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Many public universities in Alabama require consent training

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Auburn University does not have a mandatory program but encourages students to complete an online course covering mental health, sexual assault and civility. (Dawn Kent Azok dazok@al.com)



By **Abbey Crain**, acrain@al.com

Mandy Parente, interpersonal violence prevention coordinator at the University of Alabama at Birmingham, said students have been receiving mandatory online and in person Title IX training covering consent and bystander training since 2014.

Most public university students around the state undergo some form of consent and or sexual assault awareness training. These programs vary nationally from in-person sessions with trained staff to online courses on consent and healthy relationships. In 2015, the New England Journal of Medicine published a study on a campus sexual violence prevention program that trained women to avoid sexual assault. The study found the program reduced college women's chance of being assaulted by 50 percent. However the course by a doctor at the Centers for Disease Control by placing the responsibility on women to avoid being assaulted.

"Students have reported feeling higher levels of self efficacy and said they are more likely to intervene if they see sexual violence happening," Parente said. "They also have a better understanding of what consent is and the nuances of consent."



Parente is now working with students who asked to create a Consent Campaign on campus.

Incoming students at the University of North Alabama are required to take a sexual assault prevention courses online before signing up for classes. The Title IX office offers courses throughout the year including Mandatory Reporting, Bystander, and Title IX training.



"We also go into every First Year Experience course for freshman and talk about Title IX and bystander intervention. That program also includes a discussion about consent, alcohol and identifying signs of intimate partner violence," Tammy Jacques, assistant vice president for student affairs and Title IX coordinator, said.

Auburn University does not have a mandatory program but encourages students to complete an online course covering mental health, sexual assault and civility. Eric Smith, director of health promotion and wellness services, said they receive a response rate of above 90 percent. Auburn also offers the Green Dot training program, which encourages bystanders to act if they see a sexual assault happening.



"Since the majority of individuals will not be victims or perpetrators of power-based personal violence we believe harnessing bystanders can actually prevent incidents from occurring," Smith said.

The University of Alabama requires incoming students to complete an online program through AlphaPoint, which includes issues such as sexual harassment and communication skills.

Many schools across the country began implementing consent training after Emma Sulkowicz spent their year carrying a dorm room mattress around Columbia's campus in New York to protest their university's response to their alleged sexual assault in 2014.

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