


5-2015

Talking About Rape on A College Campus

Rachael L. Kaufman
Student

Follow this and additional works at: <https://scholarworks.wm.edu/honorstheses>

 Part of the [Anthropological Linguistics and Sociolinguistics Commons](#), [Curriculum and Social Inquiry Commons](#), [Discourse and Text Linguistics Commons](#), [Domestic and Intimate Partner Violence Commons](#), [Education Policy Commons](#), [Gender and Sexuality Commons](#), [Linguistic Anthropology Commons](#), [Other Linguistics Commons](#), [Other Social and Behavioral Sciences Commons](#), [Policy Design, Analysis, and Evaluation Commons](#), [Quantitative, Qualitative, Comparative, and Historical Methodologies Commons](#), [Social and Cultural Anthropology Commons](#), and the [Social Work Commons](#)

Recommended Citation

Kaufman, Rachael L., "Talking About Rape on A College Campus" (2015). *Undergraduate Honors Theses*. Paper 199.
<https://scholarworks.wm.edu/honorstheses/199>

This Honors Thesis is brought to you for free and open access by the Theses, Dissertations, & Master Projects at W&M ScholarWorks. It has been accepted for inclusion in Undergraduate Honors Theses by an authorized administrator of W&M ScholarWorks. For more information, please contact scholarworks@wm.edu.

Talking About Rape on a College Campus

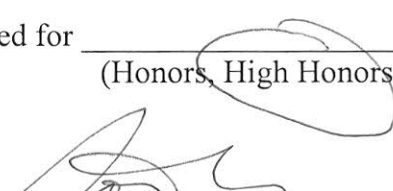
A thesis submitted in partial fulfillment of the requirement
for the degree of Bachelor of Arts in Anthropology from
The College of William and Mary

by

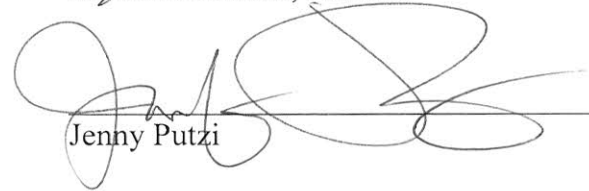
Rachael Kaufman

Accepted for

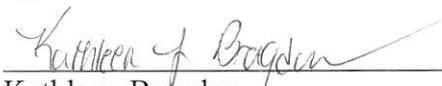
(Honors, High Honors, Highest Honors)



Jonathan Glasser, Advisor



Jenny Putzi



Kathleen Bragdon

Williamsburg, VA
May 4, 2015

Talking About Rape on a College Campus

Rachael Kaufman

Advisor: Jonathan Glasser

Table of Contents

Introduction.....	3
1 Situating Talk about Sexual Assault in the Relevant Social and Academic Context.....	4
2 Metalanguage at the Sigma Chi Town Hall Forum.....	20
3 Putting Language into Action: Administrative and Student Uses of Language in Sexual Assault Policy, Education, and Prevention.....	36
Conclusion.....	54
Bibliography.....	58
Appendix A, Sigma Chi Town Hall Forum Transcription.....	63
Appendix B, Sigma Chi Listserv Letter.....	76
Appendix C, Sexual Assault Misconduct Policy.....	77

In the past year, the issue of sexual assault on college campuses gained national attention, raising questions about how politicians, campus administrators, and students talk about sexual assault education and prevention. William and Mary has been no exception. In this thesis, I will discuss the various ways William and Mary students and administrators talk about sexual assault. In particular, I am interested in looking at a form of metalanguage--of language about language--that seems to surface in discussion of sexual assault. This metalanguage focuses on the relationship between language and social action, and the effectiveness or lack of effectiveness of talk in addressing the problem of sexual assault. Through an analysis of meetings, documents, interviews, and informal interactions, I will explore this metalanguage. First, I will talk about the relevant literature about sexual violence, speech act theory, and speech genres in order to illustrate the theoretical tools and framework for my thesis project. Then, I will analyze how students construct their speech about sexual assault at the Sigma Chi Town Hall forum held in February 2014 and discuss how this talk reveals students' ideologies about language's relation to social action. Finally, using these language ideologies, I will explore the effectiveness of how the administration and students currently use language in William and Mary's sexual assault misconduct policy and the freshman orientation sexual assault education program. These sections suggest that individuals at William and Mary think that language about sexual assault has the ability to serve as a means for social action; however, their ideologies suggest that there are certain criteria that language must meet in order for it to be effective in creating change on campus with regard to the issue of sexual assault.

Chapter 1

Situating Talk about Sexual Assault in Relevant Social and Academic Context

1.1 Inspiration for my Thesis Project

When I first came to the College of William and Mary, I was quickly introduced to the well-known path that connects the freshman dorms to the center of campus near the Sadler Center. I was told by upperclassmen that this walking path, which winds throughout the woods and is dimly lit at night, is nicknamed the “rape trail” for its creepy, desolate, and secluded qualities. Like most of my peers, I began to use this term in my everyday speech, as I felt it accurately represented my conception of where acts of rape occur, and it was a well-known and accepted name. However, as my friend groups and education evolved during my time at the College, I learned that this nickname provided misinformation about how and where rapes on college campuses actually occur. I learned from friends and my own personal research that two out of three sexual assaults are committed by someone known to the victim and that acquaintance rape is the most common form of rape on college campuses (RAINN 2011). Furthermore, it was evident that phrases like “rape trail” only perpetuated my own misconceptions that I came to William and Mary with out of high school. I then began to question how such phrases impacted the campus climate with regard to sexual assault.

This question only became more important for me to personally pursue when a sexist fraternity listserv letter was leaked in February 2014. This letter, written by a

William and Mary fraternity member to his brothers, sexualized and objectified women, explaining to other men how they need to “save the sluts” on campus by having sex with them (Boyle 2014)¹. In response to this letter, the College administration held a town hall forum in order to allow students to voice their concerns and comments about either the letter specifically or William and Mary’s campus climate in general. Talking about “talk” was a central theme at this forum. Many students’ speeches emphasized the impact, or lack thereof, that certain sexist language could have on the campus climate regarding sexual assault. The emphasis during the town hall forum on language and its effect fueled my thesis proposal, as I wanted to address these different ideologies about the relation of language to social action with regard to the issue of sexual assault on William and Mary’s campus.

Soon after the leak and the forum, William and Mary was included on a list that the Office of Civil Rights publicly released on May 1, 2014, which listed the higher education institutions under investigation for being in potential violation of Title IX, which is an amendment that prohibits federally funded institutions from discriminating on the basis of sex in all education programs or activities (Department of Education 2014). The release of this list was followed by both student and administrative responses, one of which was the formation of the “President’s Task Force on Preventing Sexual Assault and Harassment,” with the goal being to “ensure that the efforts in education, prevention, and response to sexual assault and harassment live up to our own high ideals” (Reveley 2014). Due to the nature of my thesis proposal, I was then asked to be a member of the Task Force’s campus climate subcommittee, which was charged with

¹ For the complete Sigma Chi listserv letter, see Appendix B.

addressing the scope of the problem of sexual assault and harassment on campus and student awareness of campus resources in relation to the issue (Reveley 2014). My participation in the Task Force allowed me to see the issue of sexual assault from an administrative perspective as well as from a student perspective. It was illuminating as a student to see what type of actions (many of which were focused on language about sexual assault) the administration thought would be helpful in changing the campus climate regarding the issue of sexual assault. Having already participated in the Sigma Chi Town Hall Forum, I was now aware of the disparate views regarding such a response's effectiveness. It was evident that administrators and students differently perceive certain actions taken toward sexual assault prevention and education. Moreover, this experience, in addition to others throughout my time at William and Mary, further developed my thesis question about how there were consistent, but various ways, students talk about sexual assault, which reveal certain ideologies about language's relation to social action.

1.2 What is Sexual Violence?

When conceptualizing sexual violence, there are disparate views about how to understand and define sexual assault. Michel Foucault (1988) explained rape as something that is not “a matter of sexuality, [but] it's the physical violence that should be punished, without bringing in the fact that sexuality was involved” (Foucault 1988, 200). Foucault explains that rape is nothing more than “act of aggression: that there is no difference...between sticking one's fist into someone's face or one's penis into their sex” (Foucault 1988, 201). This idea that sexual assault is simply one example of “assaults”

and is not tied to sexuality caused significant controversy among feminist scholars. In her book, *Rethinking Rape*, Ann Cahill (2001) explains that the desexualization of rape was a goal for both feminist thinkers and Foucault; however, the motivations of the two parties were different. While feminist thinkers wanted to remove the sexual content from the definition of rape in order to “render moot the legal question of victim (i.e. female) culpability,” Foucault was more interested in redefining rape as a type of assault in order to further support his other theoretical claims that sexuality is not a means of social and political power (Cahill 2001, 144). Many feminists at the time were worried that equating rape to all other physical assaults would do a serious disservice to the impact that sexual assault has not just on the individual who experiences the crime but on women’s experience in society overall. In her book, Cahill contends that Foucault’s definition ultimately serves to “veil aspects of the crime that impinge directly on women’s experience and bodies and that constitute the current phenomenon of rape” (Cahill 2001, 147).

Such understandings of sexual violence as being more than just a physical assault are evident in a variety of works about sexual violence in different societies. Specifically, the works of Veena Das look at sexual assault and violence against women in India and the United States, and what sexual assault reveals about women’s agency in society. In her essay, “Language in the Body: Transactions in the Construction of Pain,” Das seeks to question how India’s nationalist project came to produce the “appropriation of bodies of women as objects” (Das 1997, 68). In order to better understand collective violence against women in Indian society, she analyzes transcribed recordings from interviews with Indian men and women to connect the understanding of pain and suffering to

women's objectification and abuse in society. In this case, sexual violence serves as a way to establish and perpetuate power over women by taking away their bodily agency. In addition, Das has also done much to connect feminist theory and anthropology to explain the link of sexual violence to the "social and cultural imaginaries of order and disorder" (Das 2008, 283). She explains that many scholars are beginning to pay attention to intimate violence in the home and everyday life in the United States, and how the definition of what is consent has still not been resolved (Das 2008, 292). Legally, many women are too afraid to file a case against their attacker, as victim-blaming is common in sexual assault incidents. This is mainly due to the widespread perception in the U.S. that acquaintance rape is a less legitimate accusation, as well as the fact that victims usually have complex emotions about being assaulted by someone they know (Das 2008, 293).

Furthermore, as evident in Das's (2008) most recent work about this topic, a majority of current literature discusses the barriers that exist for individuals who experience sexual assault and want to receive support or report their experience. One barrier that many scholars discuss in their research is the issue of consistency in defining and understanding sexual assault. Sophie Day (1994) suggests that the way in which sexual assault is defined, understood, and talked about very much depends on the setting in which it takes place, whether this be harassment at the work place or marital rape. Day explains that the use of a single term, "rape," to describe sexual violence implies that there are continuities in definitions; however, in her piece, she reveals that among the sex workers she studies there are contrasting senses of what equals "rape" (Day 1994, 173). Day explains that a reason for such discontinuity is the nature of sexual relations. As sexual relations are often considered something that is thought to "unfold or [just]

happen,” it is difficult to, after the fact, “attach legalistic notions of consensus retrospectively to a context in which, at the time, they were irrelevant” (Day 1994, 173).

Despite Day’s focus on London sex workers in her research, her argument about the blurred definition of sexual assault is still relevant as defining sexual assault and consent is a fraught issue on many college campuses. Many news articles have commented on this aspect of college sexual assaults, as students question their college administrations’ handling of sexual assault reports. Deirdre Carmody (1989) reports that while some college administrations entertain the idea that a woman’s dress, mental state, and attitude can render her culpable in rape crimes, others plea for there to be no victim-blaming and that a survivor be supported even if her experience does not involve a physical coercion. Therefore, it is evident that there is a wide variety of ways in which college administrators view and talk about sexual violence on their college campuses. Journalists also report numerous cases where students are taking a stand against how their administration handles sexual assault cases. Amherst College has been accused of mishandling sexual assault reports and, in response, students have protested for a new administration as well as new programs to talk about and deal with this issue. One student established a website called “It Happens Here” that featured photos of sexual assault victims who are students at Amherst with words said to them by their community or attacker after they reported their assault (Kingkade 2012). Phrases such as “you asked for it” or “you were just drunk” are prevalent among these featured photos. Dana Bolger, a contributor to the site, explains that administrative talk about rape on their campus emphasizes that women are to blame for their attacks (Kingkade 2012).

Many other colleges in the past year, such as Harvard, Dartmouth, and Occidental College, were also accused of mishandling of sexual assault cases on their campuses by providing inadequate support for their students (Gordon 2014). Unfortunately, William and Mary is not an exception, as in my research, I will show that the College's students also have negative views with regard to administrative actions about sexual assault; mainly, this is evident both in student's language about the administration in relation to sexual assault but also quantitatively in the National Sexual Misconduct Campus Climate Survey (NSMCCS) that was administered to William and Mary students in Fall 2014. As one of the first schools to publicize survey results about sexual violence on their college campus, William and Mary serves as evidence for the issue of sexual assault on college campuses. In the survey, 28% of undergraduate women and 11% of undergraduate men had reported experiencing some form of physical sexual misconduct (NSMCCS 2014, 2). 4% of undergraduate women indicated they had been raped since enrolling at the college, and only 12% of these respondents filed a grievance with the university. This equates to only 35 students that took the survey (out of the 1,227 students who experienced some kind of sexual misconduct) reporting that they filed any grievance to campus administration (NSMCCS 2014, 10). Furthermore, this survey proves that, at least at William and Mary, there is a significant number of sexual assaults; in addition, it shows the discrepancy between the number of students who experience sexual misconduct and the number who file a report.

1.3 Relevant Theoretical Tools for this Research

For this thesis project, I hope to connect the issue of sexual violence, particularly on college campuses, to speech genres and speech act theory. While many scholars have researched both of these topics, few have specifically discussed how individuals talk about sexual assault on college campuses. Therefore, in my research, I take a discourse-centered approach in order to fully analyze the structure and content of individuals' speech and what this then reveals about those individuals' language ideologies. Numerous anthropologists have used discourse analysis in their own ethnographic research. For example, in *Scripting Addiction: The Politics of Therapeutic Talk and American Sobriety*, Summerson Carr (2010) examines American addiction treatment and how clinical practitioners promote "healthy" talk as a necessary step in the therapeutic process. She analyzes a practice called "flipping the script" which patients use in order to tell therapists "what they wanted to hear" despite their inner feelings not matching their words. Carr defines this as the "performance of inner reference" (Carr 2010, 191). This performance relies on a certain understanding; namely, that the patients' speech indicates that they are taking action towards their rehabilitation. For her research, Carr obtained interviews that she then transcribed and analyzed; in addition, she used data from numerous hours of participant observation and primary sources like e-mails and training materials. Carr's close analysis of talk in her ethnography enables her to draw conclusions regarding how an addict's progress is linguistically measured against cultural ideas of what it means to perform sober speech (Carr 2010, 4). Carr's research demonstrates why discourse analysis is useful in examining how and why individuals

construct their speech in particular ways. Her work served as a helpful model to structure my own research about my thesis topic.

In order to take this discourse-centered approach to my research, I rely on certain theoretical tools in order to explore the structure and content of individuals' language about sexual assault. Erving Goffman (1981) provides an influential framework in his work, *Forms of Talk*. Goffman (1981) discusses the many variables that influence how individuals engage in "talk." According to Goffman, two main variables that affect how one talks are the setting in which the speech event takes place and the recipients to whom the speech is directed. In his chapter on "Footing," Goffman explains the importance of a "participant framework," or the totality of individuals in the gathering where the observed speech is occurring (Goffman 1981, 137). Goffman explains that an individual's speech can describe the role and function of all of the members in the participant framework, as a listener's relation to the speaker, or their "participation status," can be informed by the way the speaker does or does not address them (Goffman 1981, 137). For example, Goffman distinguishes between "unaddressed" versus "addressed" recipients of speech. A speaker, when talking to more than one "hearer," will often direct their speech towards one or more individuals. Therefore, these directed individuals become the "addressed" recipients, while those who continue to listen are the "unaddressed ones" (Goffman 1981, 133).

This relation, however, does not only work in one direction: Goffman suggests a more fluid discourse situation in that just as the speaker can reveal the role of listeners, the listeners can reveal the role of the speaker. The situation or context of the speech act, therefore, can significantly affect the relationship between a speaker and her audience.

An audience does not necessarily have to listen as much as they hear; moreover, depending on the context, audience members can be conversationalists or simply listeners (Goffman 1981, 137). Goffman offers the example of how talk, especially in today's modern society, takes the form of a "platform monologue," which involves "long stretches of words coming from a single speaker who has a relatively large set of listeners and exclusive claim to the floor" (Goffman 1981, 137). In this case, audiences are farther removed from the speaker; therefore, they have the ability to hear in a way that is different from if they were a co-speaker. Moreover, this allows the audience to examine the speaker in a way that is more open and analytical than if they were in a more personal, private setting. In turn, this type of setting can influence how speakers present themselves and change how they address their audience.

Moreover, one way in which speakers present themselves and style their speech is through Goffman's (1981) concept of "footing." This phenomenon represents a code switching-like behavior where an individual's "alignment, or set, or stance, or posture, or projected self is somehow at issue" and a change in footing represents a change in the speaker's alignment in the way the speaker manages the production or reception of this utterance (Goffman 1981, 128). Changes in footing are often grounded in different markers of language, whether it is a shift in verb tense or pronoun usage. These changes in speech allow the speaker to change how his speech is being perceived and to whom his speech is being directed. "Embedding" is one technique that speakers can use in order to change their footing and, thus, their speech. This is when speakers shift from establishing themselves as the principal actor in order to create a "figure" that serves as the agent in their speech (Goffman 1981, 147). This is mainly used to separate the speaker from their

current desires, beliefs, or perceptions, as they are able to create a separate entity that expresses their ideas for them. For instance, switching from “I” to “you” or “they” allow the speaker to remove themselves as the sole agents of the utterance, thereby distancing themselves from their opinions.

Goffman (1981) provides a useful theoretical framework that is necessary in order to fully analyze how individuals form their speech about sexual assault. The idea that the participant framework and venue are strong influences for how an individual forms his or her speech is crucial to my research, as I want to understand why individuals talk in specific ways about this topic. This is especially helpful in analyzing how individuals structure their speech at the Sigma Chi Town Hall forum, as speakers alter their speech due to the venue and potential recipients who are present. However, these concepts are also present in student ideologies about language’s relation to social action; who is in the participant framework and the speech’s context are two important criteria for evaluating language’s effectiveness in sexual assault policy and education programs. In addition, the linguistic tools, footing and embedding, allow for a more intensive analysis of individuals’ use of language both at the forum and in policy and prevention programs. As will be seen, changes in footing and embedding are used constantly both as a way for individuals to qualify personal beliefs about this topic at the forum and to lessen the harshness of words in denying sexual contact in certain encounters. Therefore, this is a useful concept, as I want to connect the structuring of individual’s outward speech to the individual’s inner beliefs and understandings about the issue of sexual assault on campus.

Mikhail Bakhtin is also an important scholar for understanding how individuals form their speech. In his essay, “The Problem of Speech Genres,” Bakhtin (2013)

discusses the problem and definition of speech genres, defining speech genres as “relatively stable types of utterances” that exist in a particular sphere of communication (Bakhtin 2013, 225). He explains how many components, such as content, style, and compositional structure, impact how an individual utterance, which contributes to a speech genre as a whole, is constructed. Bakhtin describes how speech genres are, in a sense, limitless in diversity, as a different genre exists in each type of human activity. The subject matter, participants, and situation all further complicate how people speak in a particular way in a particular space (Bakhtin 2013, 224). Bakhtin specifically addresses the influence that a speech genre can have on an individual’s speech. He explains that while each speaker has a certain individual style, some genres are more or less conducive to allowing the individual to express this style (Bakhtin 2013, 226). Furthermore, this relates to a concept coined by Bakhtin known as dialogism. Bakhtin (2010) mainly uses this concept in relation to literature, as dialogic literature is literature that is informed by other authors’ works that have come before it. This concept extends beyond influence, as Bakhtin (2010) contends that a previous work of literature is changed just as much as the present work that is reusing a certain reference. Furthermore, Bakhtin (2010) extends this concept to apply to language, as he explains that it does not exist in a vacuum, but rather all speech is informed and shaped by what has come before it. Furthermore, speakers inform their speech by what has been said before them, participating in a dialogue with other speakers.

Bakhtin’s work is necessary to my research in order to fully grasp all of the potential influences that shape how individuals talk about sexual assault. As I will illustrate in Chapter 2, the concept of speech genres is particularly relevant to how

individuals structure their speech at the town hall forum. The speeches I analyze illustrate that there are various, but consistent, ways that individuals talk about sexual assault in a forum setting. For example, certain characteristics of this talk, as Goffman (1981) presents, are embedding and certain changes of footing to distance the speakers from their particular beliefs about the topic. In addition, Bakhtin's concept of dialogism is paramount in understanding that talk about sexual assault, or any type of speech, does not exist in a vacuum. This is evident on an individual level at the town hall forum, as individuals shape their speech based on the speech of students who spoke before them at the event. Dialogism, however, is also illustrated at an institutional level. As I will discuss in Chapter 3, the William and Mary administration and students change the language in preexisting definitions in order to reflect the nature of sexual assaults on college campuses.

While it is helpful to understand speech genres in order to understand the framework in which discourse about sexual assault is taking place, speech act theory serves as a useful perspective from which to analyze how speech and action interact with regard to sexual assault. J. L. Austin is a prominent figure in developing speech act theory, as one of his most notable works, *How to Do Things With Words*, explains the variety of utterances that he classifies as "speech acts." He explains that a speech act is the result of an individual using a performative utterance, which he characterizes as being an utterance that has no "truth-value" and is not issued to "say something" but to perform an action (Austin 1962, 5). Austin initially focuses on "illocutionary acts," which are a type of performative utterance that explicitly takes an action. For instance, in a marriage ceremony, someone declares, "I now pronounce you husband and wife," which clearly

indicates that the person is “doing” something that changes the couple’s marital status (Austin 1962, 5). However, Austin aims to broaden his definition of performative utterance to include utterances beyond illocutionary acts. One type of performative utterance that is particularly pertinent to talk about sexual assault is called “behavitives,” which is a kind of performative that is concerned with reactions to behavior, behavior towards others, and attitudes and feelings (Austin 1962, 83). Examples of explicit performative behavitives are “I apologize,” “I criticize,” or “I approve,” which Austin explains are deliberate, action-taking utterances that have no truth quality (Austin 1962, 84).

Marina Sbisa (2001) draws on Austin’s speech act theory in order to talk about “act” and its relationship to language. She explains that in “everyday talk,” individuals often contrast just saying something to doing something. However, she explains that current speech act theory contends that “utterances of every kind can be considered acts...and that a distinction should be drawn between what an utterance is and what is done using it (its ‘force’)” (Sbisa 2001, 4). Sbisa explains there are complications with this theory as it can simplify the relationship of speech and action to the point that all speakers are intentionally “doing” something definite in every utterance; however, she does not deny that as discourse continues, action is taken on the individual through their speech (Sbisa 2001, 6).

Austin (1962) and Sbisa’s (2001) discussion of speech act theory is especially relevant for analyzing how the content of individuals' speeches reflects certain ideologies about language’s relation to social action with regard to sexual assault. In Chapter 2, I will utilize their theoretical concepts in order to talk about how students at William and

Mary do differentiate between, as both Austin (1962) and Sbisà (2001) contend, “saying something” and “doing something.” This is especially relevant in discussions about the power of sexist language to negatively impact the campus climate with regard to sexual assault. In addition, at the forum, many speakers rely on certain behaviors, like “I apologize” or “I criticize,” which Austin believes are action-taking utterances. However, from a broader perspective, I also use Austin (1962) and Sbisà (2001) as a theoretical lens through which to view discussions about what kind of language can and cannot create social action with regard to this issue. Mainly, I explain that individuals differentiate which words, based on certain criteria, do and do not have “action-taking” ability. This is reflected in my discussion in Chapter 3, as I will use these criteria to explore how current sexual assault policy and education at William and Mary is effective in creating change with regard to the issue of sexual assault.

Last, Scott Kiesling is one example of an anthropologist who has bridged the gap of gender and sexuality on college campuses using discourse analysis. Kiesling (2001) analyzes how white fraternity men “reaffirm their hegemonic social position through in-group discourse” (Kiesling 2001, 101). It is evident through their speech that the men “do whiteness” in a variety of ways that rely on cultural models of race that are present in our society. Furthermore, he discusses the fraternity men’s use of different linguistic tools in order to “reaffirm [race and class] categories, create suspense, and claim dominance” (Kiesling 2001, 112). These men’s speech perpetuates white dominance in society and dominant relations of race, gender, and class by using hegemonic discourse that binds race to class and gender. For instance, Black is bound with “sports prowess” while White is bound to “upper middle class and the establishment” (Kiesling 2001, 113). Kiesling’s

work is inspiration for what I hope to accomplish here, as he uses intensive discourse analysis in order to explore how fraternity men's language reveals and constructs certain societal understandings about race and gender. Furthermore, in my thesis, I want to connect understandings of sexual violence to how people construct and understand talk about the issue of sexual assault on college campuses. It is evident that in the literature about sexual violence both on and off college campuses, language is important in understanding and defining sexual assault. Furthermore, I think that it is necessary to inquire, as I have done in my research, about how individuals think language can be used to change campus climates regarding sexual assault. While this research will address the existing gap in the literature on this topic, I hope it will also provide real recommendations to higher education institutions about how to use language effectively in the service of sexual assault prevention and education.

Chapter 2

Metalanguage at the Sigma Chi Town Hall Forum

In this chapter, I focus on the Sigma Chi Town Hall forum in order to illustrate student ideologies about the relation of language to social action. This topic is especially relevant at this forum, as the forum itself was held in order to address the potential impact of sexist language as illustrated in the fraternity listserv letter. Using the talk at the forum as well as formal interviews that I conducted as evidence, I will draw on the concepts of speech genres and speech act theory taken from the works of Goffman (1981), Bakhtin (2013), and Austin (1962) in order to illustrate the main facets of student ideologies about language in relation to social action. First, I will show how the structure of participant discourse reveals a certain understanding of who should be facilitating dialogue about sexual assault in order for the language to be effective in creating social change. Second, I will analyze how the content of this discourse reveals certain criteria for separating which words do and do not have the ability to affect social action, depending on where the words are being said, who is saying them, and what form the words are taking.

2.1 Framing Speech at the Sigma Chi Town Hall Forum

Goffman's (1981) framework provides a useful way to analyze the speech that was used at the forum and to explore what it reveals about how students talk about sexual assault. In keeping with Goffman, the audience and venue in which the forum took place are crucial for understanding individuals' speech during the event. The majority of those in attendance were students, although a few faculty and staff were present. Two

moderators were in charge of keeping time, as each speaker was allotted five minutes to voice their opinions at the microphone. Also in attendance were representatives of the fraternity in which the listserv email had been sent, all of whom were standing in the back of the room, separate from those sitting in the semicircle rows. In addition, due to the limited capacity of the room, students were seated in an overflow space where they could view the forum on a screen and submit questions or comments on note cards to be read aloud by the moderators. Obviously there were many audience members who the speakers could address; therefore, as is evident in the forum's transcription that will be discussed, there was often a distinction between "unaddressed" and "addressed" recipients, as an individual often altered the way in which she constructed her speech depending on who she was hoping to address in the audience.

The setting of the forum mainly mirrored that of Goffman's (1981) description of a "platform monologue," as one speaker at a time was given the floor to address multiple audience members. The layout of the venue consisted of multiple seats in semicircle rows, all of which were focused on a microphone at the front of the room. However, rather than only one speaker being the subject, the forum allowed for multiple individuals to speak, twenty-eight to be exact. Therefore, consistent with Bakhtin's (2010) concept of dialogism, the forum also allowed for more interaction between speakers as each individual who approached the microphone shaped his or her speech in response to those who had already spoken. This is present throughout the transcription, as speakers critique others' opinions as part of their own speech, in addition to avoiding topics that received negative response from the audience members. In addition to this cumulative effect, it is also evident that the speakers are working within a particular speech genre. While each

individual has her or his own style of speaking, the town hall format imposes its own style on each individuals' speech, resulting in speakers talking about sexual assault in various, but consistent, ways throughout the forum.

I am also interested in what linguistic techniques speakers used in order to talk about their position on the issue of sexual assault on William and Mary's campus. Throughout the forum, individuals structured their speech in consistent ways, using similar linguistic tools. In keeping with the forum itself, let us begin with the first speaker. Speaker 1 begins by introducing himself to the audience and establishing himself as "the totally average senior male here."² He then transitions his footing in order to engage the audience, which is done by making a joke about the nature of the email. Speaker 1 then changes his footing again, adopting a more serious tone as he begins speaking about the letter. During this change in footing, the speaker also switches from using the pronoun "I" to using mostly "you" and "we," as he addresses the William and Mary community as a collective entity. Speaker 1 finishes his speech on a positive note, similar to the footing that he used when beginning his speech, by explaining that he is proud to be a part of this conversation.

These shifts in footing as illustrated in Speaker 1's speech are consistent with Goffman's (1981) concept of embedding. All of the speakers in the forum either state their name and/or their status in the William and Mary community, whether it is their major, Greek status, or age. In addition, the majority of speakers then continue to try to engage the audience in some way, whether it is with humor (like Speaker 1), flattery (like Speaker 4), or a shocking statistic (like Speaker 17). During these introductions, "I" is

² For all specific quotations taken from the William and Mary Town Hall Forum transcription, please refer to Appendix A.

often utilized; however, once the speaker begins to share his personal opinions about the letter or the issue of sexual assault at large, the speaker utilizes embedding by altering his pronoun use to collective words such as “we” or “the community.” Also, in the same footing in many individual’s speeches, many speakers utilize hedges and qualifiers as a means of embedding. Speaker 7, similar to many other speakers, uses embedding in his speech to imply who should be the agent of talking about sexual assault:

1 Hi everybody. My name is _____. I am a RA and I am a ___[fraternity]___. So I
 2 met a couple of you guys, some of you before I recognize you. [laughs] Since the
 3 past Tuesday and since I’ve gone here three years for now, hopefully four, I
 4 realize that we have a lot that we don’t recognize and I think that this is a chance
 5 to look around, so take a chance to do that [pause] this is a really full room. And
 6 this is just representative of everything else we have. But I think we need to
 7 remember that this incident and for all times forward that we are a community for
 8 each other. We are a support group, we go through some kind of hard times,
 9 specifically midterms and finals, and I think we do a great job of getting through
 10 it. But I think one thing as far as taking action is involved, I would encourage you
 11 guys to each think how can we do our best to make each other feel accepted. And
 12 I guess just one quick, thing that I might add, is maybe we can try
 13 saying hi to each other when we walk by on campus a little bit more.

Speaker 7’s speech’s begins with establishing himself as an “RA” and a member of a fraternity on campus. After his initial footing where he utilizes “I” frequently in lines 1-7, Speaker 7 shifts to using “we” and “community” as a means for talking about the “incident.” He explains that “you guys” should be the agent of change, which implies that William and Mary students outside of himself and his social sphere should be the individuals responsible. Therefore, lines 11-13 imply that language is a privileged form of social action in that it has the ability to alter the campus climate by making others feel accepted; however, it is evident that this language is only effective if facilitated by certain people on campus.

Furthermore, it is clear that students utilize the similar initial footings in order to establish themselves as part of a group that they can then imply does not contribute to the issue of sexual assault on campus by using different pronouns such as “you.”

Simultaneously, embedding implies that the group that the individual represents does not need to facilitate dialogue about this topic. Also at the forum, some speakers use embedding in a more subtle way. Rather, they want to include themselves in the group of people who should be facilitating dialogue about sexual assault; however, they do not use “I” to imply that they are the only ones responsible. This is supported in Speaker 26’s speech. After introducing himself as a faculty member on campus, Speaker 26 uses “we” to discuss how the males in the room, including himself, are responsible for changing their language in order to improve the current campus climate with regard to sexual assault:

1 ...And if every man in this room could agree right now that we don’t use that
2 language, and we don’t allow our friends and family members to use that
3 language. And we cut it right then and there, that goes a long way. We
4 underestimate our personal power and our influence, and our circles of influence.
5 And when we are talking amongst ourselves as guys, and we’re comfortable and
6 we’re using that kind of language, we *cut that*. And we say that’s not ok. We take
7 that first step to disconnect from rape culture.

As evident, particularly in lines 1-2, Speaker 26 does not completely distance himself from the group of people who are responsible for changing their language (and thus facilitating social change on campus with regard to the issue), as he implies that all men are responsible for changing language. He then ends in line 6-7 by saying that if men are the facilitators of changing language about sexual assault, then significant action can be taken in addressing the campus “rape culture.” At the same time, Speaker 26’s speech implies that if other groups, such as women in the room, are the ones facilitating such talk

about sexual assault, then it might not have as big of an impact in creating positive change toward the current campus climate. This potentially could be due to Speaker 26's implied belief that men, similar to the male student who wrote the listserv letter, are the individuals on campus using sexist language. He suggests that men are responsible for changing such language, and that change could transform the broader campus climate with regard to sexual assault.

The use of embedding in order to imply who should be facilitating talk about sexual assault on campus is further supported in the formal interviews I conducted, which included questions asking about the individual's experience with the forum. One interviewee, Brad, who attended the forum, explained that many of the conversations he was a part of during the time of the release of the listserv letter involved talking about who is responsible for creating change on campus. Mainly, Brad explained that "no one was willing to say 'I'll take care of me if you take care of you.' It was like 'you change' and the other person is saying 'they should change.'" Brad gives a clear example of individuals trying to distance themselves from being culpable for perpetuating a negative climate with regard to sexual assault, in specific reference to the Sigma Chi listserv letter.

1 You could look at it on different levels. In Sigma Chi, they were saying this is one
 2 person and it doesn't represent us. And in Greek life, they're saying it's Sigma
 3 Chi, and it doesn't represent us. In this school, they're saying it's Greek life, and
 4 that doesn't represent us.

This quotation, consistent with the embedding used during the forum, reveals how students understand sexual assault to be an issue outside of their own personal circles rather than something within their own community or their personal behavior that needs to be fixed. This is reflected in how the students alter their speech to reflect their own role in the issue and to inform the rest of the audience who should be responsible for creating

change. Therefore, it is not solely important that the issue of sexual assault is being talked about, but rather student ideologies imply that who is talking about the issue and how they are talking about it are two core factors for creating social change. This is also reflected in conversations that I had with students following the forum. Many of those in attendance thought that the administration was partly to blame for the lack of adequate response to the listserv letter and the overall issue of sexual assault on William and Mary's campus. Therefore, these students explained that they were upset with the fact that President Reveley did not speak at the forum, as they thought that his words would carry significantly more meaning, and thus inspire more action, due to his position as the College's President. Some students reported that it had confirmed their beliefs that the administration does not support survivors of sexual assault and has little concern for William and Mary's climate with regard to sexual violence. Students expressed that these beliefs inhibited students from reporting crimes of sexual violence to the administration, as the lack of administrative talk about the issue helped maintain their understanding that if they or a student they know is sexually assaulted on campus, the administration will not be helpful in providing the student support.

Furthermore, these ways of talking reflect certain understandings of how language can create social action with regard to William and Mary's sexual assault climate. Specifically, it is clear through the use of embedding that students possess a need to "other" the issue of sexual assault as being a problem that exists outside of their social sphere in the William and Mary community. In many cases, the "other" who is responsible for facilitating dialogue about this issue is the administration, as they are viewed as being responsible for supporting students who experience sexual violence. In

addition, some students use collective pronouns such as “we” or “community” in order to take some ownership of their own role in addressing the issue while still maintaining some distance from being responsible for facilitating dialogue and change. It is clear that students understand that their language during the forum has a particular effect on those who hear it as they find it important to tailor their speech to imply who is and is not culpable in this issue of sexual assault on the College’s campus. In the following section, I will go beyond analyzing the students’ linguistic styles by discussing how the content of students’ language reflects this understanding that language can have a particular impact, or even be a form of action, as discussed in Austin’s (1962) speech act theory.

2.2 Ideologies about Language’s Relation to Social Action

Although it is helpful to look at the way in which individuals style their language, it is also important to analyze what student speeches reveal about their ideologies about language’s relation to social action. Specifically, it is evident that students differentiate between words that carry “weight” and those that do not, and that the concept of weight is intimately related to the effectiveness of language. Furthermore, I will analyze specific speakers who illustrate what, if any, role language has in relation to action, and what conditions are necessary for language to be effective in creating social change.

While I already discussed Speaker 1's changes in footing, I find that the content of his speech is especially illuminating with regard to how speakers understood the connection between "weight" and language form. Throughout his first speech, Speaker 1 talks about what impact he thinks the sexist listserv letter had on the William and Mary campus climate.

1 Ok um, so we are here because there was an email and we find that that email is
2 totally representative of our culture or at least one part of our culture that we
3 really know we want nothing to do with. But that part of our culture that we're
4 animalizing right now, we picked one aspect of it that was really, in essence,
5 totally victimless... but I think what is so evident that is um that we do see a real
6 problem and I do think that the fact that we are all here is like the only good thing
7 that could come of something like that. That email, like the only thing that it did,
8 it didn't, it didn't kill us, it didn't bring our society any more. It showed us where
9 were and here we are.

Clearly, Speaker 1 does not think that the language used in the listserv letter has any particular impact on the campus climate; however, this speaker admits toward the end of his speech that “we do see a real problem” with regard to sexual assault on William and Mary’s campus. Evidently, Speaker 1 understands speech and action as two separate entities that do not influence each other, as he separates the sexist language that depicts sexual assault in the listserv letter from the actual, physical sexual assaults that are occurring on William and Mary’s campus. Moreover, Speaker 1 finds that it is most effective in his speech to point out this disconnect between the letter and the actual actions taking place on campus. This is shown in Speaker 1’s second speech, with his use of an anecdote about his friend being sexually assaulted and telling him about her experience as evidence for what people *should* be talking about at the forum. It is evident that Speaker 1 understands language as being effective in creating social change, as it is evident that he engages in the forum in order to create some impact in his audience; however, he differentiates the effectiveness of talking about the language used on campus from the effectiveness of talking about the physical sexual assaults that happen at William and Mary. Therefore, Speaker 1’s ideology points at talking about actions or events versus talking about talk as a condition for language to have efficacy in creating social change. This implies that Speaker 1 thinks that language itself (like the sexist

language used in the listserv letter) does not produce a climate that encourages or perpetuates sexual assaults on campus.

A speaker who directly opposes the separation of speech and action and whose speech is in direct contrast with Speaker 1 is Speaker 13. This speaker reveals the most personal story of any of the speakers during the forum, as she explains that she is a survivor of sexual assault who brought her specific case to trial against her perpetrator. She explains that the individual who wrote the email was a part of the defense for the man who sexually assaulted her. Furthermore, Speaker 13 explains that her specific case represents the clear relation between speech and social action.

1 The very person who sent this email was part of the uh, the defense. It was that
2 same mindset that said a rape was not rape. And it is that culture that these
3 incidents are not just incidents and they are directly tied. That makes it not ok,
4 and that this culture persists at William and Mary.

Here, Speaker 13 explains that the mindset that is evident in the writer's letter illustrates the same mindset that the writer has when viewing sexual encounters (Line 2: *rape was not a rape*). Furthermore, she emphasizes that the language used in the letter illustrates how many individuals on William and Mary's campus view sexual assaults as not sexual assaults but normal sexual encounters. Therefore, this language, while it does not in fact physically harm anyone, does perpetuate a climate at William and Mary that supports or allows for physical sexual assaults to occur and to go unpunished. I think Speaker 13's view resonates with Austin's (1962) speech act theory, since while the listserv letter does not necessarily perform an illocutionary action (like marrying a couple) it does imply that certain utterances can also have an ability to facilitate action. Therefore, Speaker 13's speech illustrates that language is a powerful tool for creating an atmosphere that either condones or opposes sexual assault.

Speaker 13's speech represents the ideologies of a majority of the speakers during the Sigma Chi Town Hall forum, as a particular understanding is expressed about the relation of speech to social action. Therefore, I contend that many of the speakers understand language as something that has an influence on society's culture, which then leads a community to either promote or punish acts of sexual violence. Speaker 2 explicitly expresses this relationship as he explains that "words lead to beliefs and beliefs lead to actions, and if we can't stop the words and beliefs, then how to stop the actions." Many students discuss how the words both in the letter and words used in everyday language in our society contribute to upholding "rape culture." For the purpose of understanding what speakers mean when using this term, a majority of individuals define rape culture as a culture that normalizes or supports rape. Specific characteristics of rape culture are victim blaming, where a victim of sexual assault is blamed for their own assault by bringing to question the status of clothing, language, intelligence, etc.; and slut shaming, where a victim's assault is made less believable based on the victim's number of sexual experiences. Furthermore, Speaker 26 directly names language as a contributor to rape culture as he explains that if men stopped using sexist language then that would be a significant contributor to disconnecting the William and Mary community from "rape culture."

In addition, Speaker 15 points at certain types of talk as something that perpetuates rape culture, explaining that these types of talk as represented in the listserv letter are real and pervasive. Moreover, many speakers connect this rape culture to why there is an issue of sexual assault on William and Mary's campus, as they explain that "cutting" this sexist language is a means for "cutting" physical sexual assaults as well.

Most individuals use language as a means to challenging the current climate in regard to sexual assault in order to create a safer and better community. Speaker 19 expresses this sentiment, as she explains that individuals should change the rhetoric and point out when “jokes” are not really jokes but actually contribute to a harmful rhetoric. Therefore, she explains that changing this rhetoric will result in a safer environment for William and Mary students.

While it is evident that most students believe language does have some role in creating social change, it is interesting to note how speakers categorize which types of language have weight in creating social action. It is evident that one such condition of language creating social action is the context in which the language takes place.

Specifically, many students question the administration’s use of a forum venue, where the administration does not speak, as a means for responding to the listserv letter. Speaker 22 explains that sexual assault occurs probably every weekend on William and Mary’s campus, and therefore, while “this [the forum] is great, I’m wondering what we are actually going to do to actually change things.” This statement implies that the forum itself is not a means for facilitating change on campus but serves another purpose. Other speakers, like Speaker 10, contend that the forum’s purpose was mainly an administrative attempt to make light of the incident by deeming it “a teachable moment” where students could engage with each other through talking about the issue. Therefore, this results in the forum being labeled as a “circle jerk” by Speaker 24, as oftentimes only the people who are already informed and interested about the issue come to such events.

Furthermore, it is clear that students believe language loses its ability to be effective in

creating social change in the context of a forum, as it is assumed that everyone in attendance has similar views toward to issue.

However, while speakers call into question the efficacy of talking in a forum setting, students do still think that language can have a powerful, positive effect on campus climate with regard to the issue of sexual assault. Context is key when students address the ability of language to create social action. Students primarily described the administration as very reactive rather than proactive in responding to issues regarding sexual assault. The fact that the forum was held in response to a publicized letter that puts William and Mary in a negative light degrades the effectiveness of having a forum to discuss this issue. This is exemplified in Speaker 9's speech as she says, "People on this campus need to know that if they are sexually assaulted or raped, that the same uproar will be heard from the community." Therefore, the context in which the language and action take place with regard to sexual assault is important, as it needs to happen proactively and consistently versus in reaction to certain events. The specific event to which the speech is responding is also pertinent, as Speaker 9's speech implies that the administration should react to the physical sexual assaults on campus, like the one mentioned by Speaker 13, just as much as they are reacting to the leaked listserv letter. This condition that helps define which words have more or less "weight" in creating social action is supported in Angela's, a senior at William and Mary, interview, as she explains that both the Task Force and the Haven were reactions to the release of the Title IX list.

- 1 Then Title IX came out and things [the Task Force and the Haven] happened
- 2 really quickly so they [the administration] thought they had? to run with it...but it
- 3 was reactionary and put together so fast and not as good as if it was built over

4 time with intentionality and sustainability in mind. It could have been so much
5 better.

As evident in this excerpt, Angela understands the administrative responses as events that are done in order to make William and Mary *look* like they were addressing the issue of sexual assault on campus despite no actual change. Furthermore, while it is positive for these actions to occur on campus, Angela understands them to carry less meaning and weight in creating social change because they are reactive. I personally developed a similar understanding through being a member of the Task Force. My subcommittee decided to host focus groups this semester to survey different subpopulations of students about their understanding of the issue of sexual assault at William and Mary. Because these focus groups were held several months after the release of the Title IX list and there had been no recently publicized local events about sexual assault, many individuals expressed to me that they felt these focus groups carried more meaning simply because they were perceived to be non-reactive. Furthermore, individuals expressed the feeling that because this talk was happening due to perceived campus interest about this issue, they felt that their words had the ability to create more social change than it had in other venues that seemed more reactive and in-house, like the Sigma Chi Town Hall Forum.

Another factor that is represented in student ideologies about language's relation to social action is who is the agent of such talk about sexual assault. As aforementioned in the linguistic styling of student speeches, many individuals explain that the administration should be the agent, as they have to prove that they will be supportive to victims of sexual assault who come forward for help. Speaker 9 treats the role of the administration as crucial, as students "need to know that here we will get support not just from the other students but from the administration." This illustrates the important role

that students think the administration should have, as they should be the ones who proactively combat the issue through talking, educating, or writing policies that help prevent sexual assault and educate the William and Mary community (students, faculty, and staff) about the issue. Other groups that students think should be the facilitators of talk about sexual assault are particular subpopulations on campus. Students find that certain social groups like fraternities are responsible for perpetuating rape culture and committing sexual assaults, as illustrated in the listserv letter. This is not completely unfounded, as in William and Mary's sexual assault survey report, "members of fraternities and sororities experienced and observed various types of sexual misconduct at considerably higher levels than unaffiliated students" (Sexual Assault Survey 2015, 2). Therefore, as Speaker 2 explains, members of the fraternity council should create change by voting to educate the members of the fraternity community about issues of sexual assault. This reveals that language will result in social action only if specific people are the agents of such discourse.

Last, speakers suggest that different forms of language are more powerful than others. Speaker 23 explains that "[William and Mary] needs a very clear written rule of what consent is and every section [subpopulation] is required to read them." Many speakers find that written language, in terms of redefining current policies and definitions that the College has with regard to sexual assault, is an appropriate use of language in order to create change with regard to the issue. This is especially important because many individuals hold that the definition of consent is not clear, and that this is one reason why sexual assaults continue to occur at a high rate on college campuses. Furthermore, the idea that language in written form has more weight in creating social action is supported

by the nature of the response that resulted from the listserv letter. Despite the fact that Speaker 13's rape trial, along with many other sexual assault crimes that have occurred on William and Mary's campus, occurred prior to the release of the sexist listserv letter in February 2014, the social action that resulted from the written words in the letter was much more publicized and present in campus talk about sexual assault. Furthermore, it is evident that written words have a particular weight in that they are indisputable, whereas other talk about physical sexual assaults that occur on campus are subject to debate. It is clear that students' ideologies reflect such a dynamic, as many propose that written language, i.e. a clearly defined consent policy, will result in further action toward sexual assault prevention and education on campus.

2.3 Conclusions about the Sigma Chi Town Hall Forum

Through this analysis of the Sigma Chi Town Hall forum, in addition to personal conversations and interviews that I conducted that touched on the forum, I have illustrated how some students think and talk about the issue of sexual assault on William and Mary's campus. Students clearly think there is a connection between speech and action. This is represented both in the linguistic styling of students' speeches, as well as in their concrete discussions of what can be done to address the issue of sexual assault on college campuses. However, language's efficacy is dependent upon the context in which the speech takes place, the identity of the speaker, and the form the speech takes. These conditions for determining which words have more or less ability to create social change will be further discussed in the following chapter, where I will discuss student and administrative efforts to use language in policy and education programs in order to facilitate change with regard to the issue of sexual assault on campus.

Chapter 3

Putting Language into Action: Administrative and Student Uses of Language in Sexual Assault Policy, Education, and Prevention

As evident in the previous chapter, the majority of student ideologies clearly insist that language does have the ability to affect the current climate with regard to sexual assault on campus. In this chapter, I will discuss the ways in which the administration and students use language in efforts to address the issue through policy and prevention methods. Drawing on similar concepts from chapter 2 taken from the works of Goffman (1981), Bakhtin (1953), and Austin (1962), I will first discuss how the administration talks about sexual assault in the College's sexual misconduct policy in comparison to other institutions' definitions. I will then compare the policy's language to how William and Mary students are educated about the topic of sexual assault. I will illustrate the current disconnect between the policy's language and that of the educational programming students receive. Overall, I will show how the administration's use of language to address this issue does not align with student ideologies about using language effectively; mainly, I will illustrate how it fails to meet student's criteria with regards to the context in which the speech takes place, the identity of the speaker, and the form the speech takes.

3.1 A Closer Look at William and Mary's Sexual Misconduct

Policy

As suggested by speakers at the Sigma Chi Town Hall forum, one way to use language to create social action is through crafting policies pertinent to this issue. This idea is reflected in the suggestions outlined in the Obama administration's "White House Task Force to Protect Students from Sexual Assault," which was created in 2014. One of the Task Force's main suggestions to schools is to create an "easy accessible, user-friendly sexual assault policy" in order to facilitate a better campus climate with regard to sexual assault, so that survivors of sexual assault feel supported by the community and, specifically, the administration (Not Alone 2015). In particular, the White House recommends that schools include a clear definition of consent in order to then better define non-consensual sexual contact and intercourse (Not Alone 2015). It is evident that the definition of consent is important when constructing a sexual misconduct policy, as the presence or absence of consent is most often used to define which sexual encounters are considered sexual assault. William and Mary's sexual misconduct policy, which was revised in January 2015, reflects such suggestions, as it lists definitions of what is and is not "consent," in addition to using different sexual encounter scenarios to describe forms of non-consensual sexual contact. This sexual misconduct policy is evidence of one of the administration's main attempts to use language as means for social action.

In order to situate William and Mary's sexual misconduct policy in the context of language about consent and sexual assault, it is worthwhile to note the various ways in which different institutions define consent. Consent is often described similarly to a contract, as it is an agreement between individuals about whether or not to have sexual

contact. This is reflected in Kirsten Bell's (2014) article about informed consent in ethnographic studies, in which she compares informed consent in qualitative data collection to consent with regard to sexual encounters. She explains that giving consent is "quite literally to acquiesce to being 'done to'" (Bell 2014, 517). When such a sex contract is violated, this is often considered sexual assault or harassment, as something is being done to an individual without his or her permission. The idea of consent as a contract is specifically illustrated in the White House Task Force's recommendations for campus sexual misconduct policies as it explains that a definition of consent should recognize that "consent is a voluntary *agreement* to engage in sexual activity" (Not Alone 2015). However, other individuals have gone beyond the definition of consent as being just a "voluntary agreement." Gayle Rubin (2011) explains that in contract theory, Marxists argue that "just because someone voluntarily enters into an agreement to do something, does not mean that they have not been coerced by forces impinging on the decision" (Rubin 2011, 134). Rubin's (2011) article supports the notion that even if an individual enters voluntarily into a sexual encounter, it does not necessarily mean that the individual has consented. Mainly, these "forces" that affect one's voluntary agreement can be outside influences like peer pressure or societal expectations that the individual should engage in sexual contact. Such influences can be coercive, and therefore, consent is not truly given in such situations despite the fact that there is no direct threat of physical violence in the encounter. This reveals the complex nature of defining consent. According to Rubin's (2011) definition, even if two individuals agree on something verbally, the contract's validity is not solely dependent on the language used in the sexual encounter. This leads to the question of how institutions like William and Mary define

such factors in order to create an effective policy that creates a positive campus climate with regard to sexual assault.

In order to address the various ways in which institutions talk about sexual assault, it is most helpful to look at one of the more narrow definitions of sexual assault that many institutions use as a platform for building their own campus-specific policies. The Rape, Abuse, and Incest National Network (RAINN), the nation's largest anti-sexual assault organization, defines consent by defining a type of person who can or cannot administer it. Mainly, RAINN explains that for a sexual encounter to be consensual, the individuals involved must be a certain age, and have "the capacity to consent, and agree to the sexual contact" (RAINN 2009). RAINN explains that these terms vary from state to state. However, generally consensual participants in a sexual encounter need to be around 16-18 years old; cannot be drugged, unconscious, or have some disabilities; and cannot be forced, whether physically or emotionally, to have sexual contact (RAINN 2009). This definition represents a clear-cut way of defining rape and sexual assault, as it attempts to use mostly objective and easy-to-define qualities (i.e. age, mental status, and the use of physical force) to describe whether a sexual encounter is consensual or not.

William and Mary's sexual assault misconduct policy³ builds on RAINN's definition of sexual assault by addressing specifically who is the agent in sexual encounters, the context in which the encounter takes place, and the form of "consent" used in the encounter. In addition, the policy shows how individuals use similar linguistic tools, such as defining agents of speech and embedding, in order to negotiate consent in sexual encounters. In order to illustrate this, I will reference the several scenarios listed in

³ For the full definitions in William and Mary's sexual misconduct policy, see Appendix C.

the “examples of sexual misconduct” section of the William and Mary sexual misconduct policy (Sexual Misconduct Policy 2015).⁴ Dave Gilbert, Associate Dean of Students at William and Mary, explained that some of these scenarios are adapted from Duke University’s sexual assault misconduct policy while the U.S. Office of Compliance supplied the others to the College. While these scenarios are not actually based on real incidents, he and other administrators picked scenarios they felt were representative of issues they either have already encountered or may encounter. Following each scenario, there is a description of why or why not the scenario is a violation of the sexual misconduct policy. The first scenario (scenario A) describes a sexual encounter between two students named Joel and Beth.

1 Joel is a junior at the College. Beth is a sophomore. Joel comes to Beth’s room
 2 with some mutual friends to watch a movie. Joel and Beth, who have never met
 3 before, are attracted to each other. After the movie, everyone leaves, and Joel
 4 and Beth are alone. They hit it off and are soon becoming more intimate. They
 5 start to make out. Joel verbally expresses his desire to have sex with
 6 Beth. Beth, who has suffered from trauma since being sexually abused by a
 7 baby-sitter when she was five, is shocked at how quickly things are progressing
 8 and says nothing. As Joel takes her by the wrist over to the bed, lays her down,
 9 undresses her, and begins to have intercourse with her, Beth has a severe
 10 flashback to her childhood trauma. She wants to tell Joel to stop, but
 11 cannot. Beth is stiff and unresponsive during the intercourse. Is this a policy
 12 violation?

In order to describe why this scenario is in violation of the sexual misconduct policy, the policy illustrates the role of the agent of the encounter, the context of the encounter, and the form of “consent” used in the scenario. First, the policy explains that Joel (the agent or initiator of the sexual encounter) did not obtain Beth’s (the recipient) consent despite the fact that it is his duty to do so as the sexual initiator. This is further supported in the

⁴ For the full scenarios in William and Mary’s sexual misconduct policy, see Appendix C.

policy's specific definition of consent where consent is defined as something people "get," in an "active process that involves clearly communicating intentions and desires" (Sexual Misconduct Policy 2015). Because Joel did not actively gain consent, but rather Beth's consent was more "passive," this sexual encounter is not consensual. In addition, the scenario highlights the context in which the sexual encounter takes place, which in this case is Beth's dorm room. This example addresses the common misconception that a stranger initiates sexual assaults outside at night, as Joel, someone Beth knows, sexually assaults her in her dorm room. Last, the scenario also illustrates the alternative forms that consent (or refusal) can take during a sexual encounter. Mainly, the policy explains that the scenario is still a policy violation, despite the fact that Beth did not say "no" in response to Joel's sexual advances. Therefore, the policy reveals a broader definition of consent, as the fact that she did not enthusiastically voice a "yes" and illustrated physical signs of discomfort (line 11: *stiff and unresponsive*) are still valid forms of refusal despite the fact that she did not say "no."

This scenario, in addition to the other six that follow a similar format, focuses on certain aspects of the sexual encounter in order to most effectively use language to define what is and is not sexual harassment or assault in the sexual misconduct policy. While the policy can be viewed as something that helps the administration legally decide which sexual encounters are and are not consensual, the point can be made that the language used in the policy can have a significant impact on the campus climate. For instance, William and Mary's policy implies that many sexual violence crimes, outside of the most commonly known forms like stranger rape, will be recognized as crimes and be prosecuted as such; furthermore, this language could potentially create real actions, like

increased reporting rates of sexual violence or fewer sexual crimes perpetrated on campus, thus creating a more positive campus climate with regard to sexual assault.

This notion that language used in administrative policies does create social change in a campus community is supported in Celia Kitzinger's (1999) article, "Just Say No," where she discussed universities' use of refusal skills training (i.e. "just saying no" as a means to deny consent) as a means to address the issue of sexual assault. She explains this particular form of college programming as a "set of 'verbal hygiene practices,' through which feminists aim to subvert current cultural expectations of feminine or 'ladylike' speech" (Kitzinger 1999, 298). This training is based on the somewhat antiquated understanding that the definition of consent is the lack of a participant verbally saying "no." Therefore, Kitzinger contends that feminists hope to empower women to "just say no" as a way of being the agent of their speech and hold power over men in sexual encounters.

But while she appreciates the motive behind these programs, Kitzinger contends that current refusal skill training is a simplistic and harmful prescription, as it overrides cultural understandings of how to negotiate sex. Education aimed at empowering women to "just say no" to unwanted sexual encounters simplifies the complex understanding that women (and men) already have about the rules of refusals (Kitzinger 1999, 293). Kitzinger explains that sexual refusals take various forms, which include excuses ("I am not ready for sex"), palliatives ("That's awfully sweet of you but..."), or prefaces/hedges ("well"), all of which are forms of embedding. Furthermore, Kitzinger concludes that more effective education programs need to be situated in the cultural context of refusals that our society already supports. For instance, Kitzinger explains that most individuals

raised in the United States have a deep understanding of the cultural codes of refusals, whether it is how a person looks, acts, or speaks when they are uncomfortable and do not wish to participate in a sexual encounter. Furthermore, she explains that this simplistic “just say no” language does create and perpetuate certain actions as it allows men to rely on these “just say no” education programs in order to defend themselves in sexually ambiguous situations by saying that they misunderstood the situation because the women did not specifically say “no.” Therefore, the language used in this programming ultimately does not prevent some sexual assaults from occurring, while men who rely on this “miscommunication theory” are, in fact, fully aware of culturally normative ways of refusing and are utilizing this simplification of refusals for their own justification of sexually coercive behavior (Kitzinger 1999, 295). In addition, this simplistic definition of refusal by “just saying no” results in a limited view of which sexual encounters can be defined as sexual assault. This can lead to individuals who do experience sexual assault or harassment feeling their experiences are not valid or worth reporting to the administration, as their method of refusal did not fit into the refusals skill language of “just saying no.”

It is evident that William and Mary’s sexual misconduct policy is representative of the type of program that Kitzinger would approve of, as it goes beyond verbal proclamations and addresses these “cultural codes of refusals” that William and Mary students should already know because they are a part of American society. As described in the aforementioned scenario taken from William and Mary’s policy, it is not necessary for Beth to say “no” in order to deem the encounter nonconsensual; therefore, the responsibility for defining consent is shifted from the recipient of the sexual encounter,

Beth, to voice her consent (or lack thereof) to the initiator of the sexual encounter, Joel. Therefore, this policy would not allow for Joel to rely on Kitzinger's "miscommunication theory" as a defense of his actions during the sexual encounter.

This shift in responsibility from the recipient to the initiator is also exemplified in the policy's other examples of sexual misconduct. Almost all of the scenarios focus on what the initiator did or did not do in order to secure consent for the sexual encounter rather than focusing on that of the recipient. In scenario E, Andrew engages in sex with Felix who is under the influence of alcohol. The scenario focuses on what Andrew did wrong in the situation, which was to continue in engaging in sexual activity once he realized Felix's mental status. Similarly, scenario B in the policy also focuses on the fact that Rob touches Sasha's buttocks after she tells him to stop, rather than focusing on whether or not Sasha was clear enough in her refusal (William and Mary 2014). The policy's examples also support Kitzinger's argument that consent comes in various verbal and non-verbal forms, many of which do not include the statement of a "no." In the seven scenarios the policy describes, no participants explicitly use the word "no" during a sexual encounter. In actuality, many of the scenarios illustrate individuals using embedding (through qualifiers and hedges) in order to signify that they are not consenting to the sexual contact. For example, in scenario C, Myra tells Kristen that she "doesn't feel ready" for oral sex, using an excuse rather than a simple "no" as a means for a refusal. This scenario supports Kitzinger's contention that it is unlikely that women will simply "just say no," since there are other current cultural standards for how one refuses.

As illustrated in the policy's scenarios, it is evident that the administration finds that talking about sexual violence is important, and that context is important for

ascertaining whether consent has been given or refused. Therefore, the language used in the policy establishes three main facets of sexual activity on William and Mary's campus that can be used to influence actions taken with regard to sexual encounters on campus. First, the policy explains that the agent of speech during a sexual encounter should be the sexual initiator, as that person is responsible for obtaining consent from the recipient of speech. Second, the scenarios all take place in dorm rooms or outside social events, which reveal the nature of college campus sexual assaults in that they rarely occur by someone unknown to the victim. Last, the policy lists the many forms that consent can take, both verbal and non-verbal, specifically noting the ways in which individuals embed their speech in order to make their language more palatable to the recipient of the refusal. All of these ways in which the policy talks about sexual assault reveal a new understanding of the nature of college campus sexual assaults, as they show a different approach to talking about consent in a broader and more holistic way.

3.2 Weighing the Sexual Misconduct Policy as Social Action

It is clear that William and Mary's sexual misconduct policy presents the issue of sexual assault on college campuses both accurately and holistically. The policy follows national guidelines, while expounding upon them to include a wide range of scenarios that explore the many forms of consent in sexual encounters. However, in this section, I will contend that the policy will ultimately be ineffective in creating change in the campus climate until other aspects of this issue are addressed. In Chapter 2, I discussed how student ideologies reveal that there is certain criteria for separating which words do and do not have the ability to effect social action, depending on the context in which the

words are being said, who is saying them, and what form the words are taking. Therefore, despite the good intention of this policy to use language as a means for creating social change, I will contend that the administration has not fully fulfilled all of the aforementioned criteria in order to give their words weight in changing the social climate on campus.

First, it is evident that an important aspect of student ideologies about language's relation to social action is the form words take when talking about sexual assault. The policy does fulfill student requests to have a written policy about sexual assault and consent; however, as speaker 23 at the town hall forum explains, it is important to have "every section [subpopulation] required to read them," which is currently not the case. In my formal interviews, three students commented on the fact that they are unaware that such a policy exists and in many of my personal conversations, students explained that they have little to no exposure to the William and Mary policy. This claim is also supported in the NSMCCS results, as only 58% of respondents said they know how William and Mary defines sexual harassment and assault (NSMCCS 2014, 10). Despite the fact that this survey was conducted a few months prior to the release of the revised sexual misconduct policy, as a student, I am unaware of any changes that have occurred in publicizing this policy. The only way students are mandated to be educated about the sexual misconduct policy is through freshman orientation; therefore, it is interesting to compare the language used in the freshman orientation scripts versus the policy, as this is the only required exposure that students have to understanding how William and Mary as an institution defines sexual assault.

All William and Mary freshmen are required to attend freshman orientation with their freshman dormitories, and one presentation is allocated to talking about sexual assault. This academic year (2014), HOPE and Someone You Know teamed up to create a script that would be used to educate both freshman males and females with the same information. Out of the forty-five minute presentation, five minutes are reserved for talking about what “consent is” and what “consent is not,” in addition to allocating seven to ten minutes for talking about “what is sexual assault.” The script does not have specific points for the speaker to make in the consent section, but rather the script lists prompts for the facilitator to use to ask for participant responses, as shown below.

- 1 Ask for participant responses:
- 2 -“Help us finish these sentences. Let’s start with consent is...”
- 3 -“What about consent is not...”
- 4 -Clarify questions, ask if group thinks we missed anything, etc.

This means that students could leave the information session with different understandings of what exactly is the definition of consent, even though all the facilitators have the same training. The ways in which this script is structured reveals that the facilitators want to give the incoming students agency in talking about what they think “consent” means. However, as incoming freshmen come from a variety of backgrounds, it is probable that there will be disparate views of what exactly consent means.

Following the discussion about consent, 7-10 minutes is allocated for talking about “what is sexual assault,” where the focus is defining how the “institutions around us [the State of Virginia and William and Mary] define consent.” The script then reads the Code of the Virginia Statute.

1 If any person has sexual intercourse with someone whether or not his or her
 2 spouse, or causes someone to engage in sexual intercourse with any other person
 3 and such act is accomplished: by force, threat or intimidation of or against
 4 someone or an additional person; or through the use of someone's mental
 5 incapacity or physical helplessness..."

This definition mirrors that of the RAINN definition in that it highlights the use of force, in addition to describing the traits of an individual (line 4-5: *mental incapacity or physical helplessness*) who cannot administer consent. However, as previously discussed, such a definition differs significantly from the one used in the William and Mary sexual misconduct policy. Furthermore, while it makes sense that this definition is included in the script as William and Mary students are also subject to Virginia state law, such a definition could create confusion if a student were to compare it to the one used in the William and Mary sexual misconduct policy. However, the script then moves to describing how William and Mary as an institution defines sexual assault. .

1 "So: What is sexual assault?" Examples include any form of unwanted sexual
 2 contact, any form of sexual contact that occurs when a person cannot consent,
 3 motivated by power and control, not desire.

4 Attempt to steer the discussion to alcohol – "*What happens when we add*
 5 *substances to the mix?*"

6 Good overall maxim – "If you have to ask [to engage in sexual activity with
 7 someone], it's probably a good idea to wait."

While the definition outlined in lines 1-3 relates to the actual definition used in the policy moreso than that of the State of Virginia, it is evident that the broad, multi-faceted definition in William and Mary's policy is simplified in this script. Importantly, the fact that "consent" is part of the definition (line 2: *any form of sexual contact that occurs when a person cannot consent*) relies on a clear definition of consent to be established earlier on in the presentation. However, as previously discussed, how the script defines

consent is problematic as it relies on student-generated answers to form the definition. In addition, lines 6-7 have interesting implications about how individuals are supposed to negotiate consent. While William and Mary's policy makes it very clear that the individual initiating the sexual activity should be the responsible agent in gaining consent, the script implies that if one has to ask for "it" (i.e. sexual contact), then they should not have the sexual contact with the other individual. This renders verbal consent as unnecessary as one should be able to tell based on an individuals' outward physical expressions if that person is consenting or refusing the sexual contact. Therefore, lines 6-7 completely contradict the administration's policy that consent is something people "get," in an "active process that involves clearly communicating intentions and desires."

Also in contradiction to the sexual misconduct policy is the clear role that alcohol plays in talking about sexual assault situations in this freshman orientation script. This is exemplified in lines 4-5 above, in addition to the scenarios in the script. While only one out of the six scenarios in William and Mary's sexual misconduct policy involves alcohol, all the scenarios in the script involve alcohol. In the script, the scenarios are more so used to talk about how to be aware and intervene in a potentially unhealthy or harmful situation with regard to sexual assault. These scenarios again represent William and Mary students' only mandatory education about what form sexual assault takes at the College; however, it is important to note that these scenarios, unlike those used in the sexual assault misconduct policy, were submitted by William and Mary students through an anonymous form to HOPE during Sexual Assault Awareness Week in 2014. Therefore, they are representative of real, physical cases that occurred at the college rather than ones that the administration felt reflected past or potential incidents. In the

script, the facilitator is instructed to pick one out of the three scenarios listed to read to the audience. For brevity, I will discuss the first scenario listed that is similar to the other potential scenarios the facilitator could choose to read.

1 I was at a party my sophomore year. I had already had too much to drink, but I
2 kept getting pressured by the guys and even my friends to keep drinking. When I
3 asked for water, one of the guys told me he had some cold bottles in his room. I
4 followed him, and once we were in his room he forced me onto his bed and tried
5 to get me to drink vodka straight from the bottle. He held me down as he groped
6 me and rubbed his now-exposed erection all over me. It was one of the worst and
7 most uncomfortable moments of my life...I don't blame anyone but my attacker
8 for the assault. But I do wish that someone at the party would have noticed the red
9 flags I was too drunk to see, and either gone with me to the guy's room or helped
10 me in some other way.

It is clear that alcohol plays an important role in this scenario for illustrating how and where a sexual assault might occur. While sexual assaults can occur anywhere by anyone, it is evident that the script takes a particular stance on where and by whom sexual assaults occur at William and Mary. In all three scenarios in the script, the sexual assault involves alcohol, occurs at a party, and is initiated by someone the victim does not know well. The difference is stark between these scenarios and those that were previously discussed in the sexual misconduct policy. Therefore, it makes sense that students understand sexual assault and consent differently from what is outlined in the policy. This is especially apparent in the formal interviews I conducted. Two students, Sean and Jeff, both explained how all they could remember from freshman orientation was that if any alcohol is involved in a sexual encounter, it is considered sexual assault. Furthermore, while this is an important aspect of college campus sexual assaults, ultimately the rest of the policy's definition of sexual violence, which reveals the complex nature of negotiating consent, is not relayed to students during this one formal, mandatory educational forum.

Although the administration's language takes a written form that student ideologies contend hold more weight in creating social action, it is evident that this form of language is not appropriately conveyed to William and Mary students. Therefore, students' only mandated exposure to this policy is through this freshmen orientation script, which, as evident above, is not aligned with the policy's language. Because students are unaware that such a policy exists, it has limited power in generating change despite the fact that it is in written form. In addition, it is problematic that the only mandated education about this issue at William and Mary is facilitated by HOPE and Someone You Know. Although administrators in the Office of Health Promotion do advise these student-lead groups, only students facilitate the educational programming mandated for freshmen. As expressed at the town hall forum, students weigh speech's ability to be social action based on who the agent is. Students specifically addressed the need for the administration to be the agent of such speech, as it would be viewed as more effective in changing the campus climate. Despite the fact that the administration is the facilitator of the language in the sexual assault misconduct policy, this is unknown to students as their only mandated exposure to sexual assault education is language facilitated by other students during orientation. Since the policy is communicated to students by students, the weight of the administration as the agent of such speech is lost. Last, as also expressed at the town hall forums, students weigh language's effectiveness in relation to the context in which it takes place. As Angela explained in Chapter 2, many administrative actions, such as the revised sexual misconduct policy, are viewed as reactive because they occurred quickly after the publicized Title IX violations. The fact that the policy is barely mentioned in the script and different language is used to describe

sexual assault is problematic. Due to the lack of exposure that students have to the policy, it is possible for it to be viewed as solely a reactive measure to the publicized Title IX violation. In addition, if the policy is only discussed when responding to sexual assault incidents on campus, it is more likely to be labeled as reactive and, therefore, not useful in facilitating change. However, if the policy's language was more present in educational programming that students received, its language could be viewed as more a preventative and, therefore, proactive measure.

3.3 Effectiveness of Policy, Education, and Prevention Efforts

It is evident that at a national and local level, individuals believe that language in college policies can be useful in creating change to campus climates with regard to sexual assault. While William and Mary's policy presents a revised, holistic way of defining and discussing sexual assault, it is clear that the student body does not reap the benefits that such a policy could potentially offer. The policy serves as the College's main use of language with regard to the issue of sexual assault, as its other efforts are more concerned with creating safe spaces for survivors and using different methods of data collection to assess the climate both quantitatively and qualitatively. Therefore, if used in accordance with student ideologies about language's relation to social action, this policy could play a significant role in facilitating change on campus. For instance, the publicized use of an administrative policy in sexual assault education and prevention efforts on campus could address negative perceptions that currently exist about the administration not caring about or supporting survivors of sexual assault. Furthermore, in the next section, I will discuss my concluding thoughts about my research as a whole. I will specifically address my

personal recommendations about using language effectively in sexual assault policy, education, and prevention.

Conclusion

It is clear that a lot can be learned from analyzing how the William and Mary administration and student population talk about the issue of sexual assault. In conclusion, I want to review and expound upon the conclusions of my research. Mainly, I want to discuss how student ideologies about language's relation to social action are important in understanding how to facilitate positive change in the campus climate with regard to sexual assault. It is evident that using language in particular ways could be useful in altering student and administration attitudes with regard to this issue, in addition to changing individuals' understandings about sexual assault. In addition, I want to discuss my personal recommendations, derived from my research findings, about how language can be more effectively used on campus with regard to policy, education, and prevention.

An important conclusion that resulted from analyzing the Sigma Chi Town Hall forum is that there is clear evidence that most students do believe that language can serve as a means for social action if it meets certain criteria. One aspect of this ideology I personally find fascinating is the distinction students make between spoken versus the written language. It is evident that the written word carries a different weight than the spoken when it comes to sexual assault. I contend that this is due to the fact that written language is treated as indisputable. It is easy to define the agent of the speech and the context of the speech event. Therefore, writing can be viewed as a metaphor for authority and permanence. Written word is culturally understood to have a direct agent of speech, the writer, and it also understood to be enduring and unchanging. However, in most sexual assault cases, the only individuals that witness the event are those who are

involved in the sexual encounter. Furthermore, as specifically addressed in chapter 3, it is important to note the context, agent of speech, and the form the speech takes in order to determine if a sexual encounter is nonconsensual. However, oftentimes when sexual assaults are reported, there is a “he said, she said” type of talk where the actual events of the sexual encounter are disputed. This results in language that can be altered and changed, depending on who is talking about the incident. In addition, there is less of an authoritative agent of speech in sexual assault incidents, as it can easily be disputed who said what in the encounter. While I find it disappointing that a town hall forum was not held in response to physical sexual assaults that occur at William and Mary, I do think that understanding student ideologies about language’s relation to social action is valuable in that written words can be used effectively to create positive social change on campus. Moreover, as a result of my research, I have compiled a few recommendations about how both William and Mary students and the administration can use the language ideology's criteria in order to craft policy and education programming most effectively.

It is evident in my research that the College’s administration has crafted a policy that holistically defines sexual violence; however, it is disappointing that such a policy currently has little ability to create change on campus. This is mainly due to the fact that both the administration and the policy are disconnected from current education and prevention efforts for William and Mary students. It is clear that such language used in the policy to discuss sexual violence is needed in order to dispel student misconceptions about sexual assault, similar to the ones I had when I first came to William and Mary. Therefore, it is crucial to educate students about the many forms of consent and different types of sexual encounters that are sexual assaults. Therefore, I contend that in order for

there to be actual change on campus with regard to this issue, language about sexual assault needs to meet the aforementioned criteria that determines which words have the ability to create social action. Furthermore, I believe that it is in the best interest of facilitating change in the climate to have continuous, mandatory education about this topic. For example, by having educational programs about this topic every year of a student's enrollment at the College, there would be time to address the entirety of the sexual misconduct policy without having to simplify the language for the sake of time. This would help to address the current disconnect between the administrative and student definitions of sexual violence. In addition, it is important that an administrative voice facilitate, or at least co-facilitate, educational forums for incoming freshmen in order for students to perceive this language as a form of social action. This would also force student groups (like HOPE and Someone You Know) and the administration to engage in dialogue about this issue in order to resolve obvious discrepancies between how each group defines and talks about sexual assault. Last, it is evident that this policy's language needs to be part of larger prevention and education methods so that it is not interpreted as reactive but as part of the community's proactive efforts to address the issue of sexual assault at William and Mary. Ultimately, if this rhetoric becomes standard for how the William and Mary administration educates students about this issue, this could lead to the policy's language having significant weight in changing the current campus climate with regard to sexual assault.

Overall, I think that my thesis project not only contributes to anthropological literature about speech genres and language ideologies but also addresses an important and relevant issue in today's society. As aforementioned, the NSMCCS shows that over

one in four William and Mary women will experience some form of sexual misconduct once coming to the College; therefore, it is clear that there is a need to better understand how to address this issue on this campus. While there are many student and administrative efforts that are being done, it is evident that language can play a paramount role in facilitating social change with regard to this issue. As mainly students experience sexual violence on campus, it is clear that understanding their ideologies about language's relation to social action can be helpful in order to most effectively use language as social action at William and Mary. It is my hope that my thesis research will provide clarity to both the William and Mary administration and student body, and possibly other higher education institutions, about how language can be used as social action to address the issue of sexual assault.

Bibliography

Austin, J. L.

1962 *How to Do Things With Words*. Cambridge: Harvard University Press.

Bakhtin, Mikhail.

1953 The Problem of Speech Genres. *In* *The Lyric Theory Reader: A Critical Anthology*. Virginia Jackson and Yopie Prins, eds. Pp. 182-222. Maryland: Johns Hopkins University Press.

Bakhtin, Mikhail.

2010 *The Dialogical Imagination: Four Essays*. University of Texas Press.

Bell, Kirsten.

2014 Resisting Commensurability: Against Informed Consent as an Anthropological Virtue.” *American Anthropologist*, 25(3): 511-522.

Boyle, Abby.

2014 Leaked Sig Chi Email Goes Viral.

<http://flathatnews.com/2014/01/31/leaked-sig-chi-email-goes-viral/>, accessed April 4, 2014.

Cahill, Ann.

2001 *Rethinking Rape*. New York: Cornell University.

Carmody, Deirdre.

1989 Increasing Rapes on Campus Spur Colleges to Fight Back. *The New York Times*, January 1.

Carr, Summerson.

2010. *Scripting Addiction – the Politics of Therapeutic Talk and American Sobriety*. Princeton: Princeton University Press.

College of William and Mary

2015 Sexual Assault Misconduct Policy.

http://www.wm.edu/offices/compliance/policies/sexual_misconduct/policy/index.php, accessed March 1, 2015.

Das, Veena.

1997 *Language in the Body: Transactions in the Construction of Pain*. In *Social Suffering*. Arthur Kleinman and Veena Das, eds. Pp. 93-103. University of California Press.

Das, Veena.

2008 *Violence, Gender, and Subjectivity*. *Annual Review of Anthropology*, 37(3): 283-299.

Das, Veena.

2008 *On the Modalities of the Domestic*. *Bloomsbury Journals*, 5(3): 349-371.

Day, Sophie.

1994 *What counts as rape? Physical assault and broken contracts: contrasting views of rape among London sex workers*. In *Sex and Violence: Issues in Representation and Experience*. Penelope Harvey and Peter Glow, eds. Pp. 170-175. Routledge Press. .

Foucault, Michel.

1988. *Discipline and Punish*. Random House, Inc.

Goffman, Erving.

1981. *Forms of Talk*. University of Pennsylvania Press.

Gordon, Claire.

2014. *Timeline: The year of college sexual assault*.

<http://america.aljazeera.com/watch/shows/america-tonight/articles/2014/11/10/timeline-collegesexualassault.html>, accessed March 10, 2014.

Grandex, Veronica.

2014. William and Mary Sigma Chi Sends Out Most Bizarre and Disgusting Email About Vaginas Ever Written. <http://totalsororitymove.com/william-mary-sigma-chi-sends-out-most-bizarre-and-disgusting-email-about-vaginas-ever-written/>, accessed March, 1, 2015.

Kiesling, Scott.

2001. Stances of Whiteness and Hegemony in Fraternity Men's Discourse *Journal of Linguistic Anthropology* 11(1): 101-115.

Kingkade, Tyler.

2012 Sexual Assault Survivors at Amherst College Speak Out With 'It Happens Here' Photo Series. http://www.huffingtonpost.com/2012/11/10/sexual-assault-survivors-amherst-photos_n_2102812.html, accessed January 1, 2015.

Kitzinger, Celia.

1999 Just Say No? The Use of Conversation Analysis in Developing a Feminist Perspective on Sexual Refusal. *Discourse and Society* 10(3): 293-316.

RAINN.

2013 RAINN Statistics. <http://www.rainn.org/statistics>, accessed March 1, 2014.

RAINN

2009 Was I Raped?. <https://www.rainn.org/get-information/types-of-sexual-assault/was-it-rape>, accessed March 1, 2014.

Reveley, Taylor.

2014 President's Charge to the Task Force..

<http://www.wm.edu/sites/sahp/presidentscharge/index.php>, accessed
November 1, 2014.

Rubin, Gayle.

2011. Leather Menace. *Deviations: A Gayle Rubin Reader*. Gayle Rubin, eds. Pp.
109-137. Duke University Press.

Sbisá, Marina.

2001 Act. Key Terms in Language and Culture. Alessandro Duranti, eds. Pp. 3-8.
Blackwell Publishing Ltd.

U.S. Office of Civil Rights.

2015 School Resources. <https://www.notalone.gov/schools/>, accessed January 1,
2015.

U.S. Department of Education.

2014. U.S. Department of Education Releases List of Higher Education
Institutions with Open Title IX Sexual Violence Investigations.

<http://www.ed.gov/news/press-releases/us-department-education-releases-list->

[higher-education-institutions-open-title-ix-sexual-violence-investigations,](#)

accessed February 20, 2015.

Appendix A 1

William and Mary Town Hall Forum
February 4, 2014
Recorded and transcribed by Rachael Kaufman

Speaker 1: (male student)

Awesome, hey thank you so much, my name is _____. I am the totally average senior male here. Umm. [pause] Who here saw it on overheard? Ah no ok? No? Just you. Ok. [crowd laughs] Ok um, so we are here because there was an email and we find that that email is totally representative of our culture or at least one part of our culture that we really know we want nothing to do with. But that part of our culture that we're animalizing right now, we picked one aspect of it that was really, in essence, totally victimless. When you think about all the terrible things that we as a society do to each other, that note was the last thing on that list. Like he was just, a stupid kid my age who has like hormones and doesn't really know what the hell is going on in their lives and is like trying to figure it out and is like trying to impress people and constantly doing things, um like that. Sorry I don't want to go over time, but um (pause) but I think what is so evident that is um that we do see a real problem and I do think that the fact that we are all here is like the only good thing that could come of something like that. That email, like the only thing that it did, it didn't, it didn't kill us, it didn't bring our society any more. It showed us where were and here we are. And I am proud to be a part of this. Thank you. [Mumbling, claps]

Speaker 2: (male student)

I want to genuinely thank everyone for being here. Its really nice to see people concerned about our community My name is _____. I am the _____. Being Greek, I have seen people cry out for what this means. What is Greek life is? Is this what Greek life is? Is this what fraternity life is? And there is a reaction from that part of our community, that that is not us. That is one person. That is an outlier. It's not. But I have learned a lot from this. And one thing that I have learned from this is that people are defined by their actions. And they are defined by the people with whom they associate. And more importantly, they are defined by their inaction. And the fact is that when we as a community did not immediately jump to the defense by all those attacked in that email, we realized that there is something more at hand than just one person's horrible remarks. That perhaps we've been empowering of those same kinds of words and beliefs that bring down parts of the community. There is one thing that I know is that words lead to beliefs and beliefs lead to actions, and if we can't stop the words and beliefs, then how to we stop the actions and we like to say that William and Mary is a relatively safe community, but we need to ask ourselves relative to what? Relative to other college campuses perhaps? Relative to the standards to which we want to hold ourselves? It is not now that this email is out, and if even not a single person feels safe on this campus. And so last night, in an emergency meeting of the president's council of fraternities, there is a unanimous vote by the presidents

Appendix A 2

that we would work toward a resolution tomorrow night [20 seconds] to educate the members of our community, to let them see that this is a real issue, that we play a part in our action or inaction, and to empower those who might have just stood by before but won't anymore, and they will stand up and stop.

Moderator 1:

A reminder before we continue a reminder for those in Commonwealth, our overflow space, if you have any questions or comments you would like to share, there are index cards available across the hall...you can give a card and share your insight to the moderators.

Speaker 3: (male student)

Hello, I am merely a potential linguistics major. And as such, it is my duty, my responsibility to pay attention to language in any form that it may take. And so reading this letter, really took the breath out of my mouth, because I wasn't entirely, [pause] I didn't know that people could use that level of language to describe other people and not, and take it so seriously. And so this was a wake-up call for me, that language is not to be toyed with in any form. And because of that it has really opened my eyes that we need to control our words, because as we previously stated our words do become our character and our character does lead to our actions. And so it's [sigh], I would just like to say that, this letter, while not pleasant at all, may have been necessary to open the minds of all, to show the realities of the campus.

Speaker 4: (female student)

Um hi, my name is _____. I am actually a transfer student, this is my second semester here, so really quickly, I just wanted to say that I am really proud to be part of a community where this dialogue and this kind of conversation is welcomed and honored and really important to the community. Just a quick little plug. Umm, so a lot of people been saying that this is an issue for women and I agree with that but I think that its so much for than that. I think that it is an issue for men, I think that it is an issue for people that don't identify with themselves as one gender or another, I think that its an issue for people that are Jewish or Muslim, I think it's a issue for people who that are white or biracial or multiracial, because when one group is targeted and people stand by passively it becomes OK to target other groups. And I think, when, in light of this situation and in light of other situations that happen on this campus and on other campuses, it is completely disrespectful to stand by and do nothing. Because that is when history repeats itself, and that, and when you don't think it's your issue, you rope yourself into something and then no problem is your issue until it is directed at you. And I think that is a really dangerous way to look at it. So what we should do is be focusing on how this is a human issue, this is an issue for all humans and all humanity and really focus on how we present ourselves to other humans. And

Appendix A 3

when we say this doesn't affect my group or this only affects women, what is that saying to that group and what is that say to that group when something happens to you and they don't stand by your side. And so I think that is how we really need to think about and not act passively because you never know when it could be you.

Moderator 2:

I would like to interject a couple of comments and you make yourself right at home at that mike there. Comment 1: 'this email is why we need feminism.' (Claps) I didn't mean to rush ahead...thank you. Comment 2: 'for all the women who feel victimized or unsafe due to this email, what would you say to all of them?' So I think that is a question for all of us...I think it's a question for us. Speak out. The perfect balance, bringing people together, I think that's us, that's you all, you can give yourself a hand. (Claps) Ah I don't know about this: 'Can you focus the camera on the speakers and not the moderators?' (Laughs and claps). Ok...you're on!

Speaker 5: (male student)

Hey guys, I'm _____. Just two things, sort of reiterating what speakers have been saying. One, no one, no one may have been physically hurt from it, but when you're harboring something like this, and no one talks about, that is what creates sort of a culture that allows victims to be a group, and allows victims to exist, and allows terrible things to happen to people, when you don't say 'hey that's a really terrible thing to say about a human being.' That's one thing. Second thing, I think a lot of people that say it's not a big deal or try to shrug it off as a joke. If you interject instead of you saying, if you interject maybe a different group perhaps as well, which is unfortunate, you shouldn't have to because it is very clearly dehumanizing a group. But if you use a group that may in the past people may have made jokes or written three paragraph long *jokes* about something like that, it might be more readily accessible to some, some individuals on campus that do not believe its offensive. If like if we say hey if you put another group in here that use to be discriminated against, you see how dehumanizing an offense it is, the fact that you can't see that about females is unfortunate and really offensive.

Speaker 6: (female student)

Well I guess...[male student interrupts] (She goes first!) (claps) I guess what I think would be interesting for us to think about, and I am inviting people to reflect on is clearly the boy who sent this email felt comfortable sending this on a listserv so there's like a kind of a culture of being able to do this on the listserv and that its acceptable to kind of demean women via it, through just general listserv talking or sometimes when my guy friends invite girls to date parties say terrible things about them. And I don't know if it happens outside of Greek life, if it happens with athletic listservs or something like that too. But I wonder how William and Mary like plans on changing the culture of um how to speak about

Appendix A 4

people when we feel comfortable in our different organizations and groups and so. I really want to like advise you to think about that and I don't know. And I don't think any girl sororities have bad listservs but that's all I wanted to say so thanks.

Speaker 7: (male student)

Hi everybody. My name is _____. I am a RA and I am a ___[fraternity]___. So I met a couple of you guys, some of you before I recognize you. [laughs] Since the past Tuesday and since I've gone here three years for now, hopefully four, I realize that we have a lot that we don't recognize and I think that this is a chance to look around, so take a chance to do that [pause] this is a really full room. And this is just representative of everything else we have. But I think we need to remember that this incident and for all times forward that we are a community for each other. We are a support group, we go through some kind of hard times, specifically midterms and finals, and I think we do a great job of getting through it. But I think one thing as far as taking action is involved, I would encourage you guys to each think how can we do our best to make each other feel excepted. And I guess just one quick, two sense thing that I might add, is maybe we can try saying hi to each other when we walk by on campus a little bit more. [loud claps].

Speaker 8: (female student)

Hi, my name is _____. I put some notes on my phone so I'm going to look at them so I remember what I have to say. I would just like to say that there are a lot of victims of this email, specifically the women on this campus who now feel unsafe because of thoughts that they have read. And I personally feel unsafe. And also this email, made me mad, made me upset. And I think we all have the right to be upset about it. And I think that the people who are being defensive, I understand where your defensive nature comes from and I appreciate it, but I think that we need more than defensive and we need to think critically about the words that were shared. And we are on a college campus, we are here to think critically and if we can't think critically about this email and change our actions than I don't really know who else can. So, you know, I just think that on a college campus especially, full of smart, educated college adults, we should all be able to *think* and I just hope that after this incident we are all going to take steps to think a little more critically about the actions that we do and contribute to our culture.

Speaker 9: (female student)

Um, I'm just an average student, I'm not in a sorority or anything. I just wanted to say that this town hall meeting, that this is something the university, the college has to do to save face. It is kind of the bare minimum, like what will really show determine if the William and Mary community is really that great, is that the future responses to things are just as good as this. Like people on this campus need to know that if they are sexually assaulted or raped, that the same uproar will be heard from the community [claps]. That the college won't try to like cover it

Appendix A 5

up, and I don't know how many of you have read in the news all the stories of like the administration have tried to silence victims, tried to hide the school, whatever. We need to know that here we will get support not just from the other students but from the administration [claps]. This is the easy part is basically what I am trying to say. The average person needs to do something to their own personal life, we can't just accept the status quo at this point.

Moderator 2:

We are going to read a few cards that came from across the hall.

Moderator 1:

The first one reads 'William and Mary has an honor code. We strive to be honorable students. Does the honor code have limits? Does it only say don't cheat and don't lie? Should it not include explicitly maybe the word 'to respect each other'? Vocalizing this over and over through the honor code will remind us what is necessary.' Next comment. 'As much as I support this cause, the people who need to be here are not here. I think as a freshman, William and Mary have done a phenomenal job addressing what to do to prevent rape. However, we still do not dismantle the rape culture in our society that exists and is perpetuated by this email. We should work toward recognizing these issues, forms of language, and types of privilege in our society.' [claps]

Moderator 2:

You're up! Thanks for waiting.

Speaker 10: (male student)

Ok, *ahhhhh*. Ladies and gentlemen, non-binary individuals, hello! I'm _____. So, what I have observed so far is that the administration is very much trying to put a positive spin on this. Like yes, terrible thing happened, but this is a teachable moment, what can we learn from this. Ummm, that's kind of bullshit. [claps]. We know this community, and if we respect this community, we need to look the ugly, nasty stuff in the eye, and say *that*, we want it out. Until tonight, it's been what, a week since this happened, and until tonight, I had not heard the words 'rape culture,' no one was saying that, no one was thinking about that. Um, and I think we're scared, I think we're scared to admit, that this is more than just one person, that this is a systemic issue. We want to think we're safe, but we're really not. Like, we can create an illusion of safety, but this systemic societal issues, the privilege, the rape culture is still there. And what about my friends who are scared to walk home to their dorms at night? What about the fact that 55% of gang rapes happen in frats? What about the fact that gang rapes happen period? Um, what about the fact that most of classes still don't come with trigger warnings? There are so many things we can do to make the community safer, and sure it starts with the individual, but it doesn't end there. We have to look at the systems, and admit that the system is a problem. [claps and cheers].

Appendix A 6

Speaker 11: (female student)

Hi everyone, my name is _____. I am a senior here at the College. I am not in a Greek organization. Um I just, people come up here and say 'I'm just an *average* person on campus' and I don't want to hear that from anyone here. Everyone here is a part of this community. You're just as important. You're just as much a part of this issue. This is not just a *Greek* issue, this is not a woman issue. Like _____ said earlier, this is a human issue. [claps] And so, no one here is just average, we're William and Mary, we're William and Mary students, if you were just average you wouldn't be here. So, I like want everyone to own who they are, um I am really thankful to be a part of this community, that we are having this conversation, that everyone in here cares so much about this College and just the world in general. And so thank you for that and just keep coming up here and saying things, it makes me happy. I know its making other people in here happy so [claps].

Speaker 12: (female student)

Hi everybody, my name is _____. I am a sophomore. I am health promotion at outreach with HOPE, our peer group here on campus. But, obviously whether you're in an organization or not, this is a personal issue. Um, but what I was thinking when I read it was that the [pause] only difference between this man and any other person in the world or on this campus is that this monologue, he was caught. That *that* is the difference. He published his opinions online, and he got caught. But this, this monologue is running through so many people's minds, whether at a party or when they're walking home. She *wants* it. He *wants* it. He *asking* for it. She's wearing rain boots and its not raining. She wants the *D*. That monologue. This is what accumulates, this feeling. This feeling of she wants to be dominated, she's begging for it; she's asking for it, he's asking for it. This is rape culture, and I am loving the respect and the community and yes, those are all beautiful things. But as one of my colleagues said before, this, this is rape culture. It is everywhere. Every time I look somebody is objectified, or dominated, or seen as, seen only for what they can give or what someone can take from them from their *genitalia*. The 1%, the other 99% is bullshit. *He* said it. That dehumanizes us. And this is why it is a crime against humanity. And I really hope the administration [laughs], I hope that as _____ said before, I think the respect is beautiful, but we have to go that step further.

Moderator 2:

I just want to throw in here right now that I am looking at the clock and looking just at the comments I have in my hand and we are suppose to transition in less than 20 minutes so I need to ask people to be even more brief. I appreciate the brevity so far. Permit me to read, maybe one of these, and then lets move on. Ok, 'Could William and Mary consider making a gender studies class required?' [claps and cheers]

Appendix A 7

Speaker 13: (female student)

Hi, my name is _____. I am a sophomore at the College. This email impacted me very personally. I was a victim of a sexual assault last year. I brought charges against _____. And unfortunately it didn't go my way. But um, the point is that this isn't just an incident, its not just, these aren't incidents. Yes, we are great students and this is a great community. We like to think that we are better than this, and that we don't have a culture of this. But we do. And these incidents aren't unrelated. The very person who sent this email was part of the uh, the defense. It was that same mindset that said a rape was not rape. And it is that culture that these incidents are not just incidents and they are directly tied. That makes it not ok, and that this culture persists at William and Mary. And I think that people need to realize this and acknowledge that they are just not incidents and we need to change. [claps]

Speaker 14: (male student)

Hi my name is _____. Um, I am a sophomore here. And I just want to say there is no reason why Sadler and Caf should be lines out the door for lunch. There are just thousands of students at this campus, and there are only hundreds are here. And, you know this, yet people still make excuses for not coming to meetings, and they make excuses about the administration and they're unhappy with what the school is doing. And yet, people aren't saying anything for themselves. If the administration isn't doing what you want, the students can. And that's how we can change things. There is a reason that the guy who wrote this email isn't in this room tonight and he isn't standing up and talking. To shine a light on these things that happened and make them go away. So I'm urging you as students to stand up and say what you are thinking. And not just you guys but everyone you know. Whenever you hear someone make an excuse, that oh I don't want to come to the town forum or I have work tonight, there is nothing important than talks like these. So call them now, and urge everyone you know to do the same. [claps]

Speaker 15: (male student)

Uh hi, my name is _____. And um, I would like to take a moment to remind you guys who we are. We are members of the *College of William and Mary*. We belong to one of the most prestigious universities in the entire world. We came up with the first honor code; we're passionate about free speech. We have constantly upheld that historic and sacred tradition. Silence is not one of those sacred traditions. So please, I would like to take a moment to call it out. This is *not* an isolated incident. Acts of sexual aggression, micro and macro, hurt everyday on this campus. They do not happen in a vacuum, they do not happen pop out of no where, they are *real*. They are real, and readily identifiable trends and discourses that constantly perpetuate rape culture on this campus. They point at this email to explain that this is not us, is to project our issues elsewhere and ignore them. We

Appendix A 8

are not stuck in traffic, we *are* the traffic. So this email does define us to an unfortunate degree, but so does our action. [claps]

Moderator 1:

Before we move forward, I just wanted to share a couple of comments from the overflow room. Um, first, ‘At first response, we and the Sig Chi president, we were not sure if it was a member of our fraternity.’ ‘First response of an average frat guy, note that not all of us are like that. The association will not simply stop the problem. This needs to be solved within the fraternity community with sincere actions.’ Then the question is posed, ‘Is the administrative head of Greek life at this meeting? If so wonderful, if not, response is still lacking.’ And, they are here. [claps]

Speaker 16: (male student)

Hi, my name is _____. I am a senior here at the College. I just want to say that the majority of this room is women. And I’d like to say that the men here, I’m sure you have strong respect for women, as I believe I do myself. Um, I just wanted to say, I believe that there are a lot of men at this school with strong respect for women. I’ve hated how in the last week, this has really pitted men and women against each other at the College. I do not want to see that here. [claps]

Speaker 17: (female student)

Hi, I’m _____. And I would just like to say a few statistics. Approximately 1 in 5 college age women will be sexually assaulted, and a scarier statistic for me is that more than 1 in 20 college age men admitted in anonymous surveys admitted that they have raped someone as long as you don’t actually use the word ‘rape.’ Furthermore, the majority of men who admit to doing acts that fall under the definition of rape do not think it is rape. And this speaks to a lack of understanding of what consent is, and we need to address that. We need to address that consent needs to be *explicit* and *enthusiastic* in order for people to understand that rape is a serious problem. [claps]

Speaker 18: (female student)

Hi, my name is _____ and I’m a junior at the College. Often feminism is the butt of jokes for men and women because we think it is no longer needed. However, this email shows us that it is still very much needed. For example, if this email had targeted a specific race of a person, that person would have been expelled immediately; however, it’s taken us a week [claps and cheers]. Women’s rights are still downplayed and that needs to change. If feminism is still applied to jokes for women or women who claim that they are anti-feminist after this forum, then we have learned nothing and this will happen again. [claps]

Appendix A 9

Moderator 2:

If I can just inject for a minute. Um, we could expel someone for racial slurs but because of Supreme Court doctrine you would be sued, you would be sued or you could so easily be sued because the first amendment vows to protect freedom of expression even when you're saying hateful things about a group. I just want to put that out there. [claps] And you know, if we were a private school, we could totally control that sort of thing, our problem, I mean its not a problem, its really a benefit. But we are a state school, and so the first amendment limits what actions we can take. So I just, I would just to add that to your thoughts. But um, so we could expel somebody and it would probably end up being challenged in court for that. Yes.

Speaker 19: (female student)

That's true. But I do think it's important that a lot of people think it is just funny and a joke. Um, ____ said something a little bit earlier. I'm sorry I think your name is ____ when you spoke. Sort of reiterate that, is that if this were in the '50s about people of different races, or about Jews, we don't consider that acceptable. And we're allowing that rhetoric. So we were challenged in chapter last night. I am a member of a sorority. To help change that rhetoric. And one of my dear friends and sisters said 'how many of you don't want to be that bitch who can't take a joke?' And I was like, 'yeah that's me.' Like I don't want to be on the attack and be that *feminist bitch* all the time. But, I, I challenge people, men and women in this room, to, when someone says something like that, like 'oh don't be a pussy' or whatever. Say like 'dude I know you're trying to be funny, but please stop.' And when someone directs that at you, maybe you slipped up and thought it was funny, and someone says 'hey I don't appreciate it.' Don't give them a lot of shit, don't give them a hard time. Just, that's how the rhetoric gets changed. That is how it moves from it was just a joke, it was just funny; no one is actually going to get hurt to it is no longer acceptable. [claps]

Moderator 2:

We're going to go across the hall, and then we'll be right back to you. It says here, 'To speak of tonight in terms of a singular event would be ridiculous. I cannot tell you the number of times I have been attacked verbally by drunk fraternity brothers and other students around campus for my sexuality. These written incidents should not be the only ones highlighted and treated as wrong. Honesty is the only way to move forward.' [claps]

Speaker 20: (male student)

Hey everybody. How many times have we heard the word community tonight? Somebody give me a ballpark [6! Too many! 8! Over 9000!] I think it is important to say that there are certain subsets of our community, and at large, I think William and Mary is a fantastic community. I think we are a group of amazing people, but I think it is important to think about what subsets of the

Appendix A 10

community you are a part of. And are those subsets healthy? Perhaps there is one person responsible for this email, but uh, I think it is important to think of the unhealthy subsets of our community that would perpetuate these ideas. Thank you. [claps]

Speaker 21: (female student)

Hi, I'm _____. Um, I just want to bring up a point here that it is not just an issue that affects white women, but it is an issue that affects women of many different ethnicities. And [claps] I think race versus being a woman, there is intersection there. There's *significant* intersection there. And people do make sexual comments regarding race *all* the time. So can you imagine being a woman of color and having that in addition to... [claps and cheers]. So, while I completely agree with these people that it's terrible and wrong and hurtful, but let's not pretend that suddenly race isn't an issue here. And that I feel more threatened, because I'm part of two minorities. [claps and cheers]

Speaker 22: (female student)

Hi, my name is _____. I'm a senior. Um, I'm in a sorority but a lot of other things too. And it's all great that we're here and we're here because we care. So I don't think that we're really, we don't need to say these things to ourselves because we all believe them. I think that talking bad about it is really great and obviously can be very soothing and helpful but this is what we've always done. And if we do what we've always done, we're kind of going to get what we've always received and something I've learned, recently, through doing some research for an article, is that sexual assault happens a lot more around this campus than we realize. It happens every weekend, probably many days of the week, and we don't talk about it. We don't have forums every time. So, while this is great, I'm wondering what we are actually going to do to actually change things because I'm feeling a little despondent. [claps]

Speaker 23: (female student)

Hello! I'm _____. Um, I am also a Greek woman. I am in the process of declaring my Gender, Sexuality and Women Studies minor. [claps] Um, I fully agree with _____ that we do need to take action and that many other college campuses, they have very very clear written rules of what consent is and every section is required to read them. And I propose we do that at William and Mary [claps] and we do a little bit of that, but I propose we make it more clear. Thank you. [claps]

Moderator 1:

Just real quickly, we're going um rap up the town hall portion in about five minutes and then we'll have instructions for the next portion.

Appendix A 11

Speaker 1: (male student)

Uh we've talked a lot about a passive reaction to this and um, and how that that's not helpful. And we've also, you know, said we ourselves are being passive right now by just getting into a room together and watching each other come up and talk into the microphone about why we are just so out of touch with ourselves. Like why is it that men and women on our campus find it so hard to relate to each other? Like I'm looking around, and I don't think, I bet there aren't any male and females sitting together who don't know each other a little bit. Right? Like that's really telling. [laughs and mumbles] [We don't know each other! New friends!] See awesome! That's actually, no, but. It was said earlier. We don't say hi to each other enough on campus. We are totally. We talk about how tight of a community. And maybe it's because I came here as a transfer. But like I, I feel like William and Mary, like this is, this is the community that's present on Overheard. Like we are all here, all the time, saying we have each other's backs, and um, and that's great. I mean, what I want to talk about right now is... We were talking about the real issues and not just this email. Like what am I really suppose to tell my friend when she comes to me on Thursday night and talks about on the previous Friday um she was like, walked home and uh, and assaulted. And, and, and just, but she looks away and she doesn't really know what to say about it. She's like 'yah, I was talking to him. Yah, he was nice at first but I wanted to get out of here.' Um, that is like the sort of problem that I, as a man, as a human being, are like asked to confront. And its really hard, and I think that what we really need to do is just remind ourselves. Like for men, we have to constantly remind ourselves to like not sexualize women, to not objectify women, it's actually like a conscious thing that's really hard. [claps] And I hope that [mumbling] thank you.

Moderator 2:

I'm going to inject real quick right here before we go to our next and last speaker. One piece of good advice that's from across the hall, 'Forgive quickly and love earnestly. People make mistakes. Of course these mistakes can be horrible, but remember everyone is broken. Really, think about yourself. I know its difficult but have an open heart. Hate and contempt never did or will do any good. Love, One Tribe.' [claps]

Speaker 24: (gender non-conforming student)

Hello, my name is _____. This has all been lovely, but we need to stop this circle jerk right now. [laughs and claps] When we talk about how in Greek life systems, the norm is heterosexuality and men, pure male fraternities, usually only do activities with pure female sororities. And if this is accepted, and there's something wrong with them, there's something. This is, this is a bigger issue. If you are concerned about this, if you are in this room, or in the other room, if you're anywhere in this campus, and you don't want to see this thing happen again. *Do* something about it. Pick up the pitchfork. Pick up a pen. *Write* something. *Do* something. Thank you. [claps]

Appendix A 12

Speaker 25: (male student)

Hello, everyone. [mumbling] Anyway so, I guess we've had a lot of girls come here and talk about feminism, and our need for more feminism, and this email is a prime example of why we need that. And this may be a little counterintuitive, cause like I'm kind of furthering that dichotomy between males and females. But I just wanted to give a male perspective. And I just wanted to say that I wholeheartedly agree, and I do think that there is a bit of stigma about males calling themselves feminists. But I think that's bullshit. I think we should be able to do that. I think, I'm not [clasps]. I'm simplifying it but at the very core is the fact, it's for women to be equal to men, like not equal as in the same, because we're not the same. But we need to be at the same levels of society, and no one should feel under everyone. So that's kind of my two sense. [claps]

Moderator 2:

Thank you. Just one more. We have a faculty member. [cheers]

Speaker 26: (male faculty member)

Hi, good evening. I'm _____. I'm faculty of _____. When I read that email, I thought to myself that this is really reflective of the greater culture. Very simply, the person who wrote that was very comfortable writing that. And it probably was not the first time that that person expressed those ideas. And there have been some people who said we need to do something, and I think what we need to take responsibility for is *men*, is that we are primarily responsible for this rape culture. And if every man in this room could agree right now that we don't use that language, and we don't allow our friends and family members to use that language. And we cut it right then and there, that goes a long way. We underestimate our personal power and our influence, and our circles of influence. And when we are talking amongst ourselves as guys, and we're comfortable and we're using that kind of language, we *cut that*. And we say that's not ok. We take that first step to disconnect from rape culture. And think that if every guy in this room can agree to that's what we are willing to do, that is something concrete as we walk in the world, as we walk on this campus. We use our circles of influence to cut that language and dialogue. Can every man in this room agree to do that? [claps and cheers]

Moderator 1:

I want to thank everyone who shared. [One more! One more!] [yelling, mumbling]

Speaker 27: (male student)

Alright, um. [laughs] I just went off over there. I thought I turned it off [3 seconds!]. Thank you everyone who came on and spoke. I mean that takes guts. And I'm nervous right now, man, and everyone is looking at me. And can I go up read one of the things? [mumbling] I'll just read that. 'The email was a terrible

Appendix A 13

example of rape culture.’ [mumbling] I agree, this email was a terrible example of rape culture. And rape culture, I don’t think is always um defined...Rape culture for me, I read the email, I read the first paragraph. I didn’t read the whole thing. [loud clap] I didn’t need to...

Speaker 28: (male student)

[clapping] Be respectful of the damn thing, and don’t stand here, you piece of shit. This thing did not need you to...put the microphone down!

Moderator 1:

Ok, ok!

Speaker 27:

I am on the football team. I represent the university. I have people, and we all bring together. And people can help...[mumbling. Blah blah blah!]. It’s good people. I want to talk to you guys around. I really am, I’ve been to the gymnastic club and I’ve been to the drama, intro to acting. Those are great classes that we need to take here. And that’s why I am here today. That’s what education is about. It’s about entrepreneurs. And that’s the business school: entrepreneurship. Is it not? Thank you for letting me go.

Speaker 28: (male student)

Congratulations, sir! [claps]

Moderator 1:

Ok, ok! I just want to tell all you folks, thank you for participating...

Appendix B 1

Subject: Life, love, and pussy

Guys, I just want to put out an early semester reminder that life is good. You're here, you're alive, your penis may not always work, but it hasn't fallen off yet; be thankful. I ask you all to take a few seconds off from complaining about the cold, or preparing your schedule for Spring 2016, and look around you. There's beer to be drunk, porn to view, and sluts to fuck. Let me reiterate that last point: sluts are everywhere. While walking from class to class with your head down limiting exposure to the arctic winds of late, take notice of the feet shuffling by. See some riding boots? Some uggs? A hideous pair of rain boots without a cloud in sight? Now, raise your gaze from the footwear up, allow your eyes to wander from the feet up the long and slender legs of the lesser sex until finally you arrive at God's greatest gift: the box.

Now stop. Take it all in, breath deep, imagine what kind of underwear she's wearing, even entertain the idea she may not be wearing any at all, but stare as long as you please, they don't mind.

Now refocus. That vagina needs you. Never mind the extremities that surround it, the 99% of horrendously illogical bullshit that makes up the modern woman, consider only the 1%, the snatch. Empires have risen and fallen at the hands of the female genitalia. It has made many men, and crushed countless more. Don't allow yourself to fall victim, don't be another statistic. Master your craft, hone your skills, and perfect your stroke. Put two moist sponges in a solo cup and fuck that until you get it right if you have to, but do not settle until you've done just that: gotten it right. I can't do this alone boys. I'm losing sleep at night thinking of all the pussies crying out for a good fuck and not getting it, so I'm reaching out to you all in a time of need to initiate my community outreach program: Save the Sluts. Don't let this beautiful opportunity go to waste. Seize the moment, stuff the box, and put the neglected pussies that haunt my dreams to rest. Thank you all, and good luck.

Appendix C 1

Excerpts from William and Mary's Student Sexual Misconduct Policy
Revised February 2015

Explanations and Definitions:

The university is committed to maintaining an environment that is free from sex-based violence and in which the freedom to make individual choices regarding sexual behavior is respected by all. Sexual misconduct by anyone is unacceptable and will be addressed in a prompt, equitable fashion in accordance with this policy and the applicable procedure.

Sexual misconduct is a form of sexual harassment, which is prohibited under the university's [Policy on Discrimination, Harassment, and Retaliation](#). Sexual misconduct, as defined by this policy, includes a broad range of behavior such as inappropriate physical touching, sexual exploitation, stalking, sexual intercourse without consent, and other forms of sexual violence.

Sexual contact requires effective consent (as defined in Section IV). Sexual misconduct also may be a crime.

For additional guidance regarding the types of misconduct prohibited by this policy, please review the examples provided in Section VI.

Sexual Misconduct, for the purposes of this policy, is a category of behavior that includes actual or attempted:

1. Non-consensual sexual contact;
2. Non-consensual sexual intercourse;
3. Sexual exploitation;
4. Domestic violence;
5. Dating violence; and
6. Stalking.

Appendix C 2

Non-Consensual Sexual Contact is either of the following without effective consent (see Section IV for the definition of consent):

1. Deliberately touching a person's intimate parts (including genitalia, groin, breast or buttocks, or clothing covering any of those areas); or
2. Using force or threat of force to cause a person to touch that person's own or another person's intimate parts.

Non-Consensual Sexual Intercourse is anal or vaginal penetration, no matter how slight, by a penis, tongue, finger, or object, without effective consent, or oral penetration by a penis, without effective consent.

IV. Consent and Incapacitation

Members of the university community choosing to engage in any form of sexual activity – from touching or kissing to intercourse – must obtain consent from their partner(s) prior to engaging in such activity.

Consent for sexual activity can only be obtained in situations where all people involved have equal power and full awareness in deciding what sexual activity will and will not happen during an encounter. Getting consent is an active process that involves clearly communicating intentions and desires. Consent for sexual activity is based on the mutual understanding and respect of all people involved for the desires and wishes of their partner(s). Consent must be informed, with all people involved having the information relevant to the sexual activity in question. Consent:

1. Is mutually understandable when a reasonable person would consider the words or actions of the parties to have manifested an understandable agreement between them to do the same thing, in the same way, at the same time and with one another^[viii];
2. Is not merely the absence of a verbally stated “no”;
3. Is never final or irrevocable;

Appendix C 3

4. Is time-limited and situation-specific; even if someone obtained consent from a partner(s) in the past, this does not mean that consent is automatically granted again;
5. Can only be given by someone who is free from verbal or physical coercion, intimidation, threat, or force;^[3] and
6. Is not valid if the party from whom consent is sought is incapacitated, as defined below. If a person knew, or, using a reasonable person standard, should have known that the other party was incapacitated, the first person will be responsible for failing to obtain consent.

The use of drugs or alcohol is not an excuse for failing to obtain consent for sexual activity.

VI. Examples of Sexual Misconduct:

A. Joel is a junior at the College. Beth is a sophomore. Joel comes to Beth's room with some mutual friends to watch a movie. Joel and Beth, who have never met before, are attracted to each other. After the movie, everyone leaves, and Joel and Beth are alone. They hit it off and are soon becoming more intimate. They start to make out. Joel verbally expresses his desire to have sex with Beth. Beth, who has suffered from trauma since being sexually abused by a baby-sitter when she was five, is shocked at how quickly things are progressing and says nothing. As Joel takes her by the wrist over to the bed, lays her down, undresses her, and begins to have intercourse with her, Beth has a severe flashback to her childhood trauma. She wants to tell Joel to stop, but cannot. Beth is stiff and unresponsive during the intercourse. Is this a policy violation? ***This is a policy violation. Joel would be held responsible in this scenario for Non Consensual Sexual Intercourse. It is the duty of the sexual initiator, Joel, to make sure that he has mutually understandable consent to engage in sex. Though consent need not be verbal, it is the clearest form of consent. Here, Joel had no verbal or non-verbal mutually-understandable indication from Beth that she consented to sexual intercourse. Of course, wherever possible, students should attempt to be as clear as possible as to whether or not sexual contact is desired, but students must be aware that for psychological reasons, or because of alcohol or drug***

Appendix C 4

use, one's partner may not be in a position to provide as clear an indication as the policy requires. As the policy makes clear, consent must be actively, not passively, given.

B. Sasha is dancing with Rob, a co-worker she knows from her office, at a crowded party. After dancing for a while, Rob kisses Sasha, and she kisses him back. A short time later, Rob moves his hands to Sasha's buttocks. She tells him to stop, saying she doesn't want to be touched in that way and that he should have more respect for her. He laughs, tells her she takes herself too seriously, and again begins to grope her. ***This is a policy violation. Rob touched Sasha in a sexual way without her consent, and continued to do so after she told him to stop. Even though Sasha appears to have consented to kissing, this consent does not extend to other sexual contact. This behavior is a form of non-consensual sexual contact.***

C. Kristen and Myra have been intimate for a few weeks. One night, Myra calls Kristen and asks her to come over. When she arrives, Myra kisses Kristen passionately and leads her into the bedroom. They each express their excitement and desire to "hook up," and are soon making out heavily in Myra's bed. After a while, Kristen tries to engage in oral sex with Myra. Myra tells Kristen that she really likes her, but that she doesn't feel ready for that. Kristen tells Myra she's just being shy, and ignores her when she repeats that she doesn't feel ready. Finally, Kristen threatens to reveal on the Internet that Myra is a lesbian. Because Myra has not yet come out to her friends and family, she becomes frightened and relents. Kristen proceeds with oral sex. ***This is a policy violation. Because of Kristen's manipulative and threatening arguments, Myra was afraid and unable to freely give her consent. Consent must be given freely and without undue pressure or threat. Kristen threatened Myra and therefore did not receive effective consent from Myra.***

D. Liz and Kwan have been together for six months. She often tells her friends stories of Kwan's sexual prowess, and decided to prove it to them. One night, she and Kwan engage in consensual sexual intercourse. Without Kwan's knowledge, Liz sets up her digital camera to videotape them having sex. The next evening, she uploads the video to

Appendix C 5

an online video-sharing site and discusses it with her friends online. ***This is a policy violation. Kwan's consent to engage in sexual intercourse with Liz did NOT mean Liz had obtained his consent to videotape it. This is a form of sexual exploitation.***

E. Andrew and Felix have been flirting with each other all night at a party. Andrew notices Felix slurring his speech when he goes to the bathroom and wonders if Felix went there to vomit. When Felix returns, the two begin flirting more heavily, and as the conversation continues, the two become more physically affectionate. Andrew soon suggests they go back to his room, and Felix agrees. As they walk, Andrew notices that Felix looks unstable and offers his arm for support and balance. When they get back to his room, Andrew leads Felix to the bed and they begin to become intimate. Felix becomes increasingly passive and appears disoriented. Andrew soon begins to have sexual intercourse with him. The next morning, Felix thinks they had sex but cannot piece together the events leading up to it. ***This is a policy violation. Felix was clearly under the influence of alcohol and thus unable to freely consent to engage in sexual activity with Andrew. Although Andrew may not have known how much alcohol Felix had consumed, he saw indicators from which a reasonable person would conclude that Felix was intoxicated, and therefore unable to give consent. Andrew in no way obtained consent from Felix for sexual intercourse.***

F. Denise is an undergraduate teaching assistant in Paul's economics class. She notes that he has not been performing well on take-home assignments and exams. Both of them have come to tailgate, each with their own group of friends. Denise has consumed one can of beer, while Paul is rather intoxicated. Denise sees Paul and approaches him. She flirts with him, telling him that she can help him improve his grades if he will hook-up with her. As Paul turns to walk away, Denise grabs his buttocks and squeezes them. ***This is a policy violation. Denise, in a position of power over Paul as his teaching assistant, attempted to arrange a quid pro quo sexual relationship. Additionally, she did not seek consent from Paul to touch him, even if a reasonable person could conclude that Paul was not too intoxicated in order to provide consent. Denise has sexually harassed Paul.***

Appendix C 6

G. Jeff and Michael are neighbors in their dorm. Michael soon realizes that Jeff is undergoing the transition from identifying as male to female and prefers to be called Becca. Becca begins wearing women's clothing and starts applying makeup on a regular basis. This is alien to Michael's experience and makes him uncomfortable. Michael begins muttering slurs whenever they pass each other in the dorm. Additionally, Michael starts telling his friends on other floors about the "freak living next door," and tells them to take a look for themselves. They do, a few individually, a few as groups that murmur and snicker to each other when they see Becca. Becca begins to dread leaving or returning to her room and starts to isolate herself to avoid Michael and his associates. It gets to the point that Michael invites people to his room specifically for the purpose of showing them Becca when she passes by so they can have a laugh at her expense. ***This is a policy violation. Not only have Michael and his associates created a hostile environment for Becca based on her identification, they also have stalked her.***