

Gender-Based Violence SACUA Statement

The allegations against seven Cornell University students, dubbed the “Cornell 7” fraternity, describe a deeply disturbing sexual assault and raise serious concerns about every university’s responsibility to provide a safe and equitable learning environment for students, faculty, and staff. This case also hits too close to home for the University of Michigan to remain silent.

Based on the U-M Equity, Civil Rights & Title IX (ECRT) office’s publicly released data, there is a systemic pattern of gender-based violence being under-reported and under-investigated at the university. The [December 2024 University of Michigan Climate Survey related to Sex and Gender](#) found that 54% of Ann Arbor students had experienced at least one form of sexual or gender-based violence during the academic year surveyed. Among undergraduates, 70% of women and 78% of transgender and nonbinary students reported sexual or gender-based harassment by other students. 14% of students experienced sexual violence, including unwanted sexual contact, rape, or attempted rape. Yet only 8% of students who experienced sexual violence reported telling someone who worked for the University, and only 55% of students knew where to seek help for themselves or a friend. As the sentiment expressed with the 80.2% of faculty who voted in favor of the [“Motion on Accountability for the Handling of Gender-Based Violence and Discrimination at the University”](#) indicates, the Faculty Senate are deeply concerned about gender-based violence on campus.

U-M has addressed some concerns in recent years, but the underlying issues remain. We should lead in prevention, transparency, and accountability. We call on the U-M administration to commission an independent review of sexual and gender-based violence in Greek Life. We recommend the Offices of Student Life and Dean of Students ensure greater accountability for consent education and safety measures in our fraternities and sororities. This should include an impartial investigation of Greek Life in partnership with the Office of Student Accountability (OSA) at UM. We would advocate for a review of the bylaws of the 4 Pan-Hellenic Councils at U-M, with specific language for preventing gender-based violence. Finally, we suggest an ombuds or advocate, possibly housed in ECRT, who would help student victims navigate the maze that lies before them. Too often, victims of sexual assault lose academic momentum and focus, and the University does not help, as the offices involved in these questions are often not in direct communication with each other.

“The Leaders and the Best” must mean more than a slogan. It must be a commitment to protecting our community and holding the University accountable.

Approved by the Senate Advisory Committee on University Affairs (SACUA) on

October 23, 2026