

**VIOLENCE AGAINST WOMEN COMMITTEE
ANNUAL REPORT
2004-2005**

Abbreviated Report

Members of the Violence Against Women Committee

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Key Findings

Progress:

- Since the 2000 report, an evidenced-based By-stander Intervention Curriculum has been developed and successfully evaluated with 389 undergraduates representing all the colleges and piloted with a number of other groups on campus.
- There has been a significant increase in both active and passive programming to first-year students with nearly every incoming student receiving at least one introduction to SHARPP and its services within the first week of the fall semester.
- SHARPP's ongoing "Got Consent" campaign aims to increase both male and female students' basic familiarity with the concept of consent in relationship to sexual contact.
- Mandatory programs on sexual assault have been implemented for members of the Greek community and high risk populations highlighted in the 2000 study.
- In 2003 the UNH Police Department received a significant grant to address violence against women on campus and has begun implementing programs and enhancing their internal capacity through semi-annual trainings.
- UNH Police patrol levels have also been increased during high risks times.
- The President Ann Weaver Hart has publicly expressed her commitment to the issues through ongoing statements to the UNH community and through her commitment to fund the 2005/6 Unwanted Sexual Experience Study.

Areas of Continued Need:

- The Bystander Intervention curriculum is available to a limited number of target audiences due to the fact that all trainings have been provided through the UNH Police VAW Grant.
- SHARPP lacks both the capacity and the status within the community to provide the level of programming necessary to effectively permeate the campus culture.
- There has been limited campus-wide effort to foster linkage between areas of educational programming.
- While important progress has been made toward the development and implementation of educational programs for fraternity men and male athletes, additional efforts are needed to reach men who are least likely to attend SHARPP programming.
- Prevention efforts need focus on men who are most likely to assault, therefore considered high risk populations.
- There have been limited formal studies to better understand the meaning of consent, consequences for unwanted sexual experiences, and the role of protective factors for victims such as supportive disclosure reactions.
- In order to ensure that the recommendations from the 2000 study are implemented, it is necessary that the University make a long-term institutional commitment to both coordinate and monitor programs and services addressing climate and violence against women on campus.
- Education and awareness are needed to address the aspects of the campus climate that support negative attitudes about women and contribute to VAW.

- VAW members encountered considerable confusion among students, staff and faculty about the connection between student rights and responsibilities and various electronic communication forms on campus. (email, Instant Messenger, online websites and “blogs,” etc.).
- VAW committee members remain concerned about issues of community expectations, clear oversight and accountability, and ultimate responsibility for the content and quality of publications such as THE NEW HAMPSHIRE and Main Street.
- Students, faculty and staff representatives on the VAW committee report a general lack of awareness regarding both UNH and New Hampshire resources and reporting requirements in relationship to violence against women.

Key Recommendations

- Create a position within the administration whose sole role is to monitor recommendations and policies aimed at addressing the full spectrum of VAW on campus.
- Create a Women's Center to foster awareness and alternative social opportunities;
- Expansion of VAW-related course offerings: Discovery courses, Social Justice and Education issues, etc.
- Develop and enforce clear, consistent and well publicized standards on public discourse reflecting pro-social, respectful interaction;
- Encourage/sponsor VAW and President's Commissions organization of listening circles, student led dialoging, open debates w/multiple views, and invited speakers/forums with experts on various related issues;
- Identify and work with various UNH departments, offices and programs to host and participate in related events (Examples: Journalism, POLT, Nursing, Athletics dept, Engl 401, various college deans, etc.);
- Develop clear guidelines on acceptable advertisement standards for all University vendors.
- Develop an overt, clear statement in university policy regarding accountability and responsibility in student press with clearly defined consequences for unacceptable publications and behaviors;
- Create effective system that protects privacy while allowing accessibility to necessary information;
- Launch (and fund) on-going “report it” campaigns to encourage all students to use the VAW-related resources available to them;
- Develop and publicize consistent administrative policies and procedures on responding to issues of verbal and cyber harassment;
- Continue to refine and publicize Clery Act reporting and notification system within federal guidelines.
- Develop and endorse a campus-wide consensual relationship policy
- Regular review of existing assessments and studies on VAW;

2004-2005 Violence Against Women committee Report

In November, 2004, members of the University of New Hampshire's student body, faculty, community and staff were asked by President Ann Weaver Hart to serve on a newly recreated Violence Against Women (VAW) Committee of the President's Commission on the Status on Women (PCSW). The committee was formed in response to concerns "over the stark and unacceptable problem of violence against women at UNH, in the community, and in the boarder culture." Thirteen individuals were selected from a pool of candidates nominated by their peers to serve two-year terms. The committee is jointly co-chaired by a student, faculty member and staff member.

At its formation, the VAW Committee was charged with the following tasks:

- Develop and implementation plan for the key recommendations of the 2000 report on unwanted sexual experiences ;
- work with SHARPP, the Women's Commission, the Affirmative Action office, the UNH Police Department, and others to evaluate the range of strategies in place at UNH and to make recommendations to strengthen our efforts;
- develop communication strategies for involving students, faculty and staff in this effort; and
- monitor the University's progress in addressing these issues and provide reports and recommendations to the President's office about institutional policy and practice through the chair of the PCSW.

To fulfill our charge, members of the committee met on a bi-monthly basis beginning in January, 2005. The group began its work by gathering information about the current climate on campus in relationship to violence against women. This was accomplished by soliciting information about any current or former programs, classes or activities on the UNH campus that support or relate to the 5 recommendations from the 2000 study on Unwanted Sexual Experiences on Campus from all areas of our community. A limited number of departments and offices responded to this request¹. Because of the limited response to our inquiry, it is difficult to assess the actual status of efforts and programs on campus. Information was received through email correspondence, committee member input and by presentations from invited guests. The committee also reviewed and discussed current issues and events as they unfolded over the course of the semester. Utilizing the information gathered, this report provides an overview of the University's progress since the 2000 report. The report also summarizes the current climate on campus and offers preliminary recommendations for improvement.

An e-mail request for information was sent on February 1, 2005 to over 35 programs/departments and the Deans and Directors' e-mail list. Four academic units (Thompson School, and the Psychology, Sociology, and Natural Resource Departments) and seven programs/offices (Athletics, First Year Programs, ROTC, Greek Life, Residential Life, UNH Police Department and SHARPP) responded with information regarding the status of their efforts to reduce VAW on campus.

CONCLUSION

Considerable work has been done on the issues surrounding Violence Against Women on Campus. SHARPP, since its creation in 1988 as one of the first peer-led college-based sexual assault programs, has served as a model for college and university programs throughout the United States. SHARPP's ongoing programs, such as the nationally recognized "got consent" campaign, coupled with university faculty's development and piloting of the evidence-based Bystander Intervention Program and the administration's expressed ongoing support for and recognition of the critical need to address violence against women on campus all indicate that many individuals within the University of New Hampshire community are committed to addressing issues of violence against women in a thoughtful and committed way.

Despite these efforts and the reinstatement of the VAW committee, VAWC members report a growing expressed sense that administrative support aimed specifically at addressing VAW on campus is weakening. While SHARPP has recently benefited from a new location and the creation of a new staff position to address intimate partner violence prevention, other administrative actions suggest a lessening of support for the issues. Specifically, the elimination of the Coordinator of the Commissions staff position and the downsizing of the Commissions' office from Batcheller House to the basement of T-hall can be seen as a diminishment of both VAW resources and the overall importance of the issue. The lack of a clear commitment to offer the Women's Studies *Violence Against Women* class on a regular basis and a perceived expectation that the vast majority of VAW work is relegated to SHARPP and volunteer committee members also contribute to this perception.

Throughout this report and highlighted in the "Key Findings" the committee has identified "action items" (bulleted points) that, with institution-wide support, will create a safe and welcoming environment for all. To expedite this process and to reach these goals, the committee recommends the creation of a position within the administration whose sole role is to create and monitor recommendations and policies aimed at addressing the full spectrum of VAW on campus. The need for this position can be demonstrated by the lack of accountability to or enforcement of the recommendations of previous reports (1988 or 2000 Unwanted Sexual Experience Studies, the 1993-4 Assessment of the Campus Climate for Women, the 1999 Office of Civil Rights Compliance Review on Sexual Harassment or the 2001 Violence Against Women Committee Strategic Plan). Each document offered concrete recommendations to improve the climate for women at UNH. To date, none of these reports has been comprehensively addressed and integrated into the larger university Strategic Plan. A VAW administrator would take on the responsibility of acting on the findings of these reports and translating them into university-wide practice and programs. Such a proactive step of assigning responsibility for the coordination of all efforts aimed at ending VAW would be the most effective means of insuring a responsive and ongoing commitment to ending violence against women on campus.