

Law Enforcement Subcommittee

Recommendation Topic:

Law Enforcement and Prevention of Sexual Assault on Campus

Recommendation:

Much attention has been placed on campus sexual assaults, especially with regards to how such violent acts are handled by the disparate entities involved in the various processes. This emphasis is well founded; the reporting mechanisms for campus sexual assault are complex, challenging and ultimately overwhelming and confusing for survivors. While Law Enforcement plays an obvious role in the criminal justice process, it is equally important that law enforcement agencies be recognized as partners in sexual assault prevention.

Need:

How much effort is expended on preventing sexual violence on campus? Who is sending the prevention message? Is it coming from many sources, or one? Are the messages consistent? How is the prevention message delivered? These are but a few questions considered by the Law Enforcement Subcommittee and although we heard from various local and campus police agencies, it was abundantly clear that prevention is not delivered in a unified front. The police agencies had some very unique, creative and impressive approaches, but their prevention methodology was singular to their discipline. These silos of prevention methodologies lack synergy. If we are to truly affect campus sexual violence, stakeholder groups must unite their forces to achieve a multiplicative outcome. This can be achieved through existing violence prevention committees created pursuant to §23-9.2:10. The Law Enforcement Subcommittee recommends violence prevention committees consider the following best practices:

- The prevention message must be consistent and multi-faceted. A singular approach will be ineffective.
- Law enforcement must be a part of the prevention education efforts.
- Prevention should be one of the goals of the Sexual Assault Response Team (SART).
- Prevention education efforts must be ongoing throughout the student's college education, not just during freshman orientation.
- Prevention education should take many different forms and target different populations/groups:

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- Lecture/discussion
 - Print
 - Social media
 - Sports teams
 - Fraternities
 - Sororities
- Prevention programs must address the prevalence of alcohol consumption in allegations of campus sexual assaults. Both binge drinking and underage consumption of alcohol are prevalent on college campuses. Law enforcement has a role to play in efforts to prevent binge drinking and underage drinking. Law enforcement should work with campus officials and student organizations in efforts to prevent binge drinking and underage drinking, with a goal of enhancing student safety.
 - Policies and practices regarding alcohol consumption on college campuses vary. The Law Enforcement Subcommittee met with the Chiefs of Police for Virginia Tech and for Blacksburg, who have been integral to efforts to create a culture of campus safety called, “No Hokie Left Behind.”
 - In Virginia the subcommittee has learned that local/campus police have implemented creative and unique prevention programs. Can these programs work at other campuses? The campus police/local police need a forum/conference to discuss campus sexual assault/prevention efforts and what is working. Successes should be shared, duplicated or adapted if applicable. (i.e. Blacksburg Police Department detailed the partnership they have with each fraternity. This “Adopt a Cop” program includes planning together for large parties to ensure safety of the students.)
 - Campus Alert systems, generally operated by the campus police, can alert students/faculty regarding criminal behavior on campus, but the message may also include ways to stay safe/prevent sexual violence. The message will reinforce ongoing prevention efforts.
 - Memorandums of Understanding (MOUs) and Mutual Aid Agreements (MAAs) between campus/local and state police should contain a prevention component (i.e. the agencies will work together in prevention efforts).

The ultimate goal is for stakeholders to be partners in prevention.

Anticipated Challenges to Implementation of Recommendation:

Some stakeholders or disciplines may argue their role in campus sexual assaults is not “prevention” or the tasks they are asked to perform are inappropriate to their role.

Implementation:

The implementation of this recommendation must initially be addressed by clarifying the roles and duties of violence prevention committees created pursuant to §23-9.2:10 (see suggested law enforcement recommendation #1). Once such an amendment is in place, the specific

recommendations cited above may be better suited for a less formalized approach such as “best practices” or “model policy” form. The less formalized approach permits colleges/universities the ability to tailor their prevention message to their unique challenges.

The Law Enforcement Subcommittee heard from several campus and local law enforcement agencies regarding their unique approaches to curtailing campus sexual assault. Shared successes can sometimes be duplicated. Not only should these law enforcement agencies share their practices, but as each college/university creates their own “unified” approach to preventing sexual violence, they should have an opportunity to discuss what is working and lessons learned. This could be accomplished through an annual one day Campus Sexual Violence Prevention forum hosted by one of the colleges/universities.

This recommendation will likely be supported by victim advocate groups, local and campus law enforcement agencies, student groups, parents, Title IX Coordinators, faculty, state government officials, student health advocates, resident advisors, etc. It will be supported by these groups because they have a sincere interest in preventing sexual violence on their facilities and because it sends a positive message to the students that the entire campus community is concerned about their well being.

Fiscal Impact:

This proposal can be accomplished with existing resources, such as the Title IX Coordinator, members of the faculty, law enforcement representatives, student groups, etc. This will require nothing more than additional time commitments from personnel resources that are already in place. It will not generate revenue and a budget amendment is not necessary.