

Implementing Restorative Justice Practices at The University of Texas at Austin

CLASE Restorative Justice Research Project Final Report

July 2020

Gwynn Alexander
University of San Diego

David R. Karp
University of San Diego

The Restorative Justice Research Project was funded by The University of Texas System Board of Regents through a subcontract with The University of Texas at Austin Institute on Domestic Violence & Sexual Assault at the Steve Hicks School of Social Work. Findings, opinions, and conclusions expressed in this material are those of the authors and do not necessarily reflect the view of The University of Texas System Board of Regents.

Table of Contents

Phase 1: Restorative Justice at The University of Texas at Austin and CLASE Project Planning	4
Introduction	4
University of San Diego Center for Restorative Justice	4
Institute for Restorative Justice and Restorative Dialogue (IRJD)	4
CLASE Project Description	4
Restorative Justice Research Project Development	6
Timeline of Key Events	7
Key Members of the Restorative Justice Research Project Team	8
The Training Team	10
Context for Key Events Impacting The University of Texas at Austin at the Time of This Project	11
Phase 2: Restorative Practices Training Series	12
Training Descriptions	12
Training Participants by Department	13
Significant Outcomes	14
Survey Responses	15
Participant Training Descriptions	18
Tier I: Restorative Circles for Community Building and Improving Campus Climate	19
Tier I: Key Lessons in Training Delivery	20
Tier II: Restorative Conferences for Conduct Violations	21
Tier II: Key Lessons in Training Delivery	22
Tier III: Restorative Circles for Effective Reintegration After Separation	23
Tier III: Key Lessons in Training Delivery	24
Phase 3: Campus Implementation and Support	26
Student RJ Orientation: Response to Faculty Sexual Misconduct	26
Summary of Key Takeaways	26
SAFE Alliance RJ Training Participants	27
Summary of Key Takeaways	27
RJ Reunion Circle	28
Summary of Key Takeaways	28
IDVSA (Institute on Domestic Violence and Sexual Assault) “RJ101”	29
Summary of Key Takeaways	29
Human Resources Presentation	30
Presentation to Faculty Council Task Force	31
Restorative Justice / Practices Introduction With The University of Texas at Austin Communications	32
Introduction Meeting to Restorative Practices / Office of Legal Affairs	33
Phase 4: Closing Survey and Planning Next Steps	34
Closing Survey	34

Summer Reunion Circle	35
Second Contract and Continued Consultation	35
Planning Next Steps	36
Conclusion: Creating a Restorative University	38

The University of Texas at Austin

Executive Summary

This summary presents the actions of the IDVSA within the CLASE project to develop a culture of practice for restorative justice within the professional community at The University of Texas at Austin. The IDVSA built upon principles of diffusion theory thereby first strategically building momentum for a restorative justice intervention before diffusing the program to multiple schools and departments within the university. This summary offers a birds eye view of the timeline of diffusion.

1. 2015-2016: CLASE survey administered across The University of Texas system.
Established the need.

2. 2017: Key stake holders attend three-day training in restorative justice for higher education.
Developed specialization.

3. Fall 2018: Research consortium developed.
Convened a collaborative of expertise.

4. Spring 2019: Staff orientation.
Developed grassroots efforts.

5. Fall 2019: Restorative Practices training series.
Cultivated a community of trained practitioners.

6. Spring 2020: Implementation support.

- Reunion circle
- Legal Affairs presentation
- Student Forum

Expanded exposure, supported grassroots implementation, built on momentum.

7. HuschBlackwell & President's Letter in support of RJ development.
Institutionalized program implementation.

Phase 1: Restorative Justice at The University of Texas at Austin and CLASE Project Planning

Introduction

This report summarizes a 2-year project collaboration between the University of San Diego Center for Restorative Justice (Center4RJ) and The University of Texas at Austin Institute on Domestic Violence and Sexual Assault (IDVSA) at the Steve Hicks School of Social Work with support from the UT Austin Institute for Restorative Justice and Restorative Dialogue (IRJRD). The goal of the project was to train The University of Texas at Austin staff in restorative practices and support implementation across a number of campus units.

University of San Diego Center for Restorative Justice

The USD Center4RJ promotes research, teaching, training, and technical assistance for restorative justice (RJ) projects in higher education as well as K-12 schools, communities, and the criminal justice system. The Center is housed in the Department of Leadership Studies. The Center4RJ provides:

- Facilitator trainings on restorative practices
- Educational resources, presentations, and coursework on best practices in RJ
- Consultation and facilitation to institutions seeking a restorative response to harmful incidents
- Networking groups/learning communities
- Research on innovative practice and evaluation of restorative programs

Institute for Restorative Justice and Restorative Dialogue (IRJRD)

RJ has a history at The University of Texas at Austin spanning 15 years. It was first introduced by Marilyn Armour, a professor in the School of Social Work, who developed a notable course introducing law and social work students to RJ principles and practices. Armour founded IRJRD that focused on RJ in education, consultation, and research. IRJRD became a central hub for RJ in Texas and a nationally known academic center for RJ. As shown below, the IRJRD supported the cultivation of the research process.

CLASE Project Description

The Cultivating Learning and Safe Environments (CLASE – pronounced “class”) is a project exploring the prevalence of five forms of violence and misconduct, including sexual harassment by faculty/staff, sexual harassment by students, stalking, dating/domestic abuse and violence, and unwanted sexual contact across 13 institutions in The University of Texas System. The CLASE Project was implemented to better understand students’ experiences and perceptions of these acts with the goal to increase student safety. Findings have been used to inform institution-specific efforts that address victimization and perpetration risks across The University of Texas System.

UT Austin offers several support programs and coordinated responses in line with the CLASE Project. Those most pertinent to the contents of this report are listed below:

Supportive Services	
Title IX C.A.R.E.S. (Title IX Office)	The University of Texas at Austin’s Title IX Office embodies five components—Compliance, Accountability, Resources, Education, and Support—as it actively works to prevent, respond, and remedy acts of sexual discrimination and gender- based violence.
Legal Services for Students in the Office of Dean of Students	Legal Services for Students provides free legal advice, consultation, referrals, and possible representation for currently enrolled students in cases where the other party is not the University or any UT student, faculty, staff, or affiliate.
Student Ombuds Services (SOS)	Student Ombuds Services provides a neutral, impartial, and private environment for students to voice concerns and provide information and assistance to students who have university-related questions or complaints.
BE SAFE	Website partnership between The University of Texas at Austin Police Department (UTPD) and the Austin Police Department (APD); provides safety tips, mobile apps, and other resources to help students stay safe and secure.
Student Emergency Services in the Office of the Dean of Students	Student Emergency Services provides outreach, advocacy, intervention, support, and referrals for students in emergency situations; manages the student emergency fund and referrals of students to the Behavior Concerns Advice Line (BCAL) at (512) 232-5050.

Coordinated Response	
Institutional Title IX Coordinator	The Title IX coordinator, a full-time employee in University Compliance Services, is tasked with oversight and coordination of Title IX-related matters including compliance, prevention, education, advocacy, and support.
Title IX	In addition to the Title IX coordinator, the university has appointed five Title IX deputies, and eight full time investigators (six in the Office of the Dean of Students and two in the Office of Inclusion and Equity), all committed to supporting the University’s mission to create and maintain an educational and work environment free from all forms of sexual misconduct and interpersonal violence.
Title IX Task Force	The task force is led by the Title IX coordinator and brings together administrators, faculty, staff, and students from across campus to inform and support campus-wide Title IX efforts.

Title IX Training and Investigations, Office of the Dean of Students	Investigates allegations of student misconduct involving sexual discrimination, sexual harassment, sexual assault, interpersonal violence, and stalking.
Office for Inclusion and Equity	OIE serves the University in fulfilling the intent and spirit of equal opportunity laws by providing equitable solutions to complaints against faculty, staff, contractors, and visitors. The director of investigations and policy serves as a deputy Title IX coordinator. This staff member along with others involved in investigations partner closely with the Title IX office and the Office of the Dean of Students to resolve concerns.
UT Austin Police Department	The UT Austin Police Department’s mission is to protect and serve all persons within the UT Austin community, while protecting the resources of the university.

Data collected within the CLASE Survey of Prevalence and Perceptions informed next steps for UT Austin with the goal of reducing violence and ensuring students’ mental and physical safety. An institutional stakeholder group developed a comprehensive list of immediate actions and future next steps. The three immediate actions most relevant to this report are listed below:

1. Enhance sexual violence prevention initiatives by addressing the culture of perpetration.
2. Develop a collaborative, robust, and comprehensive faculty and staff education plan with a specific focus on sexual misconduct and harassment policies.
3. Develop and implement a collaborative Title IX awareness campaign (prevention, intervention, resources, and support).

The IDVSA collaborated with the IRJRD, both housed at The University of Texas in Austin Steve Hicks School of Social Work, to develop a plan for a campus-wide program implementation.

Restorative Justice Research Project Development

The CLASE Restorative Justice (RJ) Research Project was developed over three phases. Phase 1 encompassed the completion of the CLASE survey and collaboratively planning the RJ Research Project developed by the IDVSA, IRJRD, and Center4RJ. Phase 2 expanded the RJ community at UT Austin via a three-tiered training series spanning 6 days, led by the expert training team at the Center4RJ. Phase 3 sought to expand RJ implementation campus-wide via ongoing professional support and apprenticeship also led by the training team.

As the campus-wide implementation program was developed, the IDVSA began to develop apprentice facilitators of RJ processes. In 2017, T’Shana McClain, research project manager at IDVSA, and the UT System Chief Human Resources Officer, completed a 3-day training with the Center4RJ when it was located at Skidmore College. The Center4RJ director, David Karp, a sociology professor at Skidmore, then began a working collaboration with UT Austin.

As the CLASE RJ Research Project was developed, the research team strategically cultivated growing momentum across campus by inviting key stakeholders to an introductory workshop on campus RJ. In the spring of 2019, David Karp, Marilyn Armour, and the UT System Chief

Human Resources Officer led this workshop for a group of 30 faculty and staff where they participated in an introductory community-building circle and were provided the opportunity to ask general questions of the research team.

Timeline of Key Events

As stated above, the RJ Research Project spanned 2 years in response to the findings of the CLASE student survey. Planning such an ambitious project required many phone calls, meetings, and brainstorming sessions. However, this report documents the details of the key events as determined by the research team. These events are listed below:

Spring 2019: Restorative Justice Staff Orientation

September – November 2019: Restorative Practices Training Series

- Tier I: Restorative Circles for Community Building and Improving Campus Climate
 - September 30 – October 1
- Tier II: Restorative Conferences for Conduct Violations
 - October 31 – November 1
- Tier III: Restorative Circles for Effective Reintegration After Separation
 - November 21 – November 22

February 2020: Implementation Support Visit

- Student RJ Orientation: Response to Faculty Sexual Misconduct
- SAFE Alliance RJ Training Participants
- Restorative Justice Three-Part Training Series Reunion Circle
- IDVSA (Institute of Domestic Violence & Sexual Assault) “RJ101”
- Human Resources
- Presentation to Faculty Council Task Force
- Restorative Justice / Practice Introduction with The University of Texas at Austin Media
- Introduction Meeting to Restorative Practices/ Office of Legal Affairs

Fall 2020: Second Contract and Continued Consulting

Key Members of the Restorative Justice Research Project Team

The RJ Research Project required the collaboration of three organizations: (a) the IDVSA, (b) the IRJRD, and (c) the Center4RJ. Lead members of the research team are introduced below:

Noël Busch-Armendariz, Professor and Director, Institute on Domestic Violence and Sexual Assault, CLASE Primary Investigator

Noël Bridget Busch-Armendariz, PhD, is a nationally recognized expert in sexual assault, human trafficking, and domestic violence. She has conducted research funded by a variety of federal and state agencies such as the National Science Foundation, Department of Justice, National Institute of Justice, Office for Victims of Crime, the Office on Violence Against Women, and the Texas Office of the Attorney General and the Governor of Texas, Criminal Justice Division. Busch-Armendariz strives to put her research findings into the hands of game changers, which led to her serving as a member of the White House Task Force to Protect Students from Sexual Assault. As a result, in 2015, Busch-Armendariz released the most comprehensive and methodologically innovative study of its kind in the nation on the subject and her research institute codeveloped a *Blueprint* with The University of Texas System Police to provide guidance on how to better respond to campus sexual assault survivors. In April 2016, then Department of Defense Secretary Ash Carter visited with Busch-Armendariz to learn how to incorporate research findings and recommendations into policies regarding sexual assault in the military. She was later invited to the Pentagon to inform the Air Force Vice Chief of Staff on global workplace harassment and the Coast Guard Investigative Services on sexual assault. She is the author (with Maura Nsonwu and Laurie Cook Heffron) of the first textbook on human trafficking or modern-day slavery, *Human Trafficking: Applied Research, Theory, and Case Studies* (2018) by SAGE Publications.



Melanie Susswein, IDVSA Director of Marketing and Communications

Melanie Susswein, MSW, is the director of marketing and communications at the IDVSA. She is the director of the CLASE RJ Project. Susswein earned her MSW at the University of Pennsylvania and is an award-winning social-marketing communicator, project director, and strategist. Before coming to The University of Texas at Austin, she worked for 14 years for SUMA Social Marketing, including as vice president of account services and business development. Her clients included Texas Department of Health and Human Services, Texas Department of Family and Protective Services, the March of Dimes, the Utah Department of Health, the Arizona Department of Health, The University of Texas Health Science Center in Houston, and Harris County Health. Susswein's portfolio includes extensive work on women's health issues including preconception, interconception, breastfeeding, and postpartum care. She has also worked with and on behalf of children with special health care needs and disabilities and with a wide array of diverse populations in Texas and around the country. Susswein was the project manager and senior strategist for award-winning preconception campaigns in Utah and Arizona and the NavigateLifeTexas.org website in Texas, which won two Communicator Awards. She also has worked on violence prevention with military families and several fatherhood educational and violence prevention initiatives. She completed a year of service in Israel for the domestic violence prevention program called Women to Woman.



Yulanda McCarty-Harris, Research Project Director

Yulanda L. McCarty-Harris, JD, is an accomplished and dedicated senior leader and attorney who has 20 years of experience in the public/private sector, including 13 years in higher education. She has successfully led compliance efforts, including preventing all forms of discrimination, including sexual harassment, as well as developing, completing, and implementing comprehensive affirmative action plans that included data collection, analysis, reporting, and presentation to internal and external stakeholders. McCarty-Harris has served as a senior leader on three different college campuses, including her service as UT's executive director for organizational culture and inclusion in the Division of Diversity and Community Engagement and the executive director for the Office for Inclusion and Equity.



Marilyn Armour, PhD, Professor and University Distinguished Teaching Professor

Marilyn Armour, PhD, LICSW, is a professor and University Distinguished Teaching Professor in the Steve Hicks School of Social Work at The University of Texas at Austin. She is also the founder and former director of the IRJRD. As a clinician, teacher and researcher, Armour is the author of numerous journal articles, book chapters, and four books: *At Personal Risk: Boundary Violations in Professional-Client Relationships*, *Educating for Cultural Competence*, and *Restorative Justice Dialogue* (with Mark Umbreit), which, according to Howard Zehr, is considered “the equivalent of a state-of-the-union address for the restorative justice movement.” Her most recent book is *Violence, Restorative Justice and Forgiveness: Dyadic Forgiveness and Energy Shifts in Restorative Justice Dialogue* (with Mark Umbreit). Armour has conducted studies on the effectiveness of RJ interventions for violent crime in the prison system, in schools, for domestic violence and community restoration and of the mechanisms of action in the interventions that lead to change. As an RJ practitioner and scholar, Armour promotes building mindsets that embrace victim-centered RJ principles, including victim healing and the building of community through restorative solutions to harm. Armour is the architect of the Texas model of restorative discipline to redirect the overreliance on punitive measures that, in effect, exclude students from the classroom. In partnership with the Texas Education Agency, she implemented the model statewide in Texas, the first state in the country to undertake this effort. Under Armour's direction, IRJRD has become a national leader in the RJ field and is noteworthy for establishing best practices for school-based RJ.



David Karp, Director of the Center for Restorative Justice

David Karp, PhD, is a professor and director of the Center4RJ in the School of Leadership and Education Sciences at the University of San Diego. His current scholarship focuses on RJ in community and educational settings. For his work on campus RJ, he was the recipient of the 2019 Leadership and Innovation Award from the National Association of Community and Restorative Justice and the 2011 Donald D. Gehring Award from the Association for Student Conduct Administration. Karp has published more than 100 academic papers and six books, including *The Little Book of Restorative Justice for Colleges and Universities*, *Wounds That Do Not Bind: Victim-Based Perspectives on the Death Penalty*, and *The Community Justice Ideal*. Karp serves on the Board of Directors for the National Association



for Community and Restorative Justice. He has previously served as associate dean of student affairs and professor of sociology at Skidmore College. Karp received a BA in peace and conflict studies from the University of California at Berkeley, and a PhD in sociology from the University of Washington.

The Training Team

Nina Harris

Nina Harris is an education specialist with the Harvard University Office of Sexual Violence Prevention and Response. Harris is an experienced student affairs specialist and RJ practitioner who brings more than 15 years of direct experience in higher education administration, student engagement, and campus sexual violence prevention and education. She has provided crisis and resource counseling for hundreds of survivors of gender-based interpersonal violence and sexual harassment. As a campus administrator, she has worked tirelessly to help educational institutions cultivate compassionate and transformative campuses actively engaged in violence prevention and healthy community building. Harris has formerly held the roles of advocate, educator, and Title IX case manager at Swarthmore College and the University of Pennsylvania. As a consultant, she has worked with dozens of institutions to provide innovative and engaging educational programming, facilitate restorative dialogues, deliver staff training and professional development, and provide support in policy development.



Duke Fisher

Duke Fisher is an independent consultant with Learning Laboratories in upstate New York. Fisher is a trusted facilitator and mediator who facilitates meaningful conversation in schools, universities, and organizations worldwide. He is committed to building bridges to all of his participants and ensuring their needs are honored. Fisher has been a New York state-certified mediation trainer since 1989. He is the past director of the Dispute Resolution Center for Delaware and Chenango Counties and has taught mediation courses worldwide, including at Hofstra and Albany Law Schools. As a lead trainer for the University of San Diego Center4RJ, Fisher frequently trains community agencies and educational institutions in restorative practices that help build community, responds to incidents of crime or misconduct, and successfully reintegrates students after suspension. Fisher is the 2007 Lawrence P. Cooke Peace Innovator Award recipient recognized for his never-ending search for creative methods to support effective learning and address conflict.



Context for Key Events Impacting The University of Texas at Austin at the Time of This Project

Over the course of the 2019-2020 academic year, two significant events took place at The University of Texas at Austin. The events shaped the trajectory of the RJ Research Project.

Faculty Violations of University Codes of Conduct

During the fall of 2019, undergraduate students at The University of Texas at Austin became disturbed by the response of the university regarding faculty violations of the code of sexual misconduct. Campus tension grew across several months as students engaged in numerous sit-ins and demonstrations to draw awareness to their concerns. Students composed a list of demands for university administrators. Those demands included a request for RJ processes in cases of faculty misconduct. While The University of Texas at Austin responded to the demands, the conflict between students and administrators shaped the concerns that faculty and staff brought to the three-tiered training series. When the training team returned in spring 2020 to offer ongoing support for implementation, the unrest regarding faculty misconduct was a continued concern for project participants.

COVID-19

Also emergent in the spring of 2020 was the COVID-19 pandemic. In response to the pandemic, The University of Texas at Austin closed the campus to begin online classes March 30. As a result, many of the spring RJ implementation projects were postponed or moved to virtual platforms. This significantly limited staff capacity to implement RJ practices following the fall training series. It also impacted their participation in project data collection designed to evaluate implementation.

Phase 2: Restorative Practices Training Series

Phase 2 of the RJ Research Project launched in October 2019 with the first of three training sessions for The University of Texas at Austin faculty and staff introducing key practices for developing an RJ campus culture. The training sessions were centered on the three-tier approach to RJ implementation covering the topics of community building, restorative conferencing, and reintegration after separation. This section summarizes the three-tiered training series.

Training Descriptions

Tier I: Restorative Circles for Community Building and Improving Campus Climate

September 30 – October 1

This training introduced restorative circle practices to improve campus culture and build relationships in residential life, athletics, and student organizations. It explored how to use circles in response to charged campus incidents in order to provide inclusive dialogue, healing, accountability, and action plans.

- Philosophy and history of restorative circles
- Intensive facilitator skill building through experiential learning and case study
- Pre-circle preparation/assessment/referral and post-circle follow through on action plans
- Evidence of effectiveness and strategies of implementation

Tier II: Restorative Conferences for Conduct Violations

October 31 – November 1

This training focused on restorative approaches to conduct violations from “bread-and-butter” noise or alcohol violations to academic dishonesty to serious incidents that may also include criminal charges.

- Philosophy and history of restorative conferencing
- Intensive facilitator skill building through experiential learning and case study
- Preconference preparation/assessment/referral and post-conference mentoring for compliance
- Evidence of effectiveness and strategies of implementation

Tier III: Restorative Circles for Effective Reintegration After Separation

November 21 – 22

This training introduced restorative circle practices to successfully reintegrate campus community members after periods of separation. Reintegration circles provide reassurance to the campus community by emphasizing both social support and accountability. The primary focus was on student return after suspension, but other applications were addressed such as return from short or long-term medical leave and faculty/staff reintegration after disciplinary sanctioning.

- Philosophy and history of restorative circles
- Intensive facilitator skill building through experiential learning and case study
- Pre-circle preparation/assessment/referral and post-circle follow through on action plans
- Evidence of effectiveness and strategies of implementation

Training Participants by Department

The research team identified four key departments to target for inclusion in the Restorative Practices training series, all located within the Office of the Dean of Students. Each of the four key departments were represented at each of the training opportunities. These key departments included:

1. Student Conduct and Academic Integrity
2. Residence Life
3. Title IX Training and Investigations
4. Diversity and Community Engagement

A secondary goal of the research team was to cultivate a broad representation of staff and faculty from a variety of relevant departments throughout the Restorative Practices training series. These departments included:

1. College of Natural Sciences
2. Human Resources
3. Student Affairs
4. Faculty Affairs
5. Services for Students with Disabilities
6. Legal Affairs
7. Office of the President
8. Institute on Domestic Violence and Sexual Assault

Significant Outcomes

The Restorative Practices training series was a critical step toward developing the professional capacity to implement campus-wide RJ interventions. Significant outcomes in training series are included below:

32 faculty and staff participated in the Restorative Practices training series.

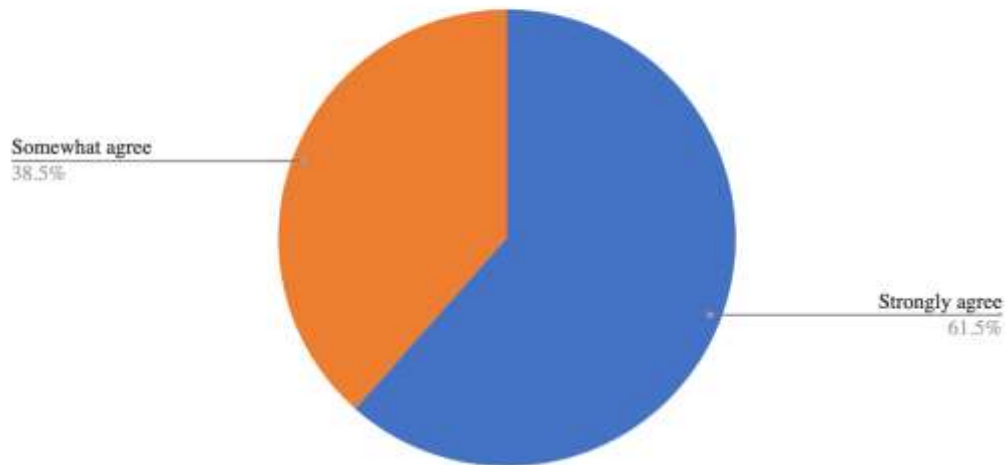
Ten faculty and staff completed the entire Restorative Practices series. An additional **12** faculty and staff completed 2 out of the 3 trainings. The reason some participants could not complete all three of the training sessions was, in part, due to the first session that took place on a religious holiday.

Survey Responses

At the conclusion of each training, participants completed a survey measuring the effectiveness of the training and participants' feelings of preparation to implement RJ practices in their professional spheres. Key outcomes of those surveys are included below:

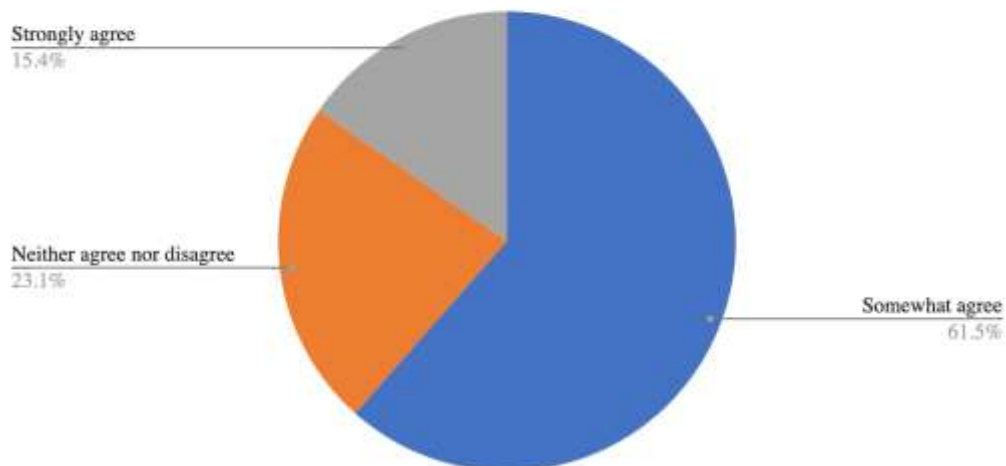
Overall, this training was an effective restorative justice learning opportunity.

n=34



The training materials (e.g., readings, handouts, videos) contributed to my learning.

n=34



The training helped me learn restorative justice concepts and methods.

n=34

Neither agree nor disagree

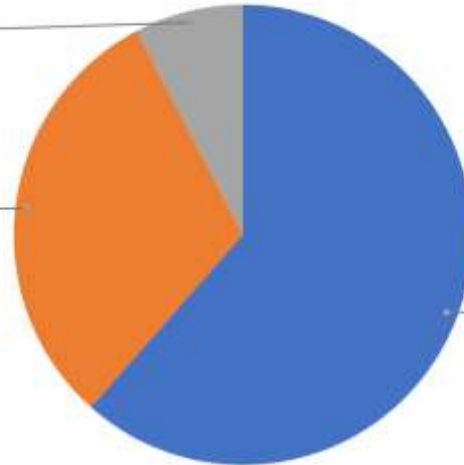
7.7%

Somewhat agree

30.8%

Strongly agree

61.5%



The trainer(s) stimulated interest in restorative justice.

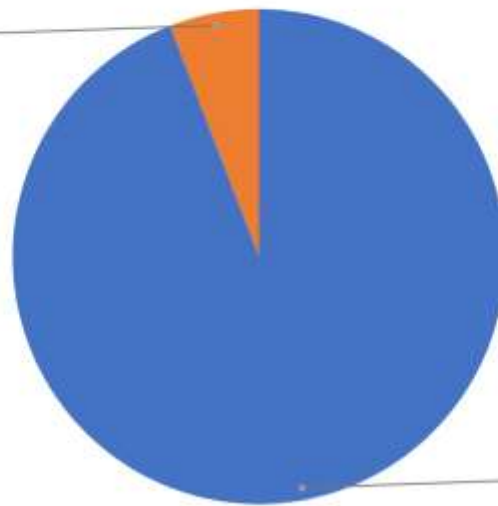
n=34

Somewhat agree

5.9%

Strongly agree

94.1%



How likely are you to facilitate a restorative process?

n=27

Not Likely

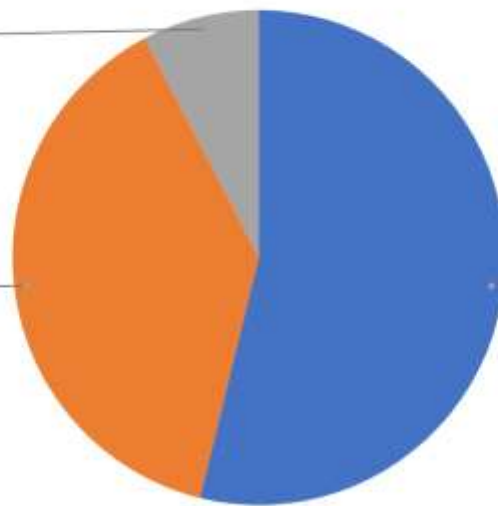
7.7%

Somewhat Likely

38.5%

Likely

53.8%



How ready to do feel to facilitate a restorative process?

n=27

Ready

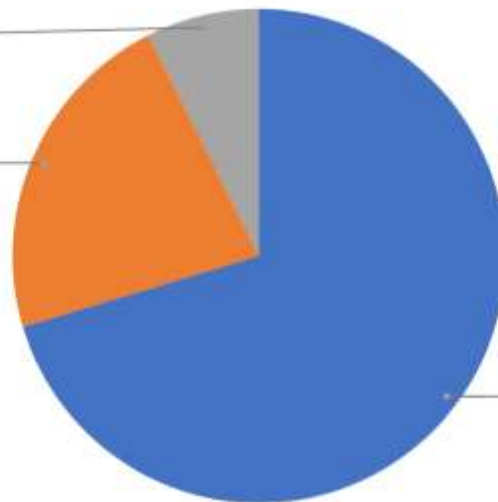
7.4%

Not Ready

22.2%

Somewhat Ready

70.4%



Participant Training Descriptions

Surveys also asked participants to offer three words that best described their training experience. In total, participants submitted 71 distinct words.

- Most words reflected the emotional and spiritual takeaways of participants including *enriching, inclusive, thought provoking, authentic, and eye opening*
- Fifteen of the words commented on the professional applications of these training sessions. These words included *comprehensive, practical, relevant, informative, and productive*
- Seven of the words addressed concerns or challenges with the training. These words included *incomplete, uncomfortable, lengthy, challenging, and disjointed*

The full list of the words collected within the surveys are included below:

Impactful	Disruptive	Educational	Eye-Opening
Informative	Lengthy	Practical	Connection
Refreshing	Approachable	Questions	Authentic
Balanced	Respectful	Advantageous	Energizing
Productive	Thought-	Comprehensive	Wisdom
Reflective	Provoking	Connecting	Captivating
Restorative	Engaging	Incomplete	Inspiring
Meaningful	Awareness	Short	Relevant
Encouraged	Finally	Thoughtful	Peaceful
Deep	Interactive	Uncomfortable	Inspired
Valuable	Efficient	Application-	Constructive
Enlightening	Inclusive	Based	Harm-
Experiential	Helpful	Community	Reducing
Nuanced	Collaborative	Wonderful	Clarifying
Enjoyable	Applicable	Caring	Professional
Soulful	Enriching	Interesting	Insightful
Inspirational	Powerful	Exciting	Disjointed
Tools	Healing	Flexible	Simulation
		Challenging	Compassion

Tier I: Restorative Circles for Community Building and Improving Campus Climate

Key concepts:

- Philosophy and history of restorative circles
- Intensive facilitator skill building through experiential learning and case study
- Pre-circle preparation/assessment/referral and post-circle follow through on action plans

Sample activities:

Opening Circle Experience

1. Welcome and Land Acknowledgement
2. Introduction to the Talking Piece: A circle in three rounds. Participants shared their introductions, a recent event that made them smile, and their current knowledge of RJ (bucket, cup, or spoon).
3. Values: What do you wish for others to take away from this experience? What do you need from others in this experience?

Grok Cards

- In this card activity, one participant draws a card describing an emotion. They then tell a story about a time they experienced that emotion.
- Other participants hold a stack of cards listing needs. Each person uses a card to propose a need that the storyteller was feeling. The storyteller then selects the need that best represented their need in the context of their story.

Talking Piece Circle

Each participant brings to the training an object that they would consider using as a talking piece in their own circles. The group participates in a circle with three rounds.

1. Why is the talking piece meaningful for you?
2. Demonstrate active listening by reflecting a person's story back to them. (I heard you say...)
3. How can you bring a more authentic self to your work?

World Cafe Circle

Multiple circle a room, each answering a different circle, and facilitator posts themes. Once the groups have completed their circles, they rotate to the next location answering the new prompt and adding to the already posted themes. Typically used for group brainstorming.

1. Where is The University of Texas at Austin at with restorative justice?
2. What existing resources or skills do you bring?
3. Where does restorative justice "fit"?
4. Where does The University of Texas at Austin need restorative justice most?
5. Who else needs to be a part of the conversations?

Wagon Wheel

Two concentric circles with inside circle partner facing outside circle partner. After they discuss a circle question, new partners are formed by rotating one circle to the left. This is a lively way to engage large groups.

1. What events can be enhanced?
2. What areas need support?
3. What skills do you bring?
4. What talking piece would you use?
5. What issues are you addressing?
6. What needs would the circle express?
7. Give me your restorative justice elevator pitch.

Tier I: Key Lessons in Training Delivery

- 1. The Tier I training is an important foundation for the content of Tier II and Tier III.**

The object of Tier I is to build the community that can sustain the challenging and politically active professional spheres explored in Tiers II and III. It is more than introducing community-building circles. As such, attendance to Tier I within the three-tier series is important.

- 2. Pre-planning meetings for each training with key stakeholders are critical for planning the delivery of training material.**

It is important that the training team engage in pre-planning with key stakeholders to be sure they have considered any existing conflicts, political positioning, or historical harms present within the group. Additionally, the training team must ask the questions that reveal these critical bits of knowledge as stakeholders may be new to RJ and not aware of the important information that should be shared pre-training. A training team cannot assume they will simply deliver a training curriculum but must also be responsive to the needs of the group, as the goal is to actually build a community within the training space.

- 3. Campus leaders should model risk taking and vulnerability early in the training.**

It is important that participants strive to create an egalitarian training space that transcends usual universities' hierarchies. Powerful members of the campus community can "take the first risk" by making contributions to the training that demonstrate vulnerability, reflectiveness, and an openness to change. If leaders model these behaviors early in the training, others may feel more comfortable to follow suit.

- 4. Participant attendance to the entirety of the Tier I training is critical to develop the foundational understanding for the rest of the training series.**

Many training attendees could not be physically present throughout the entire 2-day training. This was, in part, due to the training taking place on a religious holiday. Other commitments such as important department meetings pulled participants away throughout both training days. This inconsistency was a challenge as the work of RJ is not a "pop-in" intervention but rather a cumulative process. Therefore, there is still some work to do in planning to better support those who could not attend the complete training to ensure they have the key foundational concepts to participate in the more challenging work of the Tier II and Tier III interventions.

Tier II: Restorative Conferences for Conduct Violations

Key concepts:

- Philosophy and history of restorative conferencing
- Intensive facilitator skill building through experiential learning and case study
- Pre-conference preparation/assessment/referral and post-conference mentoring for compliance
- Evidence of effectiveness and strategies of implementation

Sample activities:

Climate Circles

In this circle, participants develop the skills to identify the unique climate of their communities and develop an environment of trust, community building, and to establish group values. The circle is held in three rounds:

1. What is a story connected to your name?
2. Each person gets three index cards.
 - a. What are three ways your campus creates an unhealthy or troubling climate for students? – Write one per card.
 - b. Shuffle the cards and redistribute.
 - c. Participants read cards and place on the centerpiece.
 - d. Participants select cards that resonate with them.
3. What next steps would you like to see to improve the campus climate and address your concerns?
 - a. Can do this in circle, popcorn-style, or in small groups.

Circle Design

Participants collaborated to design circles to implement within their own professional spheres. Some questions participants considered are below:

1. Convening: Who would you invite to participate? What is your talking piece and centerpiece?
2. Goals: What is the purpose for this circle?
3. Connection: What would you ask to create trust and a sense of community?
4. Concern: How would you introduce the topic of concern?
5. Collaboration: What questions and methods will you use to encourage collaborative decision making or individual next steps?
6. Closing: What is your closing question that helps the circle identify takeaways?

Snake Role Play

Participants split into groups and were provided a case study of a conflict appropriate for restorative conferencing.

SNAKE ROLE PLAY

During the first week of fall classes, a class of 150 students was disrupted by a snake, which looked just like a rattlesnake, moving about the room. People were screaming,

getting up on their chairs, and one student was bitten while trying to grab the snake. Eventually, another student caught the snake, put it in a backpack, and left the room to get rid of the snake. Although the snake turned out to be a bull snake (a snake that mimics the look and sound of a rattlesnake), this incident caused quite a stir on campus, and was covered on the state news channel. For days following the incident, everyone was perplexed as to how the snake got into the room. During the investigation, a university police officer learned that the student who removed the snake from the room (and who had been playing the part of hero for the past couple days) was actually one of two students who orchestrated the prank.

Participants assumed different roles in the case study:

- Student who caused harm.
- Support person for the student who caused harm.
- Student who was harmed.
- Professor whose class was interrupted.
- Police officer that responded to the call.

Participants worked through the restorative conference script while using their assumed roles to create the dialogue and lead to an agreement for processes of accountability.

Tier II: Key Lessons in Training Delivery

1. Tier II requires participants to do the challenging work of recognizing their own flawed practices.

The Tier II training in restorative conferencing was challenging because the material requires training participants to reconsider the professional practices they currently use. Tier II can trigger feelings of defensiveness within training participants that were not present in Tier I and did not develop the same sense of community. It is important that training participants complete Tier I as this training provides the foundation within the professional community to develop skills in exploring problems and strategies for resolution within university departments.

Tier III: Restorative Circles for Effective Reintegration After Separation

Key concepts:

- Philosophy and history of restorative circles
- Intensive facilitator skill building through experiential learning and case study
- Pre-circle preparation/assessment/referral and post-circle follow through on action plans
- Evidence of effectiveness and strategies of implementation

This training session took place during the broader campus discourse regarding students' discontent with the implementation of the code for sexual conduct in cases of faculty misconduct. At the time of the Tier III training, this topic was widely discussed on campus and participants debated the best way to address this topic of campus discontent. As such, the training team designated time for training participants to consider restorative approaches to the current campus climate.

Sample activities:

Conflict Coaching

The training team introduced key considerations in preparing for student re-entry into the community after a conflict. Considerations included:

1. Plan the re-entry circle before the suspension begins.
2. Suspension does not have to mean "disconnect."
3. Use suspension time to review questions likely to be used in the re-entry circle.
4. Get the right people in the circle.
5. Have the person responsible make a drafted list of potential people who might attend the re-entry circle.
6. Meet the circle participants during the sanction time to prepare them for the re-entry circle.
7. It's all about follow up.

Participants had specific questions regarding cases of re-entry for students who would be involved in the campus discontent on faculty misconduct.

1. Participants broke into groups to review and role play regarding a re-entry circle script.

Climate Circles and Circle Design

The trainers reviewed the Climate Circle and Circle Design resources materials presented in the Tier II Training. Participants designed plans to both assess the climate of the campus and design circles for their respective professional and academic spheres.

World Cafe Circle: Planning for Restorative Justice Implementation

A significant portion of the training was dedicated to developing a plan for RJ. The questions the group addressed include:

1. Who is missing? Who do we need?
2. Timeline: Institutional Rules, Policies, Procedures to include and/or Make Space for RJ
3. Adding RP to The University of Texas at Austin calendar
4. Key Harm Map
5. I will continue...
6. I will stop....
7. What would you want to see?

Tier III: Key Lessons in Training Delivery

1. It is a valuable practice to draw from real-world events taking place on campus to plan for while engaging in circle design.

The broader student unrest regarding faculty sexual misconduct was prominent during this training. The active student demonstrations across campus required many staff to pop in and out of the training, answer emails and phone calls, absorbing much of the focus in the training space. Therefore, the training team focused on these recent events to guide discussion within the training. There were many valuable takeaways the trainers identified through centering this current event as the topic for circle design.

a. Real-world examples prepare participants to address polarizing topics.

Participants explored the challenge of creating restorative dialogue regarding polarizing topics on campus. Participants wanted strategies to guide challenging conversations.

b. Training participants are able to develop comfort in discussing challenges in their work environments.

As the trainers centered the discussion on a current campus event, participants brainstormed and simulated restorative practices in response to a highly relevant topic. As such, participants saw RJ practitioners offering insight and assistance when planning an intervention about campus conflict. After the training, several participants approached the training team to ask for assistance in planning responses to their current workplace conflicts.

c. The training team can employ examples of conflicts that are relevant to the campus community while modeling the qualities of commitment and investment.

Trainers modeled the process of circle planning in real time. This is significant, as the training team modeled the commitments of time, open mindedness, and

investment required when planning effective restorative practices for polarizing topics.

2. It is important that training participants develop the skills to plan restorative processes for their campus independently and without relying on the affirmations of trainers.

The second portion of the training was dedicated to developing an ongoing plan for restorative process development to continue the movement campus wide beyond the three-tier training series. However, the training team felt if they offered too much guidance for the participants in producing their plans, the plans participants proposed may not be realistically applied at the conclusion of the training. With this reflection, the trainers offered the following insights:

a. Before planning restorative processes at the university, key stakeholders need to establish a shared vision and processes of decision making.

To make realistic plans for implementing RJ campus wide, the staff and faculty of the university must already share a collective vision or a willingness to engage in sharing power to reach the common goal. If the training participants do not already have a collective vision on campus, then Tier III should focus on equipping training participants to envision a collective goal and engage in relationships of sharing power. Campus-wide intervention is likely to fail without first establishing an ethos of shared decision making.

b. At this point, the training team should step back to become “guides on the side” rather than “sages on the stage.”

As universities plan their long-term RJ implementation strategies, the group should be able to work collaboratively while trusting each other’s insights. At this point, the training team should act as “guides on the side” as opposed to “sages on the stage.” If the training participants are centering their plans on the direction of the training team, then it is a sign more work on community building and collective vision building is required. By the conclusion of Tier III, the most important outcome is that training participants build trust within the work, the circle, and with each other.

c. Collective planning is a challenge and requires authenticity from participants. If the training participants are not demonstrating power sharing, then the group should return to Tier I community building before attempting campus-wide implementation programs.

If the training participants effectively participated in community building, then at the conclusion of Tier III, training participants should bring a level of authenticity to the circle. The success of RJ is in the authenticity of connection. Therefore, participants should be speaking from their own experiences and viewpoints rather than those representative of their position or department. If the training team observes defensive or overgeneralized comments within the group, then more attention needs to be directed to building a collective vision of power sharing within their respective roles.

Phase 3: Campus Implementation and Support

David Karp and Duke Fisher returned for a week of workshops and meetings to support program implementation. Noël Busch-Armendariz worked with David Karp to schedule a full week of activities across February 16-22, 2020. The descriptions below capture key details of the events of that week.

Student RJ Orientation: Response to Faculty Sexual Misconduct

Purpose: A general overview of RJ practices for student leaders of the movement regarding faculty sexual misconduct.

Presenters: Duke Fisher, Noël Busch-Armendariz, Melanie Susswein, and the Education Coordinator, Title IX- *apprenticeship opportunity*

Summary of Key Points:

This event was coordinated in response to the student discontent regarding faculty sexual misconduct. Prior to this event, student leaders interviewed Noël Busch-Armendariz and Melanie Susswein regarding the campus response to faculty sexual misconduct. The students requested an opportunity to learn more about the RJ process.

Three students attended the 3-hour meeting that educated the students about key concepts of RJ and enabled them to experience a community-building circle.

Questions the group addressed within the community-building circle include:

1. Where are the settings in which you feel you are in nonjudgmental space?
2. Which of your identities is most difficult to balance here?
3. What are your hopes for the experience?
4. What concerns were you hoping RJ could address?
5. How will you know this meeting is working effectively to meet your concerns? What are the signposts?

Summary of Key Takeaways

The core topics of concern proposed by the students are as follows:

1. RJ is a proactive approach that requires participants to question their implicit biases.

Students questioned RJ as a campus-wide intervention. They shared the concern that it is too late for discussion of “prevention” because habits were already present on campus and needed to be disrupted. More specifically, they wanted more information on how to address implicit biases that feed into faculty microaggressions on the basis of all intersections of identity, sexuality, race, etc. Students were seeking strategies to create more challenging conversations amongst faculty and staff as a regular part of campus life.

2. Participants in RJ processes move away from adversarial relationships to shared exploration and problem solving.

Students expressed concern about the polarizing viewpoints faculty and staff have expressed on campus that create adversarial relationships rather than shared exploration and problem solving. They wanted more resources or discussions about how to prevent defensive responses from faculty and staff and create a campus community that honors different perspectives.

3. There are four different types of harm that can be addressed through restorative processes.

The group explored the different types of harm that affected the university community:

- a. Emotional/Spiritual
- b. Material/Physical
- c. Communal/Relational
- d. Inflamed Structural/Historical

SAFE Alliance RJ Training Participants

This training was conducted during the site visit as an opportunity for the trainer and newly trained practitioners to provide an introduction to RJ in response to sexual assault for a community-based organization.

Presenters: Duke Fisher, Noël Busch-Armendariz, Melanie Susswein, and the Education Coordinator, Title IX- *apprenticeship opportunity*

Summary of Key Points:

This event was coordinated as an introduction to RJ and community-building circles within the local nonprofit organization, the Safe Alliance. Approximately 60 staff and volunteers attended the training. The mission of the organization is below as cited on the organization website:

The SAFE Alliance exists to stop abuse for everyone by serving the survivors of child abuse, sexual assault and exploitation, and domestic violence. We are dedicated to ending violence through prevention, advocacy, and comprehensive services for individuals, families, and communities that have been affected by abuse.

Early in the training, the training participants shared great concern regarding the effectiveness of RJ in cases of sexual harm and whether the movement was responsive to and informed by the perspectives of people of color. The training team built upon the concerns expressed by the training participants to further explore these topics within the training in real time.

Summary of Key Takeaways

1. It is important in preplanning sessions to account for the needs of the group.

It is important to arrange pretraining meetings with key stakeholders to ensure the training team has fully accounted for the range of needs, concerns, and goals expressed by participants.

2. **When a group expresses serious concerns during the training, it is critical that the trainers then employ restorative processes to address the concerns as quickly as possible.**

Early in the training, participants expressed concerns about the effectiveness of restorative processes for women of color and, in particular, those who have experienced sexual harm. Members of the SAFE team included women from marginalized social positions who may not be provided equity in power when interacting with bureaucratic institutions. In response, the training team chose to alter the training agenda to address the real-time concerns participants expressed within the training. When a group expresses serious concerns during the training, it is critical that the trainers then employ restorative processes to address the concerns as quickly as possible. With such a shift, it is possible for training participants to walk away from the training with an experience of RJ as a process to effectively address harms.

RJ Reunion Circle

Purpose: An opportunity for participants of the fall training series to reconvene, share updates, and ask questions.

Presenters: Duke Fisher, Noël Busch-Armendariz, Melanie Susswein

Summary of Key Points:

The 12 early adopters and RJ enthusiasts who attended the three-tier fall training participants engaged in creating the space for this meeting to push forward with expanding the movement to the broader campus.

- Amy Wolfgang (Administrative Associate, Human Resources) was the lead point person in coordinating the meeting.
- Deborah Sharp (Dispute Resolution Officer and Director of Conflict Management & Dispute Resolution) and the Director of the Office of the Student Ombuds shared their initial steps in hosting circles for faculty and staff and/or students within her respective departments as well as collaboratively.

Summary of Key Takeaways

1. **A key question that emerged was how faculty and staff who receive RJ training can expand their work to include an entire campus.**

The group expressed interest in expanding the implementation of RJ through the use of restorative practices as a regular part of campus life. As such, the group wanted to explore strategies to move their collective restorative practices as a movement that extends well beyond “the training.”

2. **It may not be possible for a university to employ all three tiers on a campus-wide scale. A good first step is to focus on Tier III, circles for re-entry.**

The University of Texas at Austin, like other large universities, has a large and bureaucratic conduct system. This conduct system drives response to harm and is well established as the norm within the campus community. As a strategy to gain momentum, participants expressed interest in first employing Tier III re-entry circles for students

returning to campus, as there is currently no support plan in place, whether due to disciplinary action, victimization, or a medical leave.

IDVSA (Institute on Domestic Violence and Sexual Assault) “RJ101”

Purpose: A community-building circle to introduce the IDVSA to an RJ experience.

Presenters: David Karp, Duke Fisher

Summary of Key Points:

The IDVSA team had recently welcomed new team members and this was designed as an opportunity to build a sense of community within the team and introduce the key concepts of restorative practices.

Summary of Key Takeaways

1. The historical context of the university matters and should be considered in planning.

The training team emphasized the importance of exploring the historical context of each community before engaging in restorative practices. While the training team may have a general idea of a “good restorative justice training,” if the training team does not account for the unique dynamics of the group, then the training can produce more harm than good by triggering unforeseen negative feelings, or may not prove effective within the unique broader dynamics of the administration of a large university.

2. It is important for the trainers to set realistic expectations regarding the problems that can and cannot be addressed within a given circle.

RJ is employed in part to create a space where challenging and conflicting perspectives within a group can be unearthed and then addressed to repair harm. However, the training team must be prepared that the community seated within the circle may be unable to address harms expressed within the group. Therefore, it is important to interview as many stakeholders as possible to account for the unique dynamics and concerns within the group and so participants have accurate expectations regarding the types of concerns that can be addressed within the community of the circle and those that may be beyond its scope.

Human Resources Presentation

Purpose: Important Characteristics of Community and Restorative Actions for Conduct, Climate, and Culture Change

Presenter: David Karp

Summary of Key Points:

RJ is an ethical framework that emphasizes the importance of strong, positive relationships. RJ practices both empower individuals and repair harm in relationships. In this way, RJ is both proactive and responsive.

Key components of the three-tier RJ process:

RJ as a whole campus approach:

- Tier I: Build and strengthen relationships
- Tier II: Respond to conflict and harm
- Tier III: Re-entry support

Faculty sexual harassment carries both “acts” and “impacts.” If left unaddressed, such harassment can lead to a toxic workplace culture. RJ practices serve to allow harmful parties to acknowledge and take responsibility for harm.

Presentation to Faculty Council Task Force

Purpose: The University of Texas at Austin Presentation to the Members of Faculty Council and the Task Force for Community Standards for Faculty

Presenters: Duke Fisher, Noël Busch-Armendariz, Melanie Susswein

Summary of Key Points:

Presentation of key points related to IDVSA and the CLASE survey. Topics of concern:

- Faculty/staff-perpetrated sexual harassment
- Student-perpetrated sexual harassment
- Stalking
- Dating/domestic abuse and violence
- Unwanted sexual contact

RJ as a whole campus approach:

- Tier I: Build and strengthen relationships
- Tier II: Respond to conflict and harm
- Tier III: Re-entry support

The task force stayed an additional 30 minutes, which was an indication of their interest in the topic.

Restorative Justice / Practices Introduction With The University of Texas at Austin Communications

Purpose: A general introduction to restorative practices.

Presenter: David Karp

Summary of Key Points:

Presentation of key points related to IDVSA and the CLASE survey. Topics of concern:

- Faculty/staff-perpetrated sexual harassment
- Student-perpetrated sexual harassment
- Stalking
- Dating/domestic abuse and violence
- Unwanted sexual contact

RJ as a whole campus approach:

- Tier I: Build and strengthen relationships
- Tier II: Respond to conflict and harm
- Tier III: Re-entry support

Case studies and lessons from the data:

- NASPA Research and Policy Institute Brief
 - Five key concepts for successful RJ implementation: a philosophy of justice; address harm through accountability; evidence-based, voluntary, and trauma-informed; requires extensive training and preparation
- University of Colorado, Boulder
 - Restorative justice program outcomes
- Campus Implementation Survey; trends of implementation across higher education
 - Survey completed May 2019, USD Center for Restorative Justice
 - Extent of RJ implementation, RJ use for violations, barriers to implementation
- University of Michigan
 - “Adaptable Resolution” mission statement

Introduction Meeting to Restorative Practices / Office of Legal Affairs

Purpose: A general introduction to restorative practices.

Presenter: David Karp

Summary of Key Points:

Presentation of key points related to IDVSA and the CLASE survey. Topics of concern:

- Faculty/staff-perpetrated sexual harassment
- Student-perpetrated sexual harassment
- Stalking
- Dating/domestic abuse and violence
- Unwanted sexual contact

RJ as a whole campus approach:

- Tier I: Build and strengthen relationships
- Tier II: Respond to conflict and harm
- Tier III: Re-entry support

Case studies and lessons from the data:

- NASPA Research and Policy Institute Brief
 - Five key concepts for successful RJ implementation: philosophy of justice; address harm through accountability; evidence-based, voluntary, and trauma-informed; requires extensive training and preparation.
- University of Colorado, Boulder
 - Restorative justice program outcomes
- Campus Implementation Survey; trends of implementation across higher education
 - Survey completed May 2019, USD Center for Restorative Justice
 - Extent of RJ implementation, RJ use for violations, barriers to implementation
- University of Michigan
 - “Adaptable Resolution” mission statement

Phase 4: Closing Survey and Planning Next Steps

IDVSA developed an ongoing collaboration with the Center4RJ to implement RJ as a university-wide program at The University of Texas at Austin. Although the work is ongoing as a result of additional subcontract to address ongoing needs of the campus, the final actions documented in this report include the closing survey and final events to close the 2019-2020 academic year.

Closing Survey

As a final step for this report, the CLASE research team requested participants of the three-tiered training series complete a closing survey. Due to COVID-19, many participants experienced disruptions in their work environment. As such, response to the survey was relatively small with only 13 of 32 possible responses. However, there are some areas of response important to highlight in closing this report.

Respondents largely marked “unsure” regarding the current state of RJ implementation across campus, including the frequency of community-building circles and circles for student misconduct, faculty misconduct, or online/virtual restorative practices. Therefore, more work is needed on assessing the quantity and quality of RJ on a campus-wide scale.

Respondents believed RJ is well aligned with the mission of The University of Texas at Austin, with 10/13 respondents indicating “very aligned” and only three selecting “somewhat aligned.” Further, respondents identified alignment in the following areas:

- As an alternative to formal grievance processes that do not allow individuals to discuss and address harm.
- Reconciliation and resolution in matters of staff or faculty conflict due to department reorganizing.
- Increasing accessibility for students with disabilities.
- Addressing harm at the individual and community levels.

Finally, respondents recognized The University of Texas at Austin as being in the early phases of RJ implementation as seven respondents selected “emerging,” while six selected “getting started.” Although survey respondents did share a positive disposition to RJ and an interest in continuing to learn, they did identify some barriers to implementation. Those responses included:

- Lack of resources available for RJ implementation
- Lack of time
- COVID-19
- Balancing RJ with other policies and initiatives
- Buy-in from top campus administrators

Summer Reunion Circle

The spring semester unfolded with a lot of uncertainty about COVID-19 and campus closures. Unable to proceed as planned, the research team and training participants met together for an online reunion circle. At this circle, strategizing for the upcoming year included a focus on best practices for circle facilitation. Some topics discussed included (a) managing emotional well-being as a circle facilitator, (b) facilitating circle processes online, and (c) easing tensions in a group when discussing topics of high conflict. With the outcomes of this meeting in mind, the research is moving forward with plans to build a facilitator's guide on circle processes for pandemic re-openings.

Second Contract and Continued Consultation

As lead trainers, Duke Fisher and Nina Harris continued to provide ongoing collaboration, mentorship, and guidance in apprenticeships to the IDVSA research team and broader university. Duke and Nina continued to meet with the research team weekly throughout the fall semester. The goals of this ongoing collaboration were threefold and included (a) facilitator support for members of the university community, (b) guidance in cultivating RJ curriculum on topics of sexual assault, and (c) development of a guidebook for building online restorative practice community. In addition, the training team also supported members of the university in creating community-building circles to address social harms related to COVID-19 and the 2020 presidential election.

Facilitator Support in Expertise and Specialization

The IDVSA team initiated the RJ research project with the goal to develop a culture of practice for restorative justice within the professional community at The University of Texas at Austin. After the initial three-tier training was completed under contract one, Duke and Nina continued to guide participants in developing individual areas of expertise and specialization. The focus of this ongoing support was to ensure that training participants went on to become competent facilitators of restorative processes. In doing so, training participants were supported in implementing RJ processes in a range of departments and schools. This ongoing support was critical to the diffusion of a single training to a broad scale of implementation. By continuing to support training participants, The University of Texas at Austin is set to be a flagship university of campus-wide RJ implementation thereby continuing to build national connections and areas of expertise in restorative justice research.

RJ Curriculum in Topics of Social Work and Sexual Assault

Noël Busch-Armendariz continued to cultivate expertise particularly in the field of restorative justice in topics of sexual harm. In pursuit of this goal, Duke and Nina consulted with Noel in the integration of restorative justice content into the course “Contemporary Issues in Sexual Assault.” The course was then taught in the fall semester of 2020. The restorative justice portion of the curriculum was administered over one eight-hour class session in which Duke and Nina facilitated a series of experiential activities. The content of the curriculum pushed students to explore community-building circles as a method to envision the needs of an entire community in cases of sexual assault, thereby challenging students to see the perpetrator in a different way.

This needs-centered approach to topics of sexual harm within clinical social work is a fairly new area of application for restorative processes.

On the Horizon: Development of Guidebook

A key outcome generated under contract one was the “key lessons-learned” that emerged at the conclusion of each of the three-tier training sessions. These “key-lessons learned” highlighted the complex and nuanced decision-making processes that restorative justice facilitators must confront when leading a successful experiential training. To this point, the decision-making processes of RJ facilitators are largely undocumented within research. The IDVSA has seen potential in documenting these decision-making processes in a guide or “tool-kit” for RJ facilitators. Within contract two, the IDVSA research team collaborated with Duke and Nina as well as graduate students within the school of social work to complete preliminary research and documentation of the key-lessons learned in RJ facilitation and decision-making processes. This guidebook will be further developed when possible under a future research project.

Planning Next Steps

As stated previously, the Center4RJ developed an ongoing collaboration for implementing RJ as a school-wide program at The University of Texas at Austin. However, this report will close with an exciting new development shared in July of 2020.

The University of Texas at Austin collaborated with the law firm Husch Blackwell to review The University of Texas at Austin’s policies on sex discrimination. As part of this process, Husch Blackwell reviewed the Title IX organizational structure and program management and made recommendations for reorganization. We believe, as a result of this project and the additional endorsement by Husch Blackwell, university leadership is committed to RJ implementation. In a recent email to The University of Texas at Austin community, President Jay Hartzell approved a series of recommendations, most notably “a groundbreaking program to provide RJ, located in the Division of Diversity and Community Engagement, that is designed to resolve disputes involving issues of equity and inclusion and restore community through mutually agreed resolutions” (J. Hartzell, personal communication, July 8, 2020).

The University of Texas at Austin

Summary of Second Contract

This summary presents the actions completed under the second contract of the IDVSA within the CLASE project to develop a culture of practice for restorative justice within the professional community at The University of Texas at Austin. The second contract was completed from May to October of 2020.

Second contract and continued consultation.
Collaboration, mentorship, and guidance.

Facilitation support for the members of the university community.
Cultivated areas of expertise and specialization across the campus community.

Developed restorative justice curriculum on topics of sexual assault.
Developed ties between philosophies of restorative justice and social work in topics of sexual harm.

On the Horizon

Guidebook on RJ Facilitation and Key-Lessons Learned. *Completed preliminary brainstorming in RJ decision-making processes.*

Conclusion: Creating a Restorative University

As interest in RJ has grown, many higher education campuses have expressed interest in RJ and implemented it in various academic and student affairs departments. Similarly, many K-12 educators have embraced RJ and a variety of implementation guides have been published. This report is not such a guide, as the pathways to implementation are far more varied in higher education, as are the types of institutions.

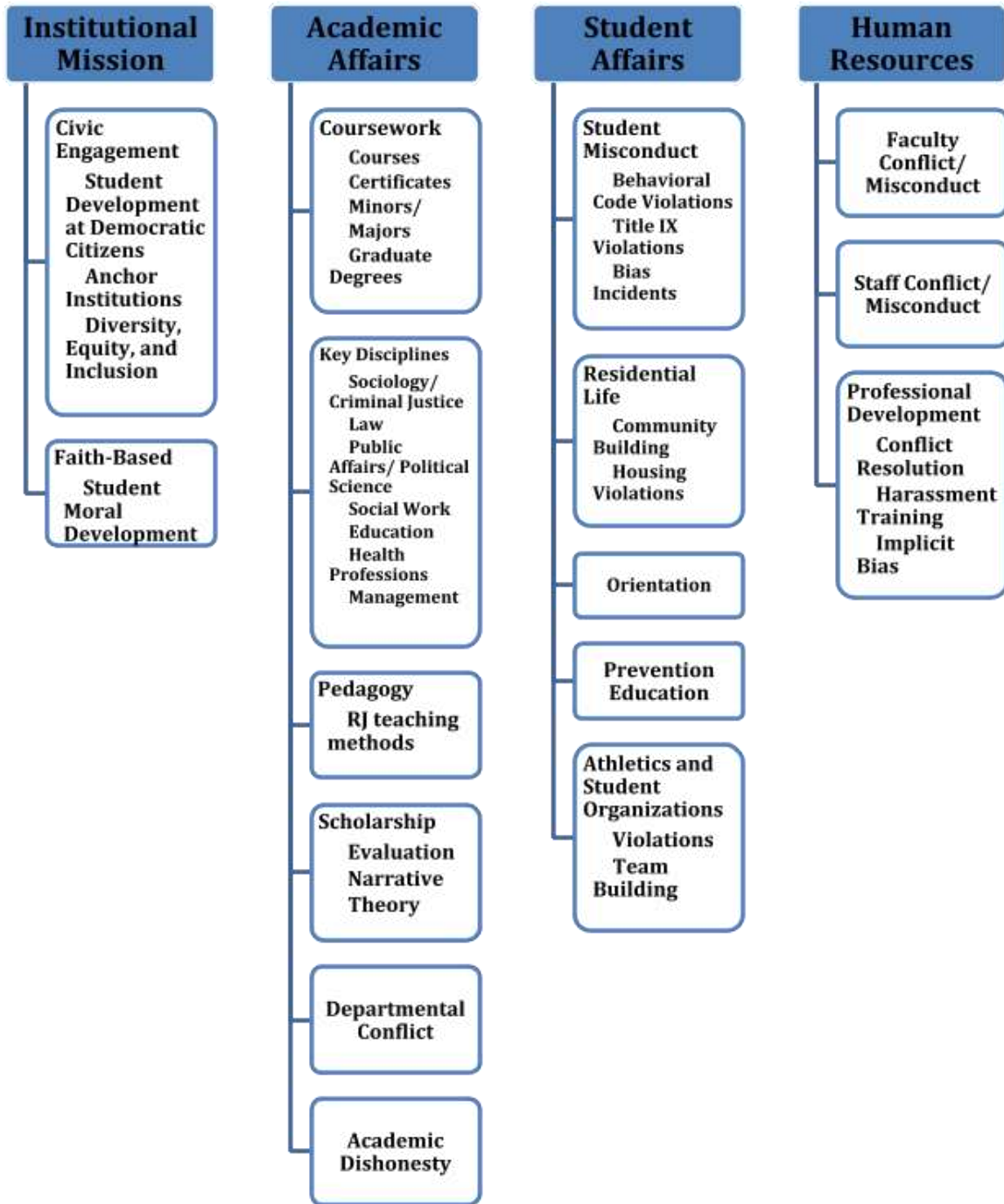
What Is a Restorative University?

Chris Marshall, a professor who led the effort to make Victoria University in New Zealand its first “restorative university,” argues the institution should use “restorative practices for enhancing the relational engagement and well-being of its staff and student community, and RJ processes for dealing with incidents of misconduct and wrongdoing, whether by students or employees. Achieving this outcome would require a common commitment to and shared understanding of the goal on the part of senior leadership, student services, and human resources” (Marshall, 2017, p. 6). Such a definition is broad enough to reflect that a restorative university would need to embrace both the philosophical principles of RJ and apply specific practices to strengthen community relationships and respond to community harm. This aspirational approach implies implementation will require ongoing effort to sustain it as well as widespread leadership, community participation, and support.

What Are the Various Pathways to Implementation?

In this section, we outline major pathways to implementation. We can imagine The University of Texas at Austin beginning modestly in one arena and gradually adding from there. Implementation might begin from a coherent strategic plan. It may begin based on the passionate commitment of individuals in one area. It may be driven by a critical incident or by a groundswell of community interest. Because the incentives vary, implementation may emerge in different departments, it may spring up rapidly in the context of fraught protest or, perhaps, slowly, quietly, and methodically. Figure 1 summarizes major pathways.

Figure 1. Implementation Pathways



Institutional Mission

Almost every higher education institution has a mission that aspires to serve the public good. Liberal arts colleges tend to emphasize the development of students as informed, responsible citizens capable of addressing society's greatest challenges. Research universities stress their role in contributing to society's technological, social, economic, and cultural advancement. They may have particular goals around supporting the larger community around them, serving as "anchor institutions" that help structure and support local economies and civic life. Community colleges emphasize the importance of providing access for first-generation and low-income students. Other institutions seek to support specific student populations, such as historically Black colleges and universities, tribal colleges, women's colleges, and faith-based institutions. Even vocational or for-profit institutions frame their purpose around goals that serve the needs of specific student populations or the well-being of society. Each variant sees its role in the service of civic engagement. In this broad way, the principles of RJ—inclusive decision making, repairing harm, strengthening relationships—are consistent with the mission of higher education. In one survey, less than 5% of respondents believe RJ was inconsistent with the mission of their institutions (Karp, 2019).

UT Austin's states its "core purpose" simply and succinctly: "To transform lives for the benefit of society."¹ As a flagship, Research I institution, we argue RJ is highly consistent with that purpose.

Academic Affairs

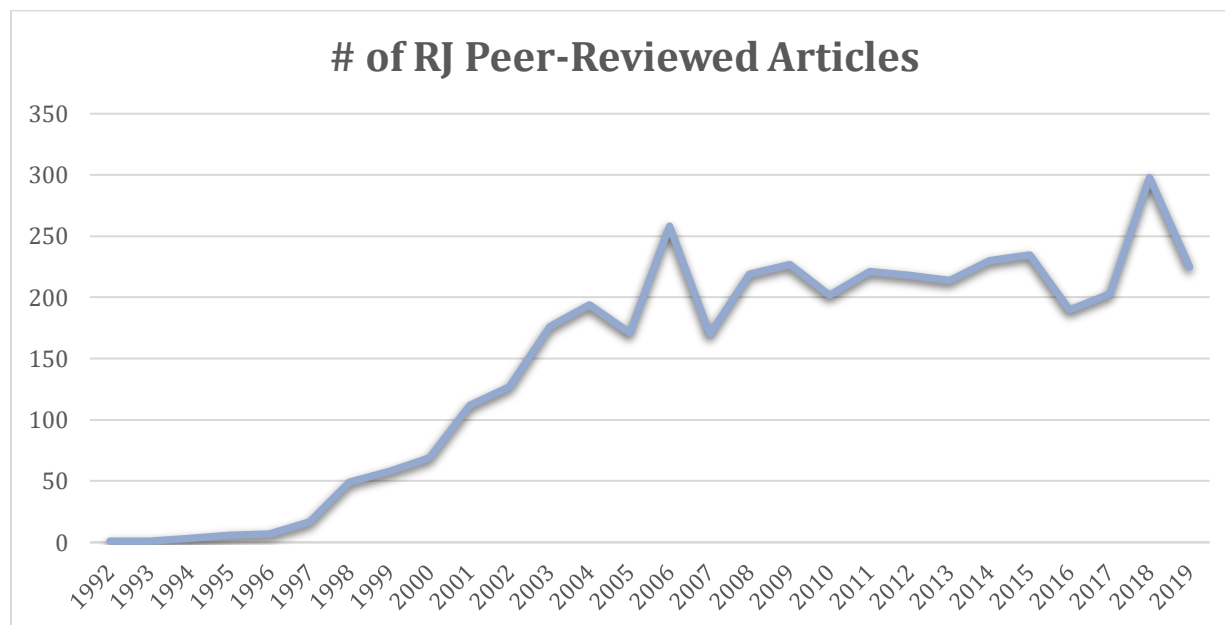
RJ may be implemented in academic affairs through teaching, research, or in response to the academic or social misconduct that takes place inside the classroom, within departments, between faculty and administration, or even within academic professional societies.

Teaching. Faculty are using restorative practices in the classroom as a method of inclusive student engagement and to foster authentic dialogue around topics that are often emotionally fraught. Faculty are also teaching about RJ. This is particularly the case in disciplines such as sociology, criminal justice, law, education, and social work. Recently, we have seen the rise of individual courses, minors, certificates, majors, and graduate programs dedicated to RJ. Law schools have developed RJ clinics. Some states have included RJ in its educational requirements for K-12 teacher certification.

¹ <https://www.utexas.edu/about/mission-and-values>

Research. Figure 2 illustrates the significant growth in peer-reviewed journal articles about RJ. Scholarship documents RJ globally, often through thick description of restorative processes and case studies. Researchers are collecting data on the effectiveness of RJ in different arenas, such as in the criminal legal system and in education. Scholars are developing theoretical models to understand how and why RJ works.

Figure 2: Growth of RJ Research by Year



Academic and Social Misconduct. Restorative practices are used to address academic integrity violations, which may include prolific plagiarism or cheating by students but also allegations of misconduct by faculty or disputes that arise between researchers. Many academic departments are mired in long-standing conflicts and low morale. Others may arise in response to critical incidents, such as accusations of sexual harassment against a faculty member or the publication of results from a climate survey.

Student Affairs

Student Misconduct. Student conduct administrators incorporate RJ principles and practices into administrative conduct hearings (usually one-on-one meetings between a conduct administrator and a student) and conduct board hearings. They facilitate various RJ practices such as restorative circles and conferences. These are used to address a range of conduct violations including Title IX and bias incidents. Sometimes, RJ practices are used when the conduct is deemed harmful but not a violation, such as bias incidents protected by free speech.

Residential Life. Building healthy residential communities are central to the mission of residential life offices. Resident directors and resident assistants often use circles to build community and respond to concerns about community climate. RJ practices are also used to address code violations such as noise violations or vandalism.

Orientation. Like residential life, orientation and first-year experience offices often use circles to build community and ease the transition of new students to campus.

Prevention Education. Many student affairs offices are charged with educating students with the goal of preventing harmful behavior. This may include education on sexual consent, harm reduction for alcohol abuse, diversity/equity/inclusion, health and wellness, or academic support services. Prevention educators may use circle practices to foster authentic dialogues about these topics.

Athletics and Student Organizations. Athletic teams, student clubs, and Greek letter organizations also use RJ for community building and to address individual or group misconduct.

Human Resources

Faculty or Staff Conflict/Misconduct. Perhaps the new application of RJ is for faculty and staff conflict and misconduct. HR departments are traditionally skilled in conducting confidential investigations but rarely offer services that include restorative approaches, particularly to address the collateral harms associated with issues such as divisiveness and acrimony that may affect a whole department in the aftermath of an investigation.

Professional Development. HR departments may offer training in RJ to develop conflict resolution facilitation capacity for department chairs or office directors. They may incorporate circle practices into trainings similarly to student affairs prevention educators. They may use circles to facilitate difficult dialogues around topics such as implicit bias within a department or to host dialogues around larger social conflicts such as political polarization or social justice movements like Black Lives Matter.

What Are the Major Obstacles to Implementation?

Lack of Vision: Campus lacks understanding of the principles and goals of RJ.

Lack of planning: There is no working group to develop buy-in, establish a reasonable timeline, conduct professional development, work out logistics, and monitor progress.

Lack of training/coaching: Initial training is expensive and needed for a wide variety of stakeholders. Subsequent training and individualized coaching are critical.

Lack of support: Enthusiastic administrators are not enough. Buy-in is necessary for staff, students, trustees, and even alumni and parents.

Lack of investment: Campus change requires financial commitment for training, coaching, resource materials, and new or redefined positions such as RJ coordinators. Change takes 3 to 5 years of committed effort.

These are challenging times for the university and for the nation. While RJ is increasingly relevant, it is unclear when institutions can feasibly commit to fully becoming restorative. It is our hope that UT Austin continues on the path started in this project.

References

Karp, D. (2019, May). *Restorative justice implementation* (Version 1) [Data set].

University of San Diego, Center for Restorative Justice.

Marshall, C. (2017). *Victoria University of Wellington: Towards a restorative university?* Victoria University.

The University of Texas at Austin. (2020, October 28). *Mission and values*.

<https://www.utexas.edu/about/mission-and-values>