Campus Safety Is About Heart More Than Compliance - Clery Center Strives to Make Campus Safety an Universal Reality by Helping Administrators See Beyond Regulations

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PHILADELPHIA (PRWEB) April 30, 2019 -- The Clery Act, a consumer protection law, aims to provide transparency around campus crime policy and statistics. Prior to the law’s passage in 1990, campus crime reporting standards did not exist. Then, because of this law, educators, families and legislators – for the first time in our country’s history – could have an open dialogue about campus safety.

The family behind the passage of the Clery Act, Howard and Connie Clery, advocated for these revolutionary policy changes following the rape and murder of their 19-year-old daughter, Jeanne, in her campus dorm room in 1986. After the Clery Act was signed into law, they established Clery Center, a nonprofit organization dedicated to guiding colleges and universities on Clery Act compliance as well as what they can do to actively foster campus safety. Clery Center helps institutions practically apply the law on campus, recognizing that each institution is unique and therefore implementation may look different for every campus.

“We believe in a proactive commitment to understanding and implementing the Clery Act as opposed to a reactive response after an incident has already occurred,” says Abigail Boyer, Clery Center interim Executive Director. “Clery Center connects on-the-ground professionals with training, ready-to-use materials, resources and strategies to implement the requirements.”

Beyond Compliance
In addition to regulation compliance, Clery Center shines a light on the heart of the issue: that the regulations are only the blueprints to the structure of campus safety. Clery Center not only guides institutions in implementation, but also to exemplify the spirit of the law. They believe it isn’t just campus security that’s responsible for making a campus safe — the whole institution, from president to students, plays a role. Clery Center works with school administrators on networking across departments and collaborating on best practices to create campuses that are safer for every student, every day.

One program that supports institutions in building such collaboration is Clery Center Membership, which helps campus teams work together for Clery Act compliance.

“Understanding the Clery Act is a continuous learning process; with the tools and resources provided by Clery Center Membership I am able to connect with other professionals who are Members. This creates an ongoing learning atmosphere and promotes dialog with one another.” Melanie Figueroa, Administrator, Clery Act Compliance, Orange Technical College in Florida.

Comprehensive Support, Education and Training
Clery Center helps college and university administrators fulfill the requirements of the Clery Act legislation to keep and disclose information about crime on and near campuses. Among other things, this includes maintaining a daily public crime log and annual security report; developing policies and programs for crime prevention and crisis response, and issuing timely warnings about crimes which pose a serious or ongoing
threat. “We wanted to be a member of the program so that we could continue to make sure we get it right every year when we file our report, and every day when we support our community.” Maureen Rush, VP for Public Safety & Superintendent, University of Pennsylvania Police.

Clery Center provides training and webinars on Clery Act compliance, works with institutions to evaluate their campus safety procedures and communications, and gives all campuses, regardless of whether or not they are Clery Center Members, information and assistance. Clery Center also models the importance of collaboration by partnering with other organizations and institutions to help administrators understand and follow intersecting report requirements for other campus safety laws like Title IX, the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act of 1974, and the Drug-Free Schools and Communities Act.

“So often when we’re working with institutions, we meet individuals who feel alone in addressing campus safety concerns or as though Clery Act compliance is only on them,” says Boyer. “In reality, so many individuals and departments across campus play a role in implementing the requirements, from developing and implementing policy, offering resources and programming to community members, or responding to reports and disclosures, which we know can come in anywhere. All of these efforts influence whether or not someone trusts their campus enough to come forward and report if something happens to them. One of my favorite parts of working with campuses is helping them figure out the role each department plays in addressing campus safety issues and how they can work together to build that kind of trust within their community.”

Keeping the Clery Act Relevant
As the national dialogue about campus and community safety has evolved, Clery Center has spearheaded policy and guidance to keep the Clery Act relevant. Today, victims of sexual assault, domestic violence, dating violence, and stalking have specific rights, options and resources guaranteed to them by the Clery Act.

Although the Clery Act does not yet include hazing as a crime, the Clery Center supports efforts to standardize the definition of hazing at the federal level. Recognizing the need for more education on this issue, Clery Center created the Hazing Prevention Toolkit for Campus Professionals and helped develop We Don’t Haze, a free 17-minute documentary that promotes hazing prevention on college campuses.

More students and members of the community are comfortable reporting, and are encouraged to report, crimes these days. As the landscape continues to change, Clery Center remains at the heart of providing structure and resources to institutions implementing effective campus safety measures.
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