Experience Report: Unlikely Allies in Preventing Sexual Misconduct: 
Student Led Prevention Efforts in a Technical Communication Classroom

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Unlikely Allies in Preventing Sexual Misconduct: Student Led Prevention Efforts in a Technical Communication Classroom

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ABSTRACT
Students’ participation in relevant service learning can have a unique impact on their institution of higher education, if provided the opportunity. This article explores student-designed sexual misconduct prevention efforts taking place in an undergraduate project management course at one institution of higher education. We found that involving students in particular kinds of campus communication design and implementation simultaneously improved those efforts and offered students the opportunity to participate in impactful civic projects. In our article, we first examine the most common approach to sexual misconduct prevention, while considering its limitations. We then introduce a nontraditional collaboration—technical communication student involvement within prevention work—which resulted in new efforts. Finally, we illustrate how instructors can integrate similar collaborations.

CCS Concepts
CCS → Social and professional topics → Professional topics → Computing education → Model curricula

Keywords
student involvement, pedagogy, service learning, violence prevention

INTRODUCTION
Sexual misconduct is an umbrella term for sexual harassment, sexual assault, dating and domestic violence, and stalking. Sexual misconduct, particularly sexual assault, is prevalent within the college-aged population (18-24 years), with 13% of individuals in the United States experiencing it while being a college student (Cantor et al., 2020). And, while sexual misconduct has long been recognized as a problem for college campuses (McMahon et al., 2019), the implementation of student-designed prevention efforts is lacking and its successes less studied.

In 2019, a unique collaboration involving sexual misconduct prevention professionals and one technical communication professor began. This collaboration foregrounded student knowledges and experiences to uniquely situate students as experts in prevention efforts. Rather than focusing on only majority identity students, who are often white, heterosexual, and able-bodied (refer to Coker et al., 2016, 2017; Jozkowski, 2015; Peterson et al., 2018), the results of this ongoing collaboration have produced projects that more effectively consider and reach students of many backgrounds.

In this co-authored reflection, we overview relevant student involvement, service learning, and sexual misconduct prevention literature. Second, we share the results of a national survey we conducted to better understand existing collaborations and service learning efforts around sexual misconduct prevention within institutions of higher education across the country. Then, we describe our collaboration and outcomes, ending with takeaways for those seeking to develop their own partnerships with prevention professionals.

Admittedly, in telling the story of our collaboration, our goals are not merely instrumentalist or hyperpragmatic (Scott, 2004), but activist in nature. In other words, as Clark (2004) and Scott (2004) wrote, technical instructors should not only seek to describe the work we engage in with our community allies, but rather we should also seek partnerships that result in action and critiques of power. We hope by bringing forward this burden our institutional colleagues are working with, others can be inspired to work with...
their respective prevention professionals in a similar manner. Our ultimate goal is to reduce sexual misconduct and empower survivors to come forward for justice and healing.

Before we begin, following Natasha Jones, Kristen Moore, and Rebecca Walton’s (2016) prompt for researcher reflections of positionality, privilege, and power (p. 220), we want to acknowledge our own in relation to our research. As a team, we are white researchers situated at a predominately white institution (PWI) and we occupy differing identities: some of us are abled and some dis/abled, transgender and nontransgender, queer and straight, working class and economically privileged. Further, we represent a spectrum of institutional power as faculty, staff, and students. As we occupy these various positions of privilege and marginalization, we also want to call attention to the unique fit of this collaboration within the Technical Communication and Rhetoric program at Utah State University (USU), as it has been designed to incorporate such social justice concerns and community engagement, making this intra-university partnership a fitting place for such a pilot.

STUDENT INVOLVEMENT AND COMMUNITY-ENGAGED LEARNING IN SEXUAL MISCONDUCT PREVENTION: A BRIEF HISTORY

In 2019, one of the authors on this paper (Edenfield) published in Communication Design Quarterly an article comparing institutional modes of sexual misconduct prevention to grassroots, peer-to-peer modes in the form of zines, specifically queer zines. Through his investigation, he came to understand that technical communicators should become invested in sexual misconduct prevention (Edenfield, 2019, p. 1). After the article was published, to leverage his research into the change called for in the paper, he shared it with sexual misconduct prevention professionals, Gallegos and Fishburn, at his institution, which resulted in a meeting to dialogue about how those changes could be brought about through their offices. This collaboration was born in that first meeting. Additionally, with the generous support of USU’s Center for Intersectional Gender Studies and Research, we were able to retain a student researcher to help us situate our collaboration within national prevention efforts. This national research was crucial to understanding whether what we were trying to accomplish was unique and whether our collaboration could address concerns with the efficacy of existing sexual misconduct prevention efforts that survey participants identified.

To begin, such a collaboration is not new to the field of technical communication, which has a long history of engaging students in service- and community-engaged learning (Allen & Benninghoff, 2004; Clark, 2004; Kimme Hea & Wendler Shah, 2016; Scott, 2004; Shah, 2018). In 2004, J. Blake Scott described the benefits of service learning for students.

Service-learning also provides students opportunities to develop, reflect about, and enact civic responsibility. This emphasis on civic responsibility can be motivating to students, leading them to look beyond their career preparation or their success in the course, and prompting them to engage with others in community problem-solving. (p. 289)

Though the pedagogical practice of service learning has been well documented, the impacts and complexities of working with community stakeholders is less understood. In 2016, Kimme Hea and Wendler Shah reported, “[T]here is a dearth of research on the silent partners of these projects: the community partners” (p. 48). The remainder of this section will examine this understudied area, in our case, prevention professionals. In the sections below, we endeavor to raise awareness to the struggles many prevention professionals experience and to the reason why student-involved design offers a potential remedy to those struggles.

SEXUAL MISCONDUCT PREVENTION RESEARCH

With steady rates of sexual misconduct and an increase in national attention, institutions of higher education are experiencing more calls for action regarding their response to sexual misconduct (McMahon et al., 2019). However, sexual misconduct prevention research has not moved at the same speed as these demands (Jozkowski, 2015; McMahon et al., 2019). The majority of prevention and education efforts in the United States that are focused on the college student demographic address a small number of sexual misconduct elements (i.e., sexual assault and dating/domestic violence) and centers on bystander intervention programs (Crooks et al., 2019; Vladutiu et al., 2011).

The shift in priority to bystander intervention programs is most likely attributed to federal mandates, such as the Campus SaVE Act, which require their inclusion in order to receive federal funding (Coker et al., 2016). Most sexual misconduct prevention efforts use a combination of risk reduction and bystander intervention strategies and may also include additional topics, such as consent and alcohol education (Cooper & Dranger, 2018; McMahon et al., 2019; Moynihan et al., 2015). Contrary to “traditional” risk reduction interventions, the bystander approach treats participants as potential allies, which eliminates feelings of defensiveness and victim blaming (Coker et al., 2017; Kleinsasser et al., 2015). Bystander intervention programs have reduced violence perpetration and victimization rates in women and have decreased overall interpersonal violence (Coker et al., 2015, 2016, 2017). Although research supports the effectiveness of bystander intervention programs (Coker et al., 2015; 2016; 2017), less has been written about the efficacy of other prevention and education efforts, such as consent workshops or healthy relationships messaging and efforts that address other forms of sexual misconduct. Research data about the impact of using peer educators to deliver sexual misconduct prevention trainings is also available (Vladutiu et al., 2011), but little has been written about using students in other ways.

The push to include bystander intervention programming in institution-wide prevention efforts has increased prevention professionals’ knowledge and understanding regarding the effectiveness of bystander programs, yet there are still few clear best practice recommendations for other sexual misconduct prevention efforts, particularly ones that center student involvement in their design and/or implementation.

The lack of established best practices has created dependence on other “traditional” methods of implementing prevention and education efforts. For instance, both risk reduction and bystander intervention programs primarily use facilitative approaches, such as in-person presentations and workshops, role-plays, and skill training. However, the greatest effects are achieved when participants are allowed to participate in multiple ways (DeGue et al., 2014; Paul & Gray, 2011), as in our collaboration.
The recruitment of bystanders as allies is also a challenge, as recruitment is a rhetorical (persuasive) act that clearly must be adapted to changing rhetorical situations; for example, what is applicable to a married woman with children may not apply to an unmarried woman who is a freshman on campus and just beginning to date (to be clear, consent is a relevant concern for both of these women). The delayed response to all of these challenges presents its own issues as sexual misconduct does not wait for institutional responses. Prevention professionals must be able to respond to the current situation and also be future-looking to anticipate coming needs, an activity that requires active research.

The recipients of sexual misconduct prevention programs have also become customary. Gender-focused interventions are common among risk reduction strategies (Cassel, 2012; Gidycz & Dardis, 2014) and tailoring sexual misconduct programs to first-year college students is well documented (Austin et al., 2016; Berkowitz et al., 2014; Coker et al., 2016; Gidycz et al., 2011; McMahon et al., 2014; Moynihan et al., 2015; Peterson et al., 2018). Additionally, recruitment of student participants in studies assessing the efficacy of these programs has primarily drawn upon those in related disciplines, such as social work, psychology, and public health fields (Bennett et al., 2014; Gidycz et al., 2008). Given that the participants in most studies assessing the efficacy of these programs are white, able-bodied, cisgendered, heterosexual, 18-19-year olds, current prevention efforts largely center the needs and experiences of individuals with those identities, who are less likely to experience sexual misconduct while in college as compared to their marginalized peers (Coker et al., 2016, 2017; Jozkowski, 2015; Peterson et al., 2018). The almost nonexistent prevention efforts in the research literature outside of “traditional” prevention efforts is alarming. Rather than searching for interventions that fit the minimum qualifications for institutions to remain compliant with federal mandates, emphasis should be placed on creating meaningful and lasting impact through a variety of strategies that relate to the entire student body.

Each of these challenges can be addressed—in part—by student design and implementation. By designing prevention efforts using a social justice praxis, students can research, design, and implement programs that embrace a wider range of student experiences—including their own and that of their peers—that involve participants in the learning and that go beyond bystander intervention training. If institutions of higher education want to address sexual misconduct within their campus communities, they need to approach the issue holistically and creatively and not rely solely on approaches that have been formally analyzed.

THE NATIONAL NEED FOR COLLABORATIVE PREVENTION EFFORTS

To more fully situate our collaboration in the context of national trends about collaborative sexual misconduct prevention efforts, we created a national survey (IRB #11283) to gather from other institutions of higher education information about their prevention efforts outside the realm of bystander intervention programming. Specifically, the desire was to learn whether and how institutions incorporate student involvement in their prevention and education efforts.

We distributed the survey nationally using the Campus Advocacy & Prevention Professionals Association’s (CAPPA) listserv. CAPPA was chosen to recruit responses because their work is focused on creating a network for campus-based professionals involved in sexual misconduct efforts (CAPPA, n.d.). The inclusion criteria for being able to complete the survey were for respondents to self-identify as a professional whose role involves sexual misconduct prevention and to have an education from an institution of higher education.

The survey consisted of 15 questions including general demographic and employment information, experiences tailoring sexual misconduct prevention efforts, and experiences with student involvement in prevention efforts. A total of 25 unique participants completed the survey, and 24 were included in the analysis (one was excluded due to the respondent not being over the age of 18). Unsurprisingly, survey results aligned with the research, revealing sexual misconduct prevention efforts are developed and implemented through “conventional” means of design, delivery, and content.

Participants identified the following challenges student involvement brings to prevention efforts:

- Training is always a challenge; they need to know the material and master the skills to deliver it.
- Our Title IX office often treats student engagement and feedback as unnecessary or treats it as an obligation.
- It is challenging to recruit students to participate.
- Staff need extra capacity for supervision and training.
- Sometimes things take longer, such as getting feedback, as we are competing for time and engagement against other commitments.
- Some faculty/staff feel our student staff presenting is less legitimate than professional staff.
- Making sure students are compensated—right now my office has about 3 paid positions; the rest of them are volunteer, so I created a for-credit training course so the volunteer peer educators can at least get course credit for it.
- There needs to be a significant amount of training for them, and with only .5 FTE focused on prevention & education, that is a lot to ask.
- It can be a challenge to give consistent, accurate information across stakeholders and various faculty/staff.
- Students do not get access to administrators who make the policies, many times they share feedback with staff who are not decision makers.

Many of the cited challenges focused on logistics, such as recruiting students, feeling students need to be extensively trained, needing additional staff to conduct those trainings, and students being seen as less credible. These challenges should not deter prevention professionals from finding creative solutions to engage students. Prevention efforts that not only involve students but also allow them to take the lead in developing solutions have the potential to have the greatest impact (Cooper & Dranger, 2018).

One opportunity for institutions to address these challenges and to expand the impact of their efforts is through partnerships between academic units and staff responsible for coordinating prevention and education. We believe embedding sexual misconduct
prevention and education into an academic course gives students exposure to the efforts, enables them to contribute to projects not available through the institution’s “formal” student engagement channels, and addresses the other challenges indicated above, such as the challenge of targeting diverse audiences.

Student involvement benefits not only the students but also the institution. Students develop thinking and problem-solving skills as well as empathy and personal ethics, all while contributing to the served communities (Berman, 2006). Student design in prevention efforts centers their knowledge and experiences, builds bridges between professionals and students, and encourages tailoring to the specific communities to which students belong. Engaging students in the problem-solving process of an issue that directly impacts them often creates greater buy-in to the larger cause in the process.

To summarize, in the above sections, we have outlined the existing literature and shared the challenges of sexual misconduct prevention and the benefits of student design in addressing those concerns. The sections below share our collaboration experiences, ending with takeaways for educators and prevention professionals who want to develop similar collaborations.

UNLIKELY ALLIES BETWEEN PROFESSIONALS AND STUDENTS

In the summer of 2016, following an internal inquiry, USU began to implement several research-based sexual misconduct prevention efforts through newly formed prevention specialist positions. Over the next three years, the institution implemented evidence-informed bystander intervention programming as well as a peer educator program through the institution’s sexual misconduct advocacy and therapy office.

These programs were effective in beginning a campus-culture shift, but several gaps in prevention efforts remained. First, most of the institution’s prevention efforts lacked tailoring towards specific student populations and instead broadly addressed the entire campus community. Second, students were not involved when designing the education and prevention materials, and even when students were involved, the freedom for creativity was limited because of the need to comply with federal mandates. Thus, students were instructed by prevention professionals to stick close to the research-based curriculum that had already been developed, resulting in a curriculum that was less applicable to the target community. Finally, these students largely came from departments within education and social sciences; the perspective of students in other areas was severely limited. Ultimately, the prevention efforts were either too broad or became narrowed to fit students who were already well-informed about sexual misconduct topics. Our collaboration sought to address these concerns as well as the typical challenges we identified above.

Project Background

In Fall 2019, we began planning our collaboration for an upper-division course—Project Management for Technical Communicators—to begin in Spring 2020. Housed in an English department, the selected course is required for students seeking a technical communication emphasis with their English degree. This class was a great fit for our pilot collaboration for several reasons. The project management course was already designed around a semester-long project using Agile methodology, which emphasized collaboration, client involvement, and iterative design.

As an advanced course in the Technical Communication and Rhetoric program, the enrolled students were well versed in design technologies and practices, teamwork, and professional writing. Many of them had been placed in internships or were working part time as designers or writers. Lastly, as noted in the introduction, the program at USU is unique among national programs in that the undergraduate and graduate curricula are designed to inform and motivate students to social justice action in the forms of practice, research, and pedagogy.

And, while any field could be involved, we believe a technical communication classroom is uniquely well-suited for student involvement in sexual misconduct prevention efforts. For one, sexual behavior is all about communication, both explicit and implicit, verbal and nonverbal. Individuals may weaponize or overlook a lack of communication by ignoring or misunderstanding verbal and nonverbal messages of nonconsent or the withdrawal of consent (Jozkowski, 2014; Levand, 2020). Second, as discussed above, student involvement through service learning, experiential learning, and applied writing has a long history in technical communication pedagogy (Clark, 2004; Kimme & Wendler Shah, 2016; Matthews & Zimmerman, 1999; Scott, 2004). Third, this work helps students gain practice in the technical aspects of communication design, workplace research, professional writing, accessibility, and skills with various tools. Finally, this project may help students identify professional skill gaps and may provide them with the opportunity to fill in those gaps.

Understanding social justice as technical communication is important to our collaboration for several reasons. First, as discussed above, upper-division students who attended this class had already been exposed by their earliest classes to conversations about diversity, equity, and technical communication as social justice praxis. Many of these courses included some kind of client project in which groups partnered with community organizations within the university’s main campus in Logan. Through this work, students were prepared to collaborate with clients around sensitive topics and to recognize the role technologies and communication play in maintaining or undoing discrimination and oppression. Further, students were primed to see their own student work as promoting social change in their communities. As a land grant institution, the university itself has taken a public stance to support public good:

The mission of [the university] is to be one of the nation’s premier student-centered land-grant and space-grant universities by fostering the principle that academics come first, by cultivating diversity of thought and culture and by serving the public through learning, discovery and engagement. [USU, emphasis ours]

To further emphasize this mission, the university recently adopted a new IDEA course goal, “Learning to apply knowledge and skills to benefit others or serve the public good,” (IDEA Faculty FAQs, n.d.). Though we stated earlier how research makes it clear that community partnerships and service learning are central activities for preparing students for meaningful work, service learning can also be a key activity for specifically socially-just technical communication pedagogy.

A 2016 Programmatic Perspectives’ Program Showcase article discussed the programmatic redesign to incorporate activist technical communication practice toward justice aims (Walton, Colton, Wheatley-Boxx, & Gurko, 2016). To demonstrate the connection
between social justice, service learning, and our collaboration, we
draw from those guidelines. From the beginning, each course is
explicitly framed around social justice concerns through readings
that orient the students to social justice and community work. They
then incorporate practice in which students apply what they have
learned to a project with a community partner. Finally, reflexive
writing situates what they have learned in the context of their career
goals and the field of technical communication (Walton, et al.,
2016). Additionally, their course work prepares them for effective
writing for a variety of audiences (nontechnical, semi-technical, and
technical), a range of quantitative and qualitative research methods,
effective and inclusive UX and design, and constructive client
communication. This context makes an upper-division course an
optimal location for involving students in this collaboration.

Project Implementation
The first collaboration took place in the spring of 2020. Working
with student advising and department leadership, students were
informed of the partnership with prevention professionals when
they signed up for the class. The English Department provided a
paid teaching assistant for the course.

Through our planning sessions, we identified several potential
projects in which student design would be particularly beneficial:

• Research and creation of consent/sexual violence prevention/
sexual health zines, including a mock-up and distribution.
This project was designed as a way to share peer-to-peer
information outside of the institution’s purview and to allow
them to discuss taboo or illegal topics, such as drug use and
consent.

• Research, audit, and overhaul of relevant webpages and/or
social media accounts. This project required students to draw
on UX skills and to collaborate with various peer groups for
feedback.

• Design materials in support of the sexual misconduct advocacy
and therapy office’s “It’s Enough” Spring 2020 campaign.
This project required students to draw on communication
design skills and to interview their peers in order to tailor it
different groups.

• Design materials in support of the sexual misconduct
advocacy and therapy office’s annual “Start by Believing”
April campaign—digital and in-person pledges. This project
also required students to draw on communication design skills
and to interview their peers in order to tailor the campaign to
different groups.

Each project included pedagogical objectives critical to the course,
such as timely and regular client communication, progress reports,
quality control, time and budget management, iterative design,
mock-ups, and teamwork.

On the first day of the class, students were introduced to the course
partnership, objectives, syllabus, and framing. The prevention
professionals attended the second class and introduced themselves
and their office missions. They also provided important background
information regarding their efforts, noting the specific importance
at USU. Finally, they discussed and answered students’ questions
on each project. For homework, students ranked their project
choices in a survey and were then assigned by the instructor to a
group of four to five.

Important for the class and aligned with project management
methodology, each project was framed as addressing a particular
problem. Understanding the problem each project was designed
to address was key to students having room to be creative and
invested and for them to produce something that was ultimately
useful for the prevention partners. Practical, doable outcomes were
also important for graduating students who were in the process of
putting together portfolios of their work for interviews.

Once teams were assigned, students worked in those teams
for the entirety of the class. In line with Walton et al.’s (2016)
recommendation to require explicit framing through readings early
on, teams were required to read documents on sexual misconduct
prevention. In addition, students read the most recently published
campus climate survey on sexual misconduct experiences, Utah
State University 2019 Sexual Misconduct Survey Data Report.
These readings were important because they helped students to
have both a general understanding of the national problem and some
activities to address it, and to localize their work to their particular
environment of which they are a part. This last point demonstrates
the critical importance of student design in sexual misconduct
prevention: students were not designing for a community they had
little to no knowledge of; rather, they were invested in and part
of their audiences. Prevention professionals repeated this refrain
throughout the course and, by doing so, directly addressed the
perceived problem identified in the national survey of prevention
professionals that we conducted: student expertise.

The campus climate survey report was fundamental in student
research and was supplemented by additional research: conducting
stakeholder interviews, researching and creating personas, and
running stakeholder focus groups. Librarian support and regular
involvement was extremely helpful in identifying primary and
secondary sources. Additionally, a student LGBTQ panel attended
the class to answer questions about sexual consent experiences
and education. Students integrated their research into their project
designs and final reports.

The course itself was designed to be a hybrid of in-class and
out-of-class work. Classes functioned as a “lab” where materials
students needed to complete the work were provided in the class
while the instructor, Edenfield, and the teaching assistant acted
as “coaches” to the projects, helping students to troubleshoot or
acting as a sounding board for challenges or questions. Edenfield
also helped teams to build and maintain healthy group processes for
decision making and delegation. These processes included training
in consensus decision making and moderation techniques. Students
were provided with explicit instructions on how to run a healthy
meeting and practiced these techniques in class, including time and
agenda management. This in-class working time was critical to
providing busy students the space and time to finish these lengthy
projects.

Regular meetings with the prevention professionals were built
into the course schedule in advance, including regular progress
reporting. Students engaged with the prevention professionals
in class and were also given “field trip days” to meet with
stakeholders, e.g., the office web design team, their assigned
prevention specialist, social workers on campus, the Inclusivity
Center’s director, a professional from the Disability Resource
Center, and other important stakeholders. Field trip days required a
small report out of insights and takeaways.

Ultimately, each team worked toward three scaffolded
deliverables—a proposal, a draft of their project, and the final deliverable—each paired with a general rubric. In between each major deliverable students submitted “steppingstone” documents, including a work breakdown structure, a Gantt chart, vision statements, and progress reports in two different formats: a paper format and an “ad hoc” presentation to their class and prevention professionals. In this presentation, students were encouraged to use the time to solicit feedback from their peers and the professionals.

Teams collaborated carefully with their prevention client in their project’s area to outline specifications for their deliverables, keeping in mind two constraints: the deliverable had to be useful to the prevention specialist and achievable for the team.

**Project Outcomes**
Each team produced content unique to their project as described below. In addition, each team also created two personas, a report of the research conducted during their project, and a report of recommendations for the implementation and future iterations for their project. Finally, and in line with Walton et al. (2016), each student wrote a memo reflecting on their project activities, teamwork, and project context. This memo was also framed as providing artifact discussion points for their professional portfolios and job interviews.

**Consent/sexual violence prevention/sexual health zines**
The final deliverable for this team was a mock-up including layout and content (sourced and original) for a sexual consent informational zine designed for a general public (off-campus) audience. This project is a direct result of Edenfield’s (2019) “Queering Consent: Design and Sexual Consent Messaging” that kicked off this collaboration in the first place, bringing to fruition the plans from those initial conversations referred to above.

Students drew from a range of existing zines and created some of their own content. The motivating factor for their project was to engender within the town and among fellow students conversations around sexual consent, particularly topics relevant to them and that the official prevention programs were hamstrung to discuss. Excluded topics included subject matter such as consent under the influence of drugs or alcohol and anonymous “hook-ups.”

**Social media and website audit and overhaul**
The final deliverable for this project was a comprehensive review of relevant websites and social media. Over time, students found that a website review was a robust enough of a project to eliminate social media from their concern. This pivot was seamless because they were working closely with their professional client. Their overview included a comprehensive audit of information and a recommendation report for changes to language with consideration to diversity and equity. They also created a comprehensive usability testing package complete with instructions. They were originally going to conduct the testing themselves, but they faced unforeseen challenges (discussed below) that prevented them from doing so. However, they included clear instructions for peer student workers to take up the testing. They also researched and created additional personas for the website redesign.

**“It’s Enough” campaign**
The final deliverable for this team included five video scripts featuring experiences of their peers demonstrating different survivor narratives: verbal harassment in the workplace, a nontransgender man abused by nontransgender woman through manipulation, a nontransgender woman’s attempted assault, gender-neutral online stalking and harassment, and sexual assault within a lesbian relationship. Within each narrative the underlying message was that survivors may feel like their experience was not “bad enough” to seek help. Each script ends by stating no matter what an individual’s experience is, it’s enough to seek help. This team also included a sketch of a poster that could be used in conjunction with the videos.

**“Start by Believing” campaign**
The final deliverable for this team included five social media graphics and captions to be shared on Instagram, Facebook, and Twitter as a countdown to Start by Believing Day, a national day encouraging pledges to believe survivors when they come forward. They also created graphics to be shared via the Instagram and Facebook story features on the actual Start by Believing Day, as well as detailed instructions on when to include interactive features (polls, swipe ups). This project was implemented in April 2020, resulting in a significant increase compared to previous years in social media interaction for Start by Believing Day.

**Challenges**
Students faced several challenges while working on these projects. First, as the deliverables were defined in collaboration with prevention professionals, initially students were unsure of where to start. The prevention professionals worked with each team to build trust and show they were responsive to student experiences and expertise. Project management methodologies provided a clear framework for their projects and scaffolded deliverables in a way that made them achievable. Tasking students to begin with a clearly defined problem statement also helped give them direction. We imagine with a less attentive prevention team or unclear scaffolding, some students might struggle to find their footing.

The most significant challenge students faced was the outbreak of COVID-19, which sent the entire course online mid-March 2020. Though students were already collaborating on their documents using shared web spaces and cloud storage, for many reasons students found continuing the projects difficult. Some were dislocated from residence halls and needed to find new housing; some returned to family housing without reliable internet; some were housed with difficult family members or where their time was consumed with watching younger siblings; some experienced mental health issues related to the stress of the pandemic; and some lost their jobs. The pandemic forced us to re-evaluate the collaboration process and deliverables and to recognize that projects needed to be scaled back. For example, the zine project originally included creating a mock-up and a distribution map, but COVID lockdowns meant they could no longer distribute it. Necessary interviews or focus groups had to be moved online. Usability testing needed to be completed remotely or with people who already lived with the students.

Despite the global climate and the challenges students faced, the projects were still completed on time and within (revised) specifications, clearly demonstrating the level of student dedication and buy-in to the projects. Though there are aspects of the collaboration within USU that made it a unique opportunity (i.e., social justice programmatic commitments), we believe there are other aspects, which we explore in the section below, that are generalizable to other courses.
PROJECT TAKEAWAYS AND APPLICATIONS
This collaboration and the survey of other sexual misconduct prevention professionals demonstrate that creative prevention and education is possible and important within institutions of higher education. Student involvement is critical in recruiting students as allies, centering student experiences, and tailoring materials to various audiences. Prevention professionals, like all other college and university employees, are limited in what they can accomplish on their own. Collaborating with an academic course can expand the amount and type of sexual misconduct prevention and education efforts that happen. It also engages students in efforts without needing to formally train or supervise them, which would be required by a peer-educator program, student internship, work study, and practicum placement.

Takeaways for Prevention Professionals
This section is addressed to prevention professionals who are considering this collaboration at their institution. Prevention professionals should be willing to consider prevention and education methods that have not been formally assessed, but that are still rooted in best practices. Academic course collaborations allow prevention professionals to bring a problem to students and then give them the opportunity to address it. This results in prevention and education efforts that are student-driven and student-created, which creates more buy-in amongst students, especially those outside of “traditional” fields like psychology, social work, and gender studies. A collaboration like this also gives prevention professionals the chance to receive feedback from students relating to which efforts are impactful for their communities.

We particularly want to highlight the importance of involving in sexual misconduct prevention and education efforts students who are diverse in ways beyond identity characteristics. Not all students are social work, psychology, or public health majors, nor do all students take such courses while in college. Solely relying on these types of students for design and implementation of prevention and education efforts could create skewed efforts. It would benefit all students at an institution if prevention professionals were intentional about tailoring opportunities for specific and various academic programs, especially academic programs that do not have prevention inherent within their curriculum (i.e., business, engineering, and computer science). The more students are able to see how sexual misconduct issues intersect with all aspects of their education and lives, the more likely they will be to use the skills central to sexual misconduct prevention including healthy relationships, consent, boundary setting, respect, and communication.

Takeaways for Faculty
For technical communication faculty, our experience and data collected demonstrates the possibilities of student involvement and classroom collaborations in courses not traditionally associated with prevention. We encourage faculty to be creative and identify possibilities for how course objectives may overlap with prevention professionals’ goals. Though a range of disciplines are possible for this kind of collaboration, we understand technical communication courses to be well suited for it as it is framed by Walton et al. (2016) and for the reasons discussed in the sections above. However, our experience also points to at least three areas of concern when designing a collaborative course project.

First, preparation is key to successful collaboration. In this case, because of the programmatic focus on social justice and division of the course, students were already informed of issues of diversity, activism, and community engagement. Collaborating in another course in another program may require additional framing, such as readings, lectures, or speakers on the topics of community engagement, equity, social justice, and/or diversity, to orient students to the material. Like Walton et al. (2016), we found that orienting students towards this perspective was critical to successful collaboration and the recruiting of students as allies. Preparing students in such a way also enabled them to work more independently, a concern noted by the reported data on working with students.

Second, having a close relationship between the prevention professionals and the instructor was crucial to the collaboration’s success. Professionals were able to attend class a number of times and scheduled team meetings in which students would present their work-to-date for feedback. These interactions were critical to students’ success. Students trusted their clients and took their feedback very seriously in their redesigns. Likewise, prevention professionals trusted students with creative choices and perceived them as knowledgeable in their respective areas. This relationship resulted in projects that transcended the classroom; students felt a tremendous sense of responsibility and ownership over their work.

Third, the projects needed to be constrained enough to allow the work to be completed in a firm timeframe. When deciding on the projects for the course, we considered how much time students could realistically devote to their project. Project Management for Technical Communicators is a 16-week course. Even with an entire course designed around this collaboration, time was limited. Though students had decided on projects by the beginning of the second week, they still needed time to learn project management methodologies and associated skills, orient themselves to the context and problem their projects were addressing, identify stakeholders, decide appropriate research methods, conduct research and analysis, and so on. Crucial to the success of this collaboration was identifying projects that could be completed in about 12 weeks. Otherwise, students would be frustrated, graduating seniors could not include the completed projects in their portfolio, and the prevention professionals would receive incomplete or rushed work.

CONCLUSION
This was the first time this type of formal collaboration happened between this institution’s sexual misconduct prevention professionals and an academic course. Since this course is only taught in Spring semesters, we have time after each course to debrief and revise for the next one.

For the Technical Communication and Rhetoric program, this kind of collaboration is a fulfillment of its commitment to teaching technical communication as social justice praxis. For students, they exit the course with practice in project management and associated skills and with important portfolio pieces and talking points.

This work continues for the prevention professionals, as well, who plan to identify other academic colleges, majors, and courses in which this type of formal collaboration would be possible. They particularly want to focus on colleges and majors that are not “traditional” collaborators, such as STEM and business courses. It is important to the prevention professionals that sexual misconduct prevention and education efforts are relevant to all students, not just to those who are involved as peer educators, interns, and practicum professionals.
and work study students. For that to be true, going beyond “traditional” methods and actively engaging a diverse group of students is essential.

Given a lack of resources and personnel, it can be easy for campus prevention professionals to rely on “traditional” methods (i.e., risk reduction education, bystander intervention programming) as their sole forms of sexual misconduct prevention. It is often intimidating to try new efforts, especially given the delicacy in which conversations around sexual misconduct must happen. We believe universities should empower students to have a creative voice in sexual misconduct prevention efforts, which starts by actually giving them such opportunities. We encourage prevention professionals to utilize the student voices available to them at their institution and to connect with faculty who are willing to provide their students with a program development opportunity that will result in impactful implementation.

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