University of Washington Health & Safety Compliance

Priority Item 3: Safety of Minors in University-sponsored Programs

Challenge Statement
Ranging in age from three to seventeen, more than 24,000 minors participate in over 100 University of Washington programs as varied as the Educational Outreach Summer Day Camps, the Robinson Center for Young Scholars, and the Center for Urban Horticulture Nature Preschool. While many of the programs are well established and have demonstrated a remarkable history of safety and success, there is currently no method for the institution to identify, monitor and support the University-sponsored programs that serve children and youth under the age of 18. Moreover, federal and state laws do not prescribe the specific policies and procedures needed to keep minors safe and healthy.

Context
In the wake of the child abuse scandal at the Pennsylvania State University (Penn State), states across the nation passed legislation requiring college and university employees to report suspected child abuse. As of 2012, Washington state law dictates that such reporting be made directly to law enforcement or the Department of Social and Health Services. UW Administrative Policy Statement 11.8, Reporting Suspected Child Abuse, further details these expectations with regard to faculty, staff and volunteers. Penn State commissioned the law firm Freeh Sporkin & Sullivan, LLP to perform an independent investigation. The resulting “Freeh Report” was published in 2012 and included recommendations for institutional governance and administration, aimed at protecting minors at Penn State. The UW Office of the President reviewed the Freeh Report and mapped its recommendations to existing UW policies and practices. At the same time, a Safety of Minors Committee was convened; its recommendations included the creation of the UW Youth Programs Development and Support Office, which launches this month.

The University of Washington sponsors many on- and off-campus programs whose primary focus is working with and for minors – their mission, practices, size, age range served, and infrastructure vary widely. Many of the programs offer important educational and mentoring experiences for the UW’s enrolled students. It is in the interest of the institution to ensure that these youth-serving programs operate within the University’s educational and strategic mission, as well as operationalize high standards for safety and compliance with laws and regulations.

Mitigation Plan
To ensure the safety of minors on campus, institutional infrastructure will be developed to identify, monitor and support youth-serving programs:

- Create a comprehensive inventory of UW-sponsored programs and services in which minors participate
- Work with programs to identify, develop and share age- and program-appropriate guidelines that align with University policy and reflect national best practices
- Create and launch a set of educational training and outreach programs for university employees whose work involves programming for or direct interaction with minors
- Identify, prioritize and develop policies that operationalize institutional goals and objectives. Possible priority areas include: screening and selecting employees and volunteers, including background checks; training requirements for employees and volunteers who work with minors; establishing and monitoring standards of conduct for interactions between staff and minors; incident reporting and response; and communication with parents and guardians.
• Provide strategic support and consultation services for the 100+ University programs whose primary purpose is working with minors

**Project Leads**
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**Sample of Relevant Laws and Regulations**

**Federal**
• Title IX of the Education Amendments of 1972: 20 U.S.C. 1681-1688
• Americans with Disabilities Act: 42 U.S.C. 12101-12213
• Clery Act: 20 U.S.C. 1092(f)

**State**
• Abuse of Children: Chapter 26.44 RCW
• Report of Child Abuse or Neglect – Reporting Responsibilities: Chapter 28B.10.846 RCW