What is sexual assault?
Sexual assault is a crime of power and control. The term sexual assault refers to sexual contact or behavior that occurs without explicit consent of the victim. Some forms of sexual assault include:
- Penetration of the victim's body, also known as rape
- Attempted rape
- Forcing a victim to perform sexual acts, such as sex acts or penetrating the perpetrator's body
- Fondling or unwanted sexual touching

What is consent?
Our university's Interim Sexual Misconduct & Title IX Offenses Policy defines CONSENT as: "The affirmative, unambiguous, and voluntary agreement to engage in a specific sexual activity during a sexual encounter." Under this definition, an individual who was under duress, threat, coercion, or force, would not be able to consent. Further, one would not be able to infer consent under circumstances in which consent was not clear, including but not limited to the absence of "no" or "stop," or the existence of a prior or current relationship or sexual activity. Please note, under state law children who are less than 13 years of age are incapable of consent under all circumstances. Sexual activities with someone who is at least 12 years of age and less than 16 years of age are only legal if the defendant is less than 18 years of age and less than 4 years older than the victim.

But, isn’t it safe here? The simple answer is YES! So many of us who study and work at Tech appreciate the safety and serenity we enjoy on our beautiful, bright campus. However, we are aware that safety is relative to an individual’s perception and contingent upon ongoing community support. We also know there is always room for improvement when it comes to campus safety and because sexual assaults are understood to be vastly underreported in the U.S., we want to be proactive in supporting those in our community who have been affected by these issues and help prevent such incidents.

Misconceptions
It is important to be informed of the dangers and realities of sexual assault. Myths and misconceptions about sexual assault can make it more difficult for someone to:
- Assume a potentially risky situation
- Respond effectively when at risk for help needed when
- Understand if they have been assaulted, they are not to blame
- Confide in someone when they have been assaulted (because they feel ashamed or fear being believed)
- Understand and believe someone who confides that they’ve been assaulted (since many people still have unrealistic ideas of what constitutes sexual assault)

By offering ongoing training and programs on campus, Tech aims to dispel myths and misconceptions. We also seek to increase awareness and security, better inform individuals of resources available to them, create genuine and educated dialogue, and give participants greater empathy for victims and greater incentives to intervene.

Parents
We know parents have an enormous impact on students’ decision making in college. It’s important for parents to talk to their children about these difficult issues. Research shows that the majority of sexual assaults that occur during college years happen between two people who know each other and where alcohol or drugs are involved. Many sexual assaults can be prevented by limited alcohol use and clear communication between partners about intentions. Talking to your son or daughter about these important topics and communicating your expectations about alcohol and drug use and your values about sexual involvement may help them make healthy choices.

Title IX
New Mexico Tech employees a Title IX Coordinator who plays an important role in helping Tech ensure that every person affected by our operations— including faculty, staff, and students—are aware of their legal rights and protections under Title IX of the Educational Amendments of 1972, which prohibits sex discrimination in education programs and activities.

Peter Phaiah currently serves as New Mexico Tech’s Title IX Coordinator.

Sexual misconduct against students, including sexual harassment, sexual assault, rape, and sexual exploitation, can be a form of sex discrimination under Title IX. Mr. Phaiah is responsible for overseeing Tech’s response to reports involving possible sex discrimination. He is also responsible for monitoring outcomes, identify and address any patterns, assess our campus climate, and ultimately to prevent the recurrence of such incidents.

Campus Safety & Compliance
A university committee comprised of administrators, faculty, staff and students meets regularly to discuss campus safety objectives and federal compliance obligations related to safety and security and to develop improvements for campus policies and practices. Community input is welcomed.