

SPECIAL REPORT
of the
HEALTH COUNCIL
concerning
CAMPUS VIOLENCE

Presented at the
642nd Regular Meeting of the Faculty Senate
May 16, 2005

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For well over two decades, violence has been identified as a major public health issue, with sexual violence as a major component of the problem.¹ While sexual violence has been acknowledged, there is still significant prevention and intervention work that is required in order to effectively address this critical issue on college campuses.

At the University of Massachusetts Amherst, sexual violence continues to be an issue that threatens the security of the campus community, as well as the academic and mental health of students who experience such violence during their tenure at the University. The UMASS Community Advisory Team for the Prevention of Sexual Violence has been gathering information about rape, sexual assault, and relationship violence on campus since 1987. Offices all over campus – University Health Services, UMASS Police, the Everywoman’s Center, the Dean of Students – use the Sexual Assault and Relationship Violence Anonymous Report Form (SACRF) to report incidences of sexual violence. The results of these reports are collected, collated, and put into an annual report by the UMASS Community Advisory Team.

In the calendar year 2003 (the last year for which data is currently available), there were 70 reported incidents of sexual violence, ranging from forcible rape, to physical assaults perpetrated by a dating partner, to indecent assault and battery. The majority of the reports were for forcible rape and intimate partner assault. The most common location for assault was the residence halls. Although 70 reports may seem like a high number of assaults, the FBI believes that the crimes of sexual assault and rape are the most under-reported of all violent crimes.² Consequently, we can assume that the rates of sexual violence on the UMASS campus are significantly higher than the actual reported incidents. The data collected at UMASS also are consistent with trends at colleges and universities across the nation.

Health concerns related to sexual violence are numerous.³

- 30% of rape survivors contemplate suicide after the rape.
- 82% of rape survivors say the rape permanently changed them.
- The adult pregnancy rate associated with rape is estimated to be 4.7%.
- Non-genital physical injuries occur in approximately 40% of rape cases.
- Rape survivors often experience long-term post-traumatic stress symptoms such as chronic headaches, fatigue, sleep disturbance, and recurrent nausea.
- Rape survivors often experience eating disorders and make suicide attempts after being raped. In addition, after being raped, survivors are 2 ½ times more likely than the average woman to develop a substance abuse problem.
- The transmission rate of sexually transmitted diseases as a result of sexual assault is estimated to be between 3.6% and 30%.

¹ Koop, C.E. (1992). Violence in America: A public health emergency. *Journal of the American Medical Association*, 267, 3075-3076, Prothrow-Stiith, D (1990). The Epidemic of Violence and its impact on the Health Care System. *Henry Ford Hosp. Med J.*, 38 (2&3), 175-177; *Journal of the American Medical Association*, 267, 3071-3072; Shalala, D. (1993). Addressing the Crisis of Violence. *Health Affairs*, 12 (4), 30-33.

² FBI Uniform Crime Reports, http://www.fbi.gov/ucr/cius_03/pdf/03sec2.pdf

³ Fisher, B.S., Cullen, F.T. & Turner, M.G. (December 2000). The Sexual Victimization of College Women. National Institute of Justice. <http://www.ncjrs.org/pdffiles1/nij/182369.pdf>

These statistics do not include the secondary impact on partners, family members, friends, and the campus community. Clearly, rape and sexual assault are important health issues that must be addressed on our college campus.

The Faculty of the University can address the issue of sexual violence on campus by being prepared to receive disclosures of sexual violence and to subsequently support survivors with validation and referrals. In addition, the Faculty Senate can make a commitment to distributing information about sexual violence to its members on an annual basis. Thus, the Health Council of the Faculty Senate, in collaboration with the Community Advisory Team for the Prevention of Sexual Violence is asking the Faculty Senate to approve the following resolution:

MOVED: Whereas sexual assault, rape and relationship violence are critical problems affecting this
52-05 campus, and because these problems have significant acute and long-term health impacts on
 individuals, families, and communities, be it resolved that the Faculty Senate will annually
 distribute the UMASS Amherst Sexual Assault & Relationship Violence yearly data report and
 corresponding resource guide on responding to reports of sexual violence to all academic
 departments, faculty, and teaching assistants, as presented in Sen. Doc. No. 05-046.