

MAY 12, 2022

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2022 REPORT  
ON SEXUAL RESPECT  
AT CALIFORNIA  
INSTITUTE OF THE ARTS

CaLARTS

## TO THE CALARTS COMMUNITY:

A year ago, we introduced our [first comprehensive report](#) on the work across CalArts to prevent sexual misconduct. We documented our extensive recommitment in recent years to engage the community, rewrite policies, reinforce preventive practices, and improve the availability of resources for survivors and their allies.

We also outlined our forthcoming work and pledged to sustain our accountability and transparency through regular reporting to the community.

In the spirit of that transparency, I introduce today our second annual Institute report on sexual respect. As you will see here, we made important strides over the past 12 months. We have focused on training; on gauging, through a community-wide survey, our culture around sexual respect; and strengthening the Institute's infrastructure for ongoing progress, among other steps.

We continue to prioritize community engagement and regular, frank conversations around this crucial subject. As I indicated in introducing last year's report, we all must communicate thoroughly and honestly about our shared commitment to, experiences with, and specific actions to support sexual respect. This open dialogue is key to fostering the permanent, durable culture we hold as fundamental—a culture in which all are welcome, safe, and empowered to thrive.

To that end, we have scheduled several town hall meetings for students, faculty, staff, and alumnx. These gatherings, to be held the week of Sept. 26, 2022, will center on findings and an action plan stemming from *Where We Stand: The CalArts Survey on Sexual Respect*, which was open to participation by the entire CalArts community in November and December 2021. A report covering the survey results and next steps will be distributed to the community prior to the town halls in the fall 2022 semester.

Representative bodies of our shared-governance system—namely the Student Union and faculty, staff, and alumnx councils—will have robust opportunities to engage in detail with the survey outcomes and next steps. A related series of listening sessions on sexual respect will begin this month and continue into the fall. [La Shonda Coleman](#), the Title IX coordinator at Pepperdine University, will help us lead these sessions, the first of which will be specific to students who are graduating this spring.

I thank you for your dedication to one another and to the CalArts community. We have much to be proud of. With our collective vision, momentum, and dedication to one another, we are poised to keep building a more secure, inclusive culture for all Calartians.

**GRATEFULLY,  
DIONNE SIMMONS**

**Director of Community Rights and Responsibilities  
Title IX Coordinator**

# FOUNDATIONAL: STRENGTHENING THE INFRASTRUCTURE FOR SEXUAL RESPECT AT CALARTS

## SUMMARY

California Institute of the Arts prioritizes an inclusive, secure, and welcoming environment as foundational to realizing its mission: empowering artists to transform themselves, one another, and the world through artistic practice.

Building on its work over the past several years to strengthen a climate of sexual respect, CalArts focused from May 2021 to May 2022 on tools to enable that climate. These efforts cover a gamut from training and supportive mechanisms to Institute resources, including a new working committee to help shape future actions.

In the same vein, a central pillar of the year's work is *Where We Stand: The CalArts Survey on Sexual Respect*, made available to all members of the CalArts community in November and December 2021. Results from the survey, to be made public to the community in the fall 2022 semester, will be key in informing future measures to improve climate.

This report, the Institute's second annual report on sexual respect as prepared by the Office of Community Rights and Responsibilities, details the CalArts work in this area for the 12 months that began in May 2021. Likewise, it previews some of the Institute's forthcoming steps to continue fostering a culture and climate of sexual respect. The earlier report, issued in May 2021, is available [on the CalArts website](#).

## KEY ADVANCEMENTS

CalArts introduced several resources to make more clear the specific mechanisms available for those confronted with sexual misconduct. These include:

- a reworked and expanded website for the [Office of Community Rights and Responsibilities](#), which includes specifics for the reporting of misconduct, procedural options available for survivors and their allies, responsibilities of responding parties, and support available inside and outside the Institute
- a new informational brochure made available across the community—"Know Your Rights"—that summarizes and distills CalArts policies and resources on sexual misconduct and discrimination

- a new informational card that captures the most essential details from the *Know Your Rights* brochure
- presentations by Dionne Simmons and Elizabeth Peisner, the director of community rights and responsibilities and the confidential student resource advocate, respectively, to students in each of the CalArts Schools, emphasizing Institute processes for reporting sexual misconduct and receiving support

Because understanding sexual misconduct is central to prevention, CalArts has worked with its individual Schools to review specific types of training. These types of trainings include foundational instruction in the general recognition and prevention of sexual misconduct, as well as lessons that are more specific to particular areas of the arts. These more specialized conversations with faculty have included a focus on consent and expectation-setting within specific academic programs. Forthcoming training sessions include those particular to intimacy, boundaries, respect, and consent.

To bolster supportive resources available to CalArtians affected by sexual misconduct, the Institute has been collaborating with external organizations that refer students to help. These partners have supported the Institute's training efforts. Likewise, the Institute is strengthening its relationships with these partners to enhance referral options and CalArts' internal support programs over the longer term.

Meanwhile, the Institute has introduced a working committee on sexual respect. Eva Liebovitz, a student representative; Andrea Fontenot, Kaucyila Brooke, and Lee Anne Schmitt; faculty representatives; Cori Bratby-Rudd, an alumnx representative; Elizabeth Franks, a staff representative; Eva Graham, an administration representative; and Dionne Simmons, the Title IX coordinator and director of community rights and responsibilities, led the committee's initial work. A proactive body, it is a central advisory group that will review CalArts practices around sexual respect and make recommendations for future action. Its review of results from *Where We Stand: The CalArts Survey on Sexual Respect* will be a vital component as the Institute identifies its next areas of focus.

The survey itself marks an important milestone. Led by faculty member [Kevin Swartout of Georgia State University](#), an expert on sexual violence and in data analysis, the survey drew responses from students, faculty, staff, alumnx, and administrators in November and December 2021. Swartout is leading a tabulation and detailed analysis of the survey responses, which will be reported to the entire CalArts community early in the fall 2022 semester in a series of events and with a formal written report. The report will include specifics of an Institute response to the survey—a response for which the Institute has received external counsel from [La Shonda Coleman](#), the Title IX coordinator at Pepperdine University.

As part of her engagement, Coleman has been evaluating CalArts' practices and policies on sexual respect, with a goal of developing recommendations for consideration by the CalArts community.

## INDICATORS OF PROGRESS

Momentum in stopping sexual disrespect can be difficult to quantify. Still, the Institute has noted meaningful progress in the reporting of sexual misconduct: Reports made by students and other current community members—excluding faculty and staff, who are mandated reporters—increased 41.3% since January 2020, when Dionne Simmons began tracking the data as the then-new director of community rights and responsibilities.

Such indicators demonstrate that community members have a better understanding of their options when they seek support for issues of sexual misconduct. Those stepping forward to seek support do not need to engage in a formal process in order to seek supportive measures. It appears that the range of options available to the community and growing awareness of those options, taken together, are driving greater usage of the supportive resources that CalArts makes available.

Another promising indicator: Alumnx have been in steady contact with the Office of Community Rights and Responsibilities to discuss their interest and pursue sustained involvement in the Institute's work on sexual respect. Many have sought to share information about their own experiences and to offer guidance on prospective resources. CalArts will continue to solicit and prioritize alumnx involvement in its work on sexual respect.

## WHAT'S NEXT

Leading up to the town hall gatherings centered on the *Where We Stand* survey results, CalArts will host listening sessions led by La Shonda Coleman to encourage discussion and reflection around sexual respect in the community. Input collected in these sessions will be part of Coleman's ongoing work to evaluate sexual respect-related policies, practices, and processes at CalArts. Her recommendations on these fronts are expected by the fall 2022 semester, when they will go before the working committee on sexual respect for initial review and consideration.

The committee's work in the 2022-23 academic year is expected to include a detailed review of the *Where We Stand* survey data and Coleman's recommendations, plus the development of proposed short- and long-term strategies to strengthen the Institute's climate around sexual respect. A call to fill committee vacancies will be distributed across the CalArts community.

Also in the new academic year, the Office of Community Rights and Responsibilities will collaborate with Schools on their individual needs around sexual respect, cultivate deeper engagement across the Institute with the working committee on sexual respect, and foster greater

membership and representation on the committee. The School deans are working directly with the Office, including on the introduction of the *Where We Stand* survey results to the community.

Training in the works for 2022-23 includes small-group sessions to be incorporated as part of new student and employee orientation. Additionally, the Office of Community Rights and Responsibilities is exploring, with faculty, several programmatic possibilities that would bring to campus artists who focus on sexual respect and harm reduction.

### A FINAL NOTE

Improving the climate for sexual respect at CalArts hinges on support and engagement across the community. The Office of Community Rights and Responsibilities invites feedback on this report, along with questions, suggestions, and any other input. Members of the community can use this [online feedback form](#).

The Institute's next annual report on sexual respect is due for release in May 2023.