All students should be able to study and live in a supportive environment free of harassment, sexual violence and all forms of discrimination. In response to growing national awareness about the crisis of sexual assault on college campuses and in further support of our own students, faculty and staff, New Mexico Tech is increasing efforts to address sexual discrimination and violence. During summer and fall student orientations, and throughout the academic year, Tech will offer training and information sessions as well as other programs to raise awareness and encourage students and employees to help prevent sexual violence and join together in fostering an increasingly respectful and inclusive campus community.

It’s On Us
New Mexico Tech supports the national “It’s On Us” campaign which reflects the belief that sexual assault is not just an issue involving a crime committed by a perpetrator against a victim, but one in which all of us have a role to play. The campaign aims to inspire individuals to see it as their personal responsibility to do something, big or small, to prevent sexual assault. This past spring, scores of Tech students, faculty and staff took the “It’s On Us” pledge. We encourage you to join us in taking the pledge at itsonus.org.

“An important part of Tech’s new Strategic Plan is that we are a community of scholars,” said Melissa Jaramillo-Fleming, Vice President of Student and University Relations and Dean of Students. “This effort is one way that we show our support for each other and create a safe and welcoming environment on campus.”

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 oral sex or penetrating the perpetrator’s body
- Fondling or unwanted sexual touching

*Source: The Rape Abuse and Incest National Network (RAINN)

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 asleep, or mentally or physically incapacitated, either through the effect of drugs or alcohol or for any other reason, or 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 13 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, tight-knit 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:

- assess a potentially risky situation
- respond effectively when at risk & seek help when needed
- understand if they have been assaulted, they are not to blame
- confide in someone when they’ve been sexually assaulted (because they feel ashamed or may fear not being believed)
- understand and believe someone who confides that they’ve been assaulted (since many people still have misconstrued 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 are 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
Earlier this year, Tech welcomed a new Affirmative Action Director/Title IX Coordinator Randy Saavedra.

Mr. Saavedra plays a critical 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 Education Amendments of 1972, which prohibits sex discrimination in education programs and activities.

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