH and how is it communicated to the campus community?
2. How are you measuring success in achieving the strategy?

3. Do you have sufficient resources to address SA/SH at the Academy?
4. Does the Academy leadership have sufficient level of authority to respond to incidents of sexual harassment?

#### FACULTY/STAFF

1. How would you classify the level of emphasis and support from senior Academy leadership in preventing SA/SH?
2. Can you describe the viewpoint of faculty and staff toward the SA/SH prevention program at the Academy?

#### Regimental Officer

1. What is your role at the Academy?
2. What has been your experience at the Academy?
3. To the best of your knowledge, how does the USMMA define sexual assault/harassment?
4. Have you spoken to your midshipmen about sexual assault and/or harassment? If so, how often and is it a mandatory conversation you must have with the midshipmen? What is your message to the midshipmen?
5. Where does the USMMA suggest midshipmen go to report sexual assault/harassment? Please describe, to the best of your knowledge, the reporting options that are available to Midshipmen.
6. How confident are you that, if a midshipman reports a sexual assault/harassment, the USMMA would handle the situation appropriately?
7. What factors do you think convince midshipmen to decide not to report sexual assault and/or harassment to law enforcement or the Academy?
8. As a leader of midshipmen, how do you discourage retaliation against midshipmen who report sexual assault and/or harassment? Have you been informed of this type of retaliation occurring in the past?
9. How would you describe the environment for female Midshipmen at the Academy?
10. How would you describe the overall acceptance of lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgendered Midshipmen?

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## Department Head, Professional Development and Career Services

1. What education and training do midshipmen receive on SA/SH prevention before and after their Sea Year rotations?
2. What is your role as an ATR in responding to incidents of sexual assault or harassment at sea? Do you handle these complaints or does the SARC? Do you know why?
3. To the best of your knowledge, how many incidents of sexual harassment does the PDCS office receive on average each year? Sexual assaults?
4. What agreements are in place with the commercial shipping companies address procedures for responding to incidents of SA/SH involving midshipmen during Sea Year?
5. Describe the feedback received from midshipmen during their post Sea Year debriefs with regards to their experiences and how they were treated while at sea?

## Sexual Assault Response Coordinator

1. What is your role at the Academy?
2. How long have you been working in the field of sexual assault/harassment? What other populations have you worked with?
3. How would you characterize the problem of sexual assault/harassment at the Academy compared to other populations you've worked with?
4. Are there any factors that are unique to the Academy that you believe perpetuate sexual assault and/or harassment amongst midshipmen?
5. What are the roadblocks you face while attempting to fulfill your role as SARC?
6. How would you characterize Academy leadership's support of your role?
7. How would you describe the environment for female midshipmen at the Academy?
8. How would you describe the environment for lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgendered midshipmen at the Academy?
9. What do you think influences midshipmen to decide against reporting sexual assault and/or sexual assault incidents to the Academy or law enforcement?
10. What is the primary prevention strategy you promote at the Academy? How often do midshipmen receive prevention training? How is the training received?

11. If you had access to all of the resources you need to address sexual assault and harassment at the Academy, what on the list do you currently have, and what would you add?

#### Sexual Assault Victim Advocate

1. What training have you received to serve as a victim advocate? Who provided the training?
2. What are your responsibilities as a victim advocate?
3. Approximately how many midshipmen have disclosed sexual assault and/or harassment incidents to you?

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## USMMA MIDSHIPMEN

1. Why did you decide to attend the United States Merchant Marine Academy?
2. What has your experience been like so far?
3. To the best of your knowledge, how does the USMMA define sexual assault/harassment?
4. How often have you received training on the issues of sexual assault/harassment at the USMMA?
5. Please describe the trainings for us. How was the information presented? What did you learn from the training?
6. What did you think of these trainings? What was helpful, what was not?
7. Where does the USMMA suggest midshipmen go to report sexual assault/harassment? Please describe, to the best of your knowledge, the reporting options that are available to Midshipmen.
8. How confident are you that, if a midshipman reports a sexual assault/harassment, the USMMA would handle the situation appropriately?
9. Have you known anyone who reported a sexual assault or harassment incident to the Academy? If yes, to the best of your ability, how did they view their experience?
10. Has a fellow Midshipmen ever confided in you that she or he had experienced sexual assault or harassment, but decided against reporting the incident to law enforcement or the Academy?
11. What do you think influences midshipmen who experience sexual assault or harassment to not report the incidents to law enforcement or the Academy?
12. Have you had experiences on campus or at sea that made you feel like your safety was at risk? If so, how frequent are these experiences? Can you describe an experience that you've had that made you feel uncomfortable?
13. How would you describe the environment for female Midshipmen at the Academy?
14. How would you describe the overall acceptance of lesbian, gay, bisexual, and/or transgendered Midshipmen?

15. If you saw a midshipman in a situation that you believe could result in a sexual assault, how likely would you be to intervene? How confident are you that a fellow midshipman would intervene if you found yourself in a similar situation?

## Regimental Midshipmen Leadership

1. Describe the effectiveness of the Midshipmen Human Relations Officer and Sexual Assault Victim Advocate (SAVA) programs in the regiment?
2. How pervasive is the issue of SA/SH at the Academy?
3. Is the regimental leadership given sufficient responsibility and leadership support to help prevent SA/SH?
4. Other Military Service Academies use a peer-to-peer approach to education and training on SA/SH prevention. Does USMMA have similar programs and, if so, are they effective?

## Human Relations Officer

1. What programming do you do for the Academy?
2. How well received and attended are your programs?
3. How closely do you work with the SARC and SAVAs?
4. When did your organization start? Has interest increased in the past few years?
5. What would you improve about the sexual assault and harassment programming at the Academy?

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## INDUSTRY

1. How would you describe the maritime culture? What would you say are the key drivers of these cultural characteristics?
2. What changes, if any, have you seen in how the maritime industry has dealt with issues of preventing and responding to sexual harassment and assault at sea over time?
3. To the best of your knowledge, how does your organization [or the industry] define sexual harassment? Sexual assault?
4. What institutional forces or unique circumstances of the commercial maritime experience may exacerbate a climate that allows sexual assault or harassment at sea?
5. What is your company's strategy for preventing and responding to incidents of SA/SH at sea? How is this communicated to officers, crews and others onboard ships and how are they held accountable?
6. How are you measuring success in achieving the strategy?
7. What data do you collect regarding the incidence of SA/SH ashore or on your ships?
8. Where and how would an employee report an incident of sexual assault or harassment? Who is responsible for addressing any complaints?
9. How confident are you that if an employee reports a sexual assault or sexual harassment incident the complaint will be handled appropriately?
10. Are you personally aware of any sexual assault or sexual harassment incidents either in port or at sea? Have you personally ever spoken to anyone about sexual assault or harassment?
11. What is the value of the USMMA Sea Year program to the maritime industry?
12. Safety is a top priority of the Department of Transportation. If you were a senior DOT official, what steps would you take to ensure the safety of midshipmen during the Sea Year?

## Ship Leadership

1. Please show me where you post your policies, complaint process, and complaint forms.
2. Do you provide this via any other means to the cadets?
3. What do you do to introduce your cadets to your ship and its policies/procedures?
4. Do you feel cadets are well prepared when they arrive? If not, what would you like to see improved?
5. Have you observed any differences between the USMMA midshipmen and the other cadets who serve on your ship?
6. Who on your ship would cadets have available to them to help with any issues, including sexual harassment and sexual assault?
7. How confidential is external communication so that cadets could reach out to someone off ship for assistance (Designated Person Ashore, school, law enforcement, etc.)? [Cadets expressed concern that email is not really private.]
8. What issues or concerns do you have about cadets that USMMA could address?
9. Do you feel that cadets who arrive as sophomores are mature enough for the experiences they will be exposed to as a cadet?

## Cadets (State Maritime Cadets if Any Assigned to the Ship)

1. Describe your experience so far.
2. What could have been done to better prepare you for your time onboard?
3. Do you have ongoing communication with your school? What is it like? Has it been helpful? What improvement/ changes would you like to see?
4. Have you experienced or observed any sexual harassment, hazing, sexual assault, or bullying?
5. Have you experienced or observed any behaviors that made you uncomfortable?
6. What avenues are available to you onboard ship to address concerns?
7. Do you trust these resources?

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8. Do you feel you can reach back to your school and get a quick response that meets your needs?

## Crew Member

1. How do you feel about the culture and climate on this ship?
2. Describe how you would characterize your experience with cadets (e.g., positive, negative, a distraction, etc.)?
3. Do you feel cadets are well prepared when they arrive? If not, what would you like to see improved?
4. Have you observed any differences between the USMMA midshipmen and the other cadets who serve on your ship?
5. What issues or concerns do you have about cadets that USMMA could address?

## USMMA ALUMNI

1. What year did you graduate from the US Merchant Marine Academy?
2. Why did you decide to attend the United States Merchant Marine Academy?
3. What does being a USMMA alumnus mean to you?
4. Immediately upon graduation, which service or profession did you enter?
5. How often, if ever, have you been back to Kings Point since graduating?
6. Recalling from memory, how would you describe the culture at the Academy during the time you attended there?
7. How would you describe the environment for female Midshipmen at the Academy?
8. How would you describe the overall acceptance of lesbian, gay, bisexual, and/or transgendered Midshipmen?
9. Describe your Sea Year experiences. What was the value of the Sea Year to you?
10. What institutional forces or unique circumstances of the commercial maritime experience may exacerbate a climate that allows sexual assault or harassment at the Academy? At sea?
11. Did you have experiences on campus or at sea that made you feel like your safety was at risk? If so, how frequent were these experiences? Can you recall or describe an experience that made you feel uncomfortable?
12. When you attended USMMA, do you recall receiving training on the issues of sexual harassment? Sexual assault?
13. If so, how often? What did you think of these trainings? In your opinion, what was helpful, what was not?
14. As best you can remember, what protocols were in place for reporting and investigating sexual assault and sexual harassment?
15. How confident were you that if you or another midshipman reported a sexual assault/harassment the USMMA would handle the situation appropriately?

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16. Given the climate on campus at the time, if you saw a midshipman in a situation that you believed could result in a sexual assault, how likely would you have been to intervene? How confident were you that a fellow midshipman would intervene if you found yourself in a similar situation?
  17. Have you known anyone who reported a sexual assault or harassment incident to the Academy? If yes, to the best of your ability, how did they view their experience?
  18. Did a fellow Midshipmen ever confide in you that she or he had experienced sexual assault or harassment, but decided against reporting the incident to law enforcement or the Academy?
  19. In your opinion, what influenced midshipmen who experienced sexual assault or harassment to not report the incidents during your time at the Academy?
  20. Based on your own experience, what is the most important thing Academy leadership could do today to address the issue of sexual assault and sexual harassment going forward?