

How do you define sexual violence? How do you think sexual violence is defined by Penn State administrators and/or in institutional discourse? Is this definition inadequate and, if so, how would you leverage your role to change it?

I define sexual violence as a violation of personal boundaries against another individual in an attempt to obtain sexual activity. Sexual violence can be visual, verbal, or physical and occur within a variety of relationships, which are two key factors I believe are oftentimes missed by many including the institution and administration of Penn State. When the term “sexual violence” comes to mind, physical crimes like rape and sexual assault come to the forefront of its definition but there is so much more into it that is not acknowledged or made aware. Acts like stalking, catcalling, and sharing of explicit images are also forms of sexual violence, yet discussed more rarely. Another key aspect neglected is that of the relationship between victim and offender who are most often than not, acquainted with one another. Whether it’s a friend, teacher, coach, family member, or even romantic partner, it can be defined as sexual violence. Using my role as The College of Liberal Arts Representative, I would work to change the current dialogue around sexual violence at Penn State to be inclusive of not only physical acts but verbal and visual, as well as spread awareness to the many acts that can be defined as sexual violence, regardless of the relationship you share with the individual. It’s important that if we are to solve the issue of sexual violence at Penn State, we are defining it correctly and teaching others to do so as well.

What do you think Penn State (specifically administrators or governing bodies) or our local/state/federal government can do to decrease the incidence of sexual and relationship violence?

What Penn State’s administration can do to decrease the incidences of sexual and relationship violence is make the accusation process more efficient and safer for the victim as well as hold the offender to a higher standard of accountability. Almost $\frac{2}{3}$ of sexual violence offenses go unreported because the victims are afraid and more often than not, the appropriate repercussions for the offender are not implemented, allowing them the opportunity to offend again. If the process was made with empathy towards the victim instead of protection for the offender, then more people would be willing to report offenses meaning fewer offenders would risk offending afraid of the serious consequences they will face due to the likelihood of being reported on. It’s important to advocate for justice and equality, and the treatment of both the victim and offender must represent these values.

Do you plan to advocate for the aforementioned changes? If so, how?

To me, successful advocacy involves awareness, discussion, and resolution and this will be brought together by the transparency of students, faculty, and especially the administration of Penn State. Current efforts are not producing the necessary changes because there is a lack of transparency and comprehension. Penn State has a reputation to uphold, but the well-being and safety of its students must be prioritized, and as of right now, that is not the case. The administration does just enough to make it seem like progress is occurring when in reality, most of the work is being pioneered and upheld by the student body with little cooperation from them. We need transparency and cooperation. Yearly meetings between student and faculty representatives that are knowledgeable on this issue and Penn State administration and the governing body are needed to discuss reports and statistics from that year, as well as update the rules by which these situations are handled and discuss further additional courses of action. There needs to be a thorough report sent out to all students and faculty of Penn State as well as with consent from all parties reported on. I am aware that a process like this already occurs but that there have been issues in the past in terms of transparency and the withholding of information. With Penn State welcoming a new President who is a woman, I hope to have a discussion with her about the issues of sexual violence we face here at Penn State and advocate for her to make it a priority within her administration, something we've seen a lack of in years past.

What steps have you taken to bring anti-sexual-violence and/or social justice work into your education, workplace, and/or an organization that you have been involved with and/or personally become a better advocate?

I think my biggest contribution in the environments around me in terms of bringing awareness to sexual violence and social justice issues as well as advocacy is through a listening ear and a non-judgmental heart. It's hard to tell your story, and as someone who has experienced sexual violence, I know how difficult it can be to come to terms with what happened, let alone tell others about it. I advocate through telling my story and strengthening others to tell theirs when they're ready. I've gained an immense amount of respect and empathy for those who have experienced the consequences of sexual violence. It's not necessarily through any organization, job, or place that I bring this contribution but rather to the people I meet within and outside of them. I have become a better advocate by listening and learning from the testimonies of others and how they made them feel. I acknowledge them and their experience, and then together we work to touch another person and their story. I am a better advocate because of the people around me who have shown me that no matter what you've experienced, it doesn't define you, and instead empowers and motivates you to create change.

If elected, what organizations will you maintain relationships with? Will you start or maintain a relationship with anti-sexual violence organizations? If so, how?

If elected, I would love to maintain relationships with several organizations, especially the fraternities and sororities to get their perspective of the issue of sexual violence in their communities as well as the multicultural caucus to see how as minorities they have been affected by this issue and would like to approach it. I would also love to maintain a relationship with the Center of Gender and Sexual Diversity, Gender Equality Center, and Center for Character, Conscience, and Public Purpose and get their expertise and support in addressing this issue. I would love to cooperate with all these different organizations and centers to see if we can hold university-wide awareness events and table talks, as well as bring in guest speakers and people who are knowledgeable on ways to support victims and bring about change in small and big ways. I understand that these organizations have priorities of their own, but creating pre-planned organized schedule discussions and deliberations with their executive board and representatives as well as with their members would work best in terms of communication. I would also like to keep in touch with the Penn State administration and make sure that they are doing their part in helping us to solve this university-wide problem.