

## TAASA Calls on All Texas Universities to Answer Call to Conscience Amid Baylor Rape Scandal

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

The Texas Association Against Sexual Assault fully supports the Baylor University Board of Regents' firing of Head Coach Art Briles and removal of President Kenneth Starr. The [external and independent review](#) of Baylor's institutional response to Title IX and related compliance issues conducted by Pepper Hamilton LLP discovered the following:

- University student conduct processes were wholly inadequate to consistently provide a prompt and equitable response under Title IX.
- Baylor University failed to consistently support complainants through the provision of interim measures.
- In some cases, Baylor University failed to take action to identify and eliminate a potentially hostile environment, prevent its recurrence, or address its effects for individual complainants or the broader campus community.
- University administrators directly discouraged complainants from reporting sexual assaults or participating in student conduct processes, and in at least one instance retaliated against a complainant for reporting her rape.

The University's response to the rapes of its students has been deplorable. Baylor's repeated callous mishandling of these reports and indifference toward rape survivors very well may have resulted in more victims, as the clear message to students was that one can rape with impunity and with the protection of high-level administrators.

This situation is not a PR nightmare for Baylor; it is a crisis of conscience. Football deeply permeates Texas culture. For many, it is paramount. It is now clear that Baylor University has allowed its students to be sacrificed for the sake of a game, the institution, and the industry of football. To elevate any money-making institution above the people it serves is devoid of humanity.

We hope, moving forward, Baylor will commit to making all necessary accommodations for those survivors still on campus and, to the extent possible, remedy the harms done to those who found it necessary to leave campus. We strongly suggest that Baylor immediately reaches out to the [Advocacy Center for Crime Victims and Children](#) for collaboration in providing comprehensive services for student-survivors. They deserve nothing less.



As a proactive measure, we call on Baylor, and all Texas colleges and universities, to seize this opportunity and answer this call to conscience by adopting all applicable recommendations from the Pepper Hamilton report so they are better equipped to support present and future survivors of sexual violence in their campus communities. Many of the recommendations, including the following, are broadly applicable, consistent with state and federal law, and should be immediately adopted by all institutions of higher education:

- Ensure that all implementers, investigators, and adjudicators have trauma-informed training.
- Create a culture within the athletics programs that ensures the reporting, investigation, and disciplinary actions involving student-athletes and athletics department staff are managed in the same manner as all other students and staff on campus, and that student-athletes are held accountable to the same standards as all other university students.
- Work with local government entities and area non-profits in an effort to develop a local-area Sexual Assault Response Team (SART).
- Consider integrated multi-disciplinary programming to address issues of sexual and gender-based harassment and violence, gender equity, tolerance, diversity, inclusion, intersectionality, alcohol and substance abuse, consent, social media, bullying and hazing, classism, racism, and other issues that impact campus culture and the development and education of students.
- Develop and implement a sustained campaign to keep institutional and community focus on the university's commitment to the prevention of sexual and gender-based harassment and violence.

The complete list of recommendations made by Pepper Hamilton LLP is located at  
[http://media.cmgdigital.com/shared/news/documents/2016/05/26/PEPPER\\_HAMILTON\\_RECOMMENDATIONS.pdf](http://media.cmgdigital.com/shared/news/documents/2016/05/26/PEPPER_HAMILTON_RECOMMENDATIONS.pdf).