

Teresa A. Sullivan
Sexual Misconduct Conference – Welcome Remarks/Fairstein Intro
Monday, Feb. 10, 2014; 9:00 AM
Old Cabell Hall

Good morning. I want to welcome the presidents, chancellors, and colleagues who have traveled from colleges and universities across the country; our guest speakers; and members of our own UVa community who are here today.

I would also like to recognize a member of UVa's Board of Visitors who is with us today: Allison Cryor DiNardo. Thank you for coming, Allison.

Our purpose in coming together for the next two days is to launch a national discussion about one of the most troubling issues on America's college campuses. Sexual misconduct is troubling for many reasons, because of the many ways it can damage both individuals and institutions. When it occurs, it undermines some of the highest principles that we espouse in higher learning — principles of individual freedom, personal accountability, and shared community.

Many people, including President Obama quite recently, have argued that sexual assault has become an epidemic in America, with college campuses as a hot bed of this epidemic. We are here because we agree that we are facing a major problem on our campuses. We are here because we need to talk about the issues on many levels – including the level of institutional accountability. We are here because we want to make changes to a culture that we know fuels sexual misconduct.

First, we need to start the conversation. Then we need to turn the conversation into action. Then we need to work to ensure that our actions change the culture.

We have come together so we can talk candidly about the issues we face; so we can learn from one another; and so we can seek ways to change cultural forces and other forces that lead to sexual misconduct on our campuses.

This conference provides a venue for us to discuss what we have learned in our respective schools, and how we have changed our

policies and practices regarding sexual misconduct as a result.

We will also discuss issues related to prevention — how we can try to stop sexual assault before it happens.

We need to acknowledge that the issues surrounding sexual misconduct are complex. For example, if both parties involved in an alleged case of misconduct are our students, we have to be impartial in the adjudication process and respect the rights of the accused. When incidents do occur, we must consider them in a highly emotional context, and yet we have to be very rational in our deliberations.

We also need to acknowledge that alcohol, drug use, and the “hook-up” culture among students frequently contribute to sexual misconduct. These cultural issues are serious problems in their own right, and when sexual misconduct is involved, they magnify risk and complicate the adjudication process.

At the same time, even if we could manage to banish alcohol abuse, drug use, and the hook-up culture, we would still have the problem of sexual assault on college campuses.

What are our responsibilities for prevention, adjudication, and remediation? What needs to be changed and why? What have we learned from student activism on this issue? What steps are we taking on our campuses, and which initiatives seem most effective? These are just some of the questions we face.

Clearly, we will not find all the answers or solutions in the next two days. But we can begin a discussion that can become an ongoing dialogue. Dartmouth is already planning the next conference on this topic for this summer: July 13-17. You will hear more about that from Dartmouth President Phil Hanlon.

Several presidents and chancellors will take part in a Panel of Presidents later today. The participation by these college leaders is a testament to two things: 1) the seriousness of the issue; and 2) their personal commitment to tackling the issue head on and to finding solutions.

During lunch we will have the opportunity to hear from Catherine Lhamon, the Assistant Secretary for Civil Rights at

the U.S. Department of Education. We look forward to hearing her remarks.

Right now, we have the privilege to hear from of the nation's top legal experts on crimes of violence against women and children ... Linda Fairstein.

Linda is a senior adviser at K2 Intelligence, where she leads the Campus Sexual Misconduct Group, specializing in best practices and Title IX compliance at academic institutions. From 1972 until 2002, she served in the office of the New York County District Attorney, where she was chief of the pioneering Sex Crimes Prosecution Unit. In that position, she supervised the investigation and trial of Manhattan cases involving sexual assault, domestic violence, child abuse, and homicides.

Linda is the author of "Sexual Violence: Our War Against Rape," which was a *New York Times* Notable Book of the Year, and she's a regular contributor on criminal justice issues to magazines, journals, and online publications.

Linda is an honors graduate of Vassar College and the University of Virginia School of Law. In 1998, her Law School classmates established a scholarship fund in her honor that supports Law students who are interested in pursuing careers in the public sector. They are known as the “Fairstein Fellows.”

Linda has received numerous awards for her legal work and advocacy. These include the Federal Bar Council’s Emory Buckner Award for Public Service and the UJA Federation’s Proskauer Award. For her work on behalf of victims of violence, she received Columbia University’s School of Medicine and School of Nursing Award for Excellence; the Anti-Violence Project “Courage” Award; *Glamour* Magazine’s Women of the Year Award; and the American Heart Association Women of Courage Award. In her free time, Linda writes crime novels. The 15th book in her best-selling series of novels – “Death Angel” – was published last summer. Ladies and gentlemen, please welcome Linda Fairstein.