Dear Students:

I am committed to providing the safest possible environment for all students at the University of Michigan, and I am writing to ask for your help in preventing and addressing sexual misconduct.

An important step for our university is to assess the campus climate and culture in relation to sexual misconduct, and we have surveys planned for this part of the effort. Outreach for the first survey is beginning this week, with communications being sent to 3,000 randomly selected students. If you are among the students who receive the survey invitation, you can be assured that your responses are completely confidential and that participation is completely voluntary. You may choose to skip questions or stop responding at any point.

If you are selected for the survey, a firm called Survey Sciences Group will send a hard copy letter with information to your address, and then an email to your university email account. We are using an outside firm for this survey to better ensure confidentiality of student responses. The survey will be given online, and it is made up of sections that ask about your knowledge, opinions, and beliefs on certain subjects, including campus policies and resources, perception of the campus climate, and the incidence and prevalence of sexual assaults. We estimate it will take about 15 minutes to complete.

Learning about the experiences of students and the degree to which students feel safe and respected will help us to better understand how we can more effectively address and prevent sexual misconduct. U-M will make the findings from the survey public to promote transparency and allow others to learn from our data, but no information identifying student respondents will be shared. In fact, the data U-M receives from Survey Sciences Group will not have any information identifying individual student respondents.

During my first semester as president, I spent a great deal of time engaging with the campus community in various forums, fireside chats, interviews, and other informal meetings. At many of these sessions, students spoke openly and personally about sexual assault issues at the University of Michigan, or wrote me directly to share their views on this very important issue.
I appreciate this dialogue, and I strongly encourage you to complete the survey if you receive it. In order to provide the safest possible environment for our students, we must understand our existing campus climate and culture as thoroughly as possible. As a token of appreciation, every student who completes the survey will be offered a small payment or the option of a donation to the United Way in lieu of the payment. Your participation will support our work to ensure a safe, healthy, and nondiscriminatory environment for our students and help keep all students safe.

Thank you,

Mark Schlissel
President