

## Box 11.2 The 2014 White House Task Force to Protect Students From Sexual Assault

Our understandings of sexual assault, and what constitutes consent, have shifted dramatically the past 30 years. Arguably no area of VMIR has evolved as quickly, and as dramatically, as has sexual assault and rape. The 2014 White House Task Force to Protect Students From Sexual Assault effectively illustrates this evolution. Then-president Obama, in announcing the creation of the task force, directed the Office of the Vice President and the White House Council on Women and Girls to “lead an interagency effort to address campus rape and sexual assault, including coordinating Federal enforcement efforts by executive departments and agencies and helping institutions meet their obligations under Federal law” (“Memorandum—Establishing a White House Task Force to Protect Students From Sexual Assault,” 2014). The new federal policy, articulated in the report *Not Alone* (White House Task Force to Protect Students From Sexual Assault, 2014), requires colleges and universities, as a condition to receiving federal funds, to “step up their game” in rape education and prevention (Cermele & McCaughey, 2015).

The task force is not without its critics. Given the contentious history of rape definitions and measurement, it is not surprising that some have challenged the statistical claim, unquestioningly accepted as an “article of faith” in the opening sentence of the *Not Alone* report, that “one in five women is sexually assaulted in college” (S. Harris, 2014). Some critics have charged that this statistic, which comes from a Department of Justice report (Krebs et al., 2007), exaggerates the issue on college campuses. The *Not Alone* report also requires college campuses to use a “preponderance