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SEXUAL VIOLENCE PREVENTION ON CAMPUS

LEADING THE CULTURE CHANGE



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Student Affairs Administrators
in Higher Education

A close-up photograph of a person's face, focusing on the eyes and nose. A blue ribbon graphic, commonly used for sexual violence awareness, is overlaid on the center of the face. The title text is superimposed on the ribbon.

SEXUAL VIOLENCE PREVENTION ON CAMPUS

LEADING THE CULTURE CHANGE

BY RUTH ANNE KOENICK

I ENTERED COLLEGE IN 1967, when freshmen were identified by wearing dinks; residence halls were single sex; women wore skirts or dresses to class; students and faculty members smoked cigarettes during class; and women's residence halls had stringent curfews. The world and campus life have changed for better, for worse, or perhaps both. Today, students who enter college and university campuses are highly influenced by what they see and post on social media, from Facebook to Tinder, Instagram to Twitter, and Snapchat to Facetime. Students live in a culture of normative indiscriminate sex, a culture in which new technologies make the observation and recordings of sexual encounters public, and a culture that is permeated by the use and abuse of alcohol often mixed with substances such as molly, sizzurp, and rohypnol.

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LEGAL LINKS ADDRESSES STUDENT-TO-STUDENT SEXUAL HARASSMENT

The inaugural issue of NASPA's *Legal Links* addresses the U.S. Department of Education's Office for Civil Rights enforcement standards for campus compliance of Title IX sexual harassment, examining the legal dimensions of sexual misconduct arising from student interactions. The issue provides an action-plan approach for institutions to take immediate and effective steps to eliminate harassing conduct, prevent its occurrence, and address its affects. *Understanding Campus Obligations for Student-to-Student Sexual Harassment: Guidance for Student Affairs Professionals* is available on the NASPA website at www.naspa.org/publications/books/sexual-harassment.

All of these factors have changed the playing field regarding sexual violence on campus. No matter what size campus—at private and public institutions alike—the knowledge about sexual violence and its related behavior patterns has changed how higher education leaders, particularly those in student affairs, think about campus life, function within their positions, and work with students on issues of sexual violence and prevention.

In the past, on many college and university campuses, there was an unspoken willingness to pretend that sexual violence did not exist, often fueled by federal and state laws but also by campus indifference. When sexual violence did occur, it was perceived to reflect poorly on an institution. Today, students, administrators, and faculty members are raising the bar of responsibility to prevent sexual violence from occurring and to respond to acts of sexual violence with sensitive and well-developed programs for victims without trampling on individual rights.

Each state and campus may define sexual violence offenses and codes of student conduct in different ways. However, federal laws, regulations, and guidance trump those definitions and have raised concerns among many campus administrators, who are struggling to prevent federal investigations into how their institutions have or have not created or failed to remedy hostile environments on their campuses. Today, higher education institutions must work within laws and policies that were never dreamed of, or thought to be needed, decades ago, including Title IX, the U.S. Department of Education Office for Civil Rights *Dear Colleague Letter* of 2011, the renewed Violence Against Women Act, and the Campus SaVE Act. These policies, broadened knowledge, and increased peer support have prompted many students, particularly women, to use social media and online tools such as KYIX (Know Your IX), a website dedicated to “empowering students to end sexual violence and to promote change.”

Many years ago, a high-level college administrator responded to several public reports of sexual assaults at his institution by declaring that “there would be no more rapes” on his campus. While he was a kind, decent, and well-intended individual, he lacked the power to make his declaration a reality. For the most part, his brand of “prevention” would be laughed at today, but may be what some administrators still espouse privately.

What is a student affairs professional to do? Operating out of fear is not healthy for administrators, institutions, or students. It does nothing to prevent sexual violence any more than that empty declaration did so many years ago. Every college and university must respond immediately to the need for sexual violence education and prevention programs and must address any historically hostile environments for women on campus. Institutions must take actions—beyond the growing body of laws, regulations, and policies—that honor the

mission of higher education institutions and the very reason that many enter the student affairs profession: a commitment to working with and further developing students.

THE FIRST STEPS

Every institution must take that first step: Acknowledge and admit that sexual violence is not only a cultural problem that crosses all boundaries but is a problem that occurs on every college and university campus around the world. As a community and as individuals, higher education institutions and their constituents must acknowledge that sexual predators are on campuses; most men do not rape, but those who do commit the crime repeatedly and in a predatory manner; and primarily men are the serial rapists on campuses. It is hard to accept that some of the men admitted to higher education institutions rape some of the women who have been admitted. Research and clinical

Not Alone: Protecting Students from Sexual Assault

In late April, the White House Task Force to Protect Students from Sexual Assault announced a number of actions to better identify the scope of the problem on college and university campuses; to help prevent campus sexual assaults; to help schools respond more effectively when an assault occurs; and to make the federal government's enforcement efforts more transparent.

Among the action items proposed:

- Offer colleges and universities a toolkit to develop and conduct a climate survey.
- Explore options to require colleges and universities to conduct an evidence-based survey in 2016.
- Share a Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) review of primary prevention strategies for reducing sexual violence.
- Pilot and evaluate prevention strategies on college campuses through the CDC and U.S. Department of Justice's Office on Violence Against Women.
- Provide a sample confidentiality and reporting policy.
- Offer specialized training for school officials.
- Provide greater clarity on the legal obligations of colleges and universities.
- Launch a dedicated website, www.NotAlone.gov, to make enforcement data public and make other resources accessible to students and schools.

To view the report, visit www.whitehouse.gov/sites/default/files/docs/report_0.pdf.

cal experience support those facts, which prompted President Barack Obama to create the White House Task Force to Protect Students from Sexual Assault. The task force recently issued its report of promising practices to help create a campus environment that both prevents and responds to incidents of sexual violence and assures that Title IX protections are promulgated and followed as identified in the 2011 *Dear Colleague Letter*. (See box, p. 11.)

Each campus can undertake many initiatives to create a culture and community that does not encourage, support, or reward sexual violence; holds individuals accountable; and is intentional in the design and implementation of both the prevention and response to sexual violence. As institutions create their "to-do" lists to promote culture change, consider the following:

- **When creating a task force to oversee campus sexual violence prevention and response, be thoughtful about who should be at the table.** A task force provides an opportunity to be inclusive, transparent, and engage diverse groups of individuals on campus.
- **Take a fresh look at students.** Consider how students are thinking about sexual violence and prevention issues on campus when developing certain types of programming, such as student orientation sessions or special programs for groups considered at higher risk for victimization or perpetration.
- **Climate or campus culture surveys allow for an examination of student beliefs, attitudes, and perceptions about how sexual violence is addressed on campus.**



Surveys can help gauge student use of available services and whether or not students would use resources should they be victimized.

- **Conduct climate surveys annually.** While some schools conduct a climate survey and use it as baseline information when initially creating programs, this type of research should be scheduled at regular intervals. Ongoing surveys assure the continued effectiveness of training, educational, and awareness programs, and prevention programs and services.

- **While students come and go, institutions remain and must constantly assess the changing student population.** With each incoming class of students comes new attitudes and perceptions. Regular assessments of the student population can provide information about how students connect with each other about critical issues related to sexual violence. Such assessments can highlight differences among classes, social groups, genders, races, and individuals with varied cultural backgrounds and employment, and can show how students connect through social media.

- **Ask the questions, act on the answers.** It is not enough to ask the questions. Institutions must examine the answers and respond with a broad range of support, services, programs, and knowledge. At the same time, students are seeking institutional transparency regarding information, funding, prevention, and resources that can empower them to help survivors of sexual violence be their own advocates or find professionals to meet their needs. Most college students do not report sexual violence, and campuses must create supportive environments

Rutgers Focuses on Education and Prevention

At Rutgers University, SCREAM (Students Challenging Realities and Educating Against Myths) Theater, a peer interactive improvisational theater group, has been addressing campus issues since 1991. In 1992, that concept was expanded to include SCREAM Athletes, a group of student athletes committed to engaging other student athletes in addressing issues connected to interpersonal violence with a focus on the unique challenges that student athletes face. Together, these peer theater groups perform some 70 times each year at Rutgers, area high schools, other universities, and local and national conferences. They tackle a broad range of issues, including sexual violence, relationship violence, harassment, bullying, and stalking.

With a focus on prevention since its inception, SCREAM has incorporated bystander intervention into all programs, which have been cited in the White House fact sheet on *Bystander-Focused Prevention of Sexual Assault*. SCREAM athletes have created a video called "Taking the Lead: SCREAM Athletes Step Up to Prevent Sexual Violence" that is available to campuses across the country. This programming is but one piece of a comprehensive approach to sexual violence prevention that touches diverse students in many ways at Rutgers.

In 2010, the Rutgers Center on Violence Against Women and Children in collaboration with the Rutgers Office for Violence Prevention and Victim Assistance (VPVA) received a grant from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) to study the effectiveness of an innovative, peer-education model that delivered multi-dose primary sexual violence prevention to incoming college students. That initial program, providing up to four individual education sessions to a random sample of first-year students, has expanded to include five to seven sessions. The piloting of this survey is a collaborative effort between the VPVA, The Rutgers Center on Violence Against Women and Children, and the Rutgers Title IX Office.

The five-session or dose program is now taught as an academic class for graduate students in the College Student Affairs Master of Education program. The seven-dose program is provided to groups of leaders in fraternities and sororities and to student athletes. A condensed dose program is used as training for various student groups, student affairs staff, and other campus groups. The flexibility of session offerings allows Rutgers staff to meet the needs of diverse groups.

Perhaps the most important question the CDC grant is designed to answer is whether multi-session educational programs yield a significant difference in attitudinal and behavioral outcomes in the prevention of sexual violence. Thus far, analysis of the short-term results indicates that while all students improved on bystander outcomes, those receiving more programming sessions reported better behavioral outcomes.

and cultures that encourage students to report without fear. No longer can we say, as one dean at a college told a survivor, "You don't want to report this. If you do, everyone will know."

➤ **Prevention is the best medicine.** Just as important as supporting survivors, institutions must provide evidence-based prevention programs that resonate with students and are primarily based in peer education. These programs must continue throughout the year to help students understand their responsibility in preventing sexual violence and to engage them in preventive practices.

➤ **Provide faculty and staff training.** Talking about issues of violence can be uncomfortable, and it is important to provide training and education to staff and faculty members to raise their comfort level. Most people want to do the right thing, but may need guidance on responding to survivors, accessing available resources, or making a referral. Include such guidance in those areas in an annual training plan.

➤ **Senior leaders play a role.** In a rape culture, an atmosphere exists in which issues such as sexual violence and the subjugation of women are normalized. What is the culture of your campus? Do senior administrators speak out about interpersonal violence? Students expect such pronouncements from women's center staff members and anti-violence advocates, but campus administrators must speak with a loud and clear voice about acceptable and unacceptable campus behaviors.

➤ **Avoid "one-size-fits-all" programming and services.** Effective programming and service offerings must take cultural differences into account. Survivors of sexual violence, who may also be members of diverse identity groups, could have unique issues to deal with along with the trauma of the assault. The most effective programming is progressive, is based on primary prevention principles and solid evidence, includes multiple components, and teaches participants specific skills to help prevent violence.

AT THE FOREFRONT OF CULTURE CHANGE

Programs on and public discussion of sexual violence prevention and institutional commitment to this issue are relatively new phenomena at many colleges and universities and were unheard of many years ago when I was an undergraduate. When several students were abducted and raped decades ago at my undergraduate institution, my colleagues in residence life and I garnered the support of the vice president of student affairs and his staff. We started a rape care program on that campus almost 45 years ago that has taught me many lessons that hold true today. Most of my key learnings have come from survivors of sexual assault, long before researchers and the federal government made the prevention of sexual violence a priority issue. Higher education institutions must lead the national charge to prevent the occurrence of sexual violence and to change the culture on campuses nationwide to one of respect and human dignity for all students. **LE**

Ruth Anne Koenick is director of the Office for Violence Prevention and Victim Assistance (VPVA) at Rutgers University, which will be piloting a climate survey later this year. The piloting of this survey is a collaborative effort between the VPVA, the Rutgers Center on Violence Against Women and Children and the Rutgers Title IX Office.

Mentors in Violence Prevention: Educating Students and Administrators

BY JEFF O'BRIEN

Mentors in Violence Prevention (MVP), a national program to prevent gender violence, bullying, and gay-bashing, was the first large-scale initiative to apply the bystander approach to issues of sexual and domestic violence. MVP has been utilized by more than 150 college campuses and 100 high schools nationally, all branches of the military, and educational institutions globally. MVP frames gender violence prevention as a leadership responsibility for administrators and students in educational institutions and others.

MVP uses a social justice model and regards all individuals as potentially empowered bystanders, who are often in positions to challenge abusive or violent behavior. In addition, MVP focuses on the continuum of behaviors that can lead to physical abuse. The heart of the MVP model is interactive discussion, in single-sex and mixed-gender workshops, using real-life scenarios that speak to the experiences of young men and women in college, high school, and other areas of social life.

One of the most successful training options is Train the Trainer, which is organized into two phases. Phase I introduces MVP's educational philosophy and training through educational units on leadership, battering, sexual assault/rape, gender roles, sexual harassment, and homophobia/heterosexism. Each educational unit is highly interactive and involves a variety of educational approaches—large group, small group, single gender breakouts, media examples, and discussion-based. At the end of each unit, participants reflect on the purpose of the unit, the utility of the activities, and discussion-starting questions.

Phase II trains the participants to be trainers. "Facilitation 101" begins this process and engages the group about the characteristics of a good facilitator. Group members also learn about dialogue, group dynamics, learning styles, and preparation. Each participant leads a segment of the curriculum and receives feedback during this phase of training. Lastly, participants engage in implementation strategy sessions, which allow for brainstorming with fellow participants and MVP trainers about ways to incorporate MVP into their respective organizations.

Jeff O'Brien is director of MVP National (www.mvpnglobal.org), presented in partnership with Northeastern University's Center for the Study of Sport in Society (www.sportinsociety.org) and the National Consortium for Academics and Sports (www.ncasports.org).

Communication and Consent Educator Program

BY MELANIE BOYD

Yale College's Communication and Consent Educator (CCE) program began as a classroom assignment. Year after year, students in my "Theorizing Sexual Violence" class wrote papers about problems with sexual violence prevention campaigns they encountered. The problems included safety tips that still presume that strangers are the real danger; consent trainings that reinforce the myth of miscommunication, placing blame on victims and strengthening predators' hands; male allies programs that exalt masculine power and normalize female helplessness; heterosexist materials that erase the experiences of queer students, male survivors, and female aggressors; and bystander campaigns that play into racist and classist stereotypes of criminality. The students were correct, but writing the paper was too easy. So I abandoned the traditional paper format and challenged them instead to design, execute, and analyze their own programs.

Students drew on research, theory, and their own rich experiences of campus culture for the assignment. They pinpointed specific structures, dynamics, and moments that gave rise to sexual pressure or disrespect, and they identified opportunities where those patterns could be broken. Very often, they targeted the normative sexual and social patterns that provide effective camouflage for sexual aggression.

STUDENT PROJECTS PROVIDE INSPIRATION

The CCE program emerged from the inspiration of these student projects. Today, Yale College has 48 student educators tasked with ending sexual violence by creating a more positive sexual culture. The students are hired from every corner of campus: activists, artists, athletes, musicians, college council leaders, international students, debaters, feminists, fraternity and sorority members, queer students, and members of faith communities. Following 10 days of intensive training, the CCEs begin their work with freshman orientation, leading small interactive workshops that illustrate basic human competence in recognizing consent. By exposing the manipulative tactics that sometimes pass as "miscommunication," the workshop builds community disdain for sexual pressure. Noting that "consent is a very low bar," the workshop ends with the freshmen talking expansively about the possibilities that open up in the absence of pressure.

In the week following freshman orientation, the CCEs run bystander intervention workshops with the entire sophomore class, welcoming them to their new status with new expectations. The power of positive community is reinforced, helping students work together to tackle everything from sexist classroom remarks to abusive relationships to uncomfortable moments at parties. The workshop emphasizes low-key interventions that don't assume criminality or ill-intent: The goal is to get students intervening as early and as often as possible, which is much more feasible with low stakes and low thresholds for intervening.

By mid-September, the CCEs move on to more tailored work. As they look at campus culture with their newly sharp eyes, they spot problems to address and positive shifts to nurture, orchestrating a myriad of interventions at the community and environmental level. By working within their own campus communities, they maximize comprehension, minimize resistance, and create enormous change. They write blog posts, host panels, and

create poster installations to infuse new ideas into campus discourse. They also work behind the scenes to transform events and practices to create safer, more respectful dynamics. Rigorously conceptualized, the CCE projects are always strategic, finding just the right threads to pull on as they alter the fabric of campus life.

"Today, Yale College has 48 student educators tasked with ending sexual violence by creating a more positive sexual culture."

It does seem to be working. While Yale College is still trying to develop appropriate quantitative measures, students widely agree that the sexual climate is changing, and they are increasingly skilled at articulating and enacting ideals and more likely to intervene in situations that fall short. There is less tolerance for misconduct and more support for survivors—and for many students, increasing confidence that respect and mutuality can become the new norm. *For more information, visit www.yale.edu/cce.*

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