

## ABSTRACT

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Public institutions of higher learning are required by The Jeanne Clery Disclosure of Campus Security Policy and Campus Statistics Act 1990 (20 USC § 1092(f)) to provide education on crime prevention to constituents and to maintain and publish accurate statistics on criminality. But while research indicates that upwards of 25% of college-age women will become victims of sexual assault or attempted assault while they are attending American universities, fewer than 15% of those survivors will report their victimization to authorities.

This qualitative study sought to uncover possible factors that affect victim advocates' ability to educate students about and assist students after sexual assaults. A Qualtrics survey was distributed to twelve public co-educational universities located in the Southern seaboard states of Virginia, North Carolina, South Carolina, Georgia, and Florida. These purposively selected schools serve average undergraduate populations of 21,000; have affiliations with victim advocates who assist student survivors of sexual violence; and are recognized as research universities by the Carnegie Classification of Institutions of Higher Education. Three advocates were then interviewed about the following themes that emerged from the survey: external influences, rape myths, federal and state regulations, and university compliance. The names of the universities and of the respondents have been disguised to maintain confidentiality.

The basic principles of feminist standpoint theory—which acknowledges the unique sensibility of marginalized persons to recognize oppressive actions—comprised the overarching philosophy that informed this study. By identifying obstacles encountered by advocates in the performance of their duties, the study may be utilized to develop more effective public and university policies on sexual assault.



VICTIM ADVOCACY IN HIGHER EDUCATION

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by

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# **DEDICATION**

For Boudicca

## ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

“Promise me you'll always remember:  
You're braver than you believe and stronger than you seem and smarter than you think.”  
attributed to A. A. Milne

When I was still a teenager, a young woman close to me was attacked. A man entered her bedroom window in the middle of the night and attempted to rape her. She did everything right: She screamed and fought until he fled, and she immediately phoned the police. Male officers searched her bedroom, noting that her shades were open—it was a balmy October evening after all—and that she was still in her nightclothes. Questions were asked; knowing looks were exchanged. But the ladder propped outside her bathroom window was ignored, and no formal report was filed. A week later, she was asked to take a polygraph examination because hadn't she moved back in with her lover soon after the attack? The police never followed up, and an arrest was never made.

I was powerless to help her.

In my late 20s, I was accepted to a university near my hometown. Frantic because my transferred records had been misplaced—computer-generated enrollment was still but a fantasy—I was overheard by the assistant dean of the College of Arts and Sciences. This gentle sage, Marie Farr, offered me coffee and salvation. She registered me for a full load of classes and asked me a question that would establish my life's path: *Have you ever heard of Women's Studies?* I had not...and we talked for hours. I discovered that she was the director of a then-new interdisciplinary minor, and I was eager to become part of its first cohort. (I would later myself direct the program.) From that moment forward, she has guided me and shown me the tools to educate and assist women. She remains my “femtor,” my touchstone, my friend.

Later that same afternoon as I was wandering the hallways to get my bearings on the unfamiliar campus, I had need of a restroom. Again frantic—this seems to be a recurring theme in my story—the most hauntingly beautiful woman I had ever encountered asked if she could help me. When I told her that I was seeking the women’s room, she pointed the way to the faculty restrooms. “But I’m a student,” I replied. She laughed and said, “*Never* follow the rules.” This gypsy, this faerie woman with her wild black hair and golden bangles—Gay Wilentz—would subsequently open my world to multicultural literature, political activism, and the wonders of women’s “discredited knowledge.” She died in 2006, and I still ache from the loss of her. Recently, a new faculty member saw a painting of her and asked who she was. “She’s my conscience,” I whispered. My journey belongs to her too.

I continue to mold my life with the intellectual clay lent to me by these remarkable feminists. Their gifts I can never repay; I can only pass them on.

After years of teaching, I found myself needing to once again challenge the safe boundaries Life had established for me. Researching victim advocacy seemed a natural choice, as I had long ago devoted my life to fostering social change. And as I worked to complete the requisite coursework in the Educational Leadership program of study, an assemblage of scholars came together—formally and informally—to assist me.

My heartfelt appreciation goes to Donna Kain, Christa Reiser, Tom Shields, Buck Whaley, and Karin Zipf, who have nurtured me along the way—despite my occasional tirades of self-doubt and self-pity—and to Marieke van Willigen, who introduced me to the “rape work” of Patricia Yancey Martin. Vivian Mott and Marilyn Sheerer have provided invaluable feedback and genuine support, and I have been honored to have them on my committee.



Holly Mathews, my methodologist, is a true Woman of Distinction, a deserved moniker bestowed upon her by our shared university. She is a fervent activist who is making a lasting difference in the lives of women throughout the Southeast. I thank her for her wisdom and for her willingness to answer the most inane of questions over lingering lunches and rambling emails.

Heading my committee has been David Siegel, a man whose breadth of knowledge is both astonishing and humbling. He has let me find my own answers—the sign of a remarkable teacher—while first helping me to ask the right questions. His work in social justice has been inspiring; his humor, a much-needed respite from the insanity of research.

Back home, Lorraine Hale Robinson—known in our household as “the Clandestine Clipper” for her early-morning gifts of news articles placed lovingly in our mailbox—has been one of my most ardent supporters. Vegan wine and exotic breads have also found their way to our home, tokens of encouragement and love from this globetrotting scholar. (And I would be remiss not to thank her husband, Johnie, who endured our infinite chatter over long, coffee-fueled breakfasts.)

I cannot begin to express my gratitude to my husband, Sefton Wiggs, who reminded me often of Christopher Robin’s words to Pooh that appear at the beginning of this section. Music and laughter fill our home because of him; and I would not have had the courage to complete this dissertation without his love, his support, and his patience.

Finally, my admiration and thanks go to the advocates who took the time to answer my questions and who work tirelessly every day to make the lives of university students safer.

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## CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION

“There is no difference between being raped and being pushed down a flight of cement steps except that the wounds also bleed inside.”

Marge Piercy

Research indicates that 20% of female students become victims of sexual assault or attempted assault at least once while they are attending American universities (Carey, Durney, Shepardson, & Carey, 2015; White House Council on Women and Girls [WHCW&G], 2014). Other national studies (National Association of Graduate-Professional Schools [NAGPS], 2014; Wolitzky-Taylor, Resnick, Amstadter, McCauley, Ruggiero, & Kilpatrick, 2011) set the percentage of college-age female rape victims closer to 25%.

However, fewer than 15% of sexual assault survivors will report their victimization to authorities, an action that is even less likely if the attacker is an acquaintance (Chen & Ullman, 2010; Paul, Zinzow, McCauley, Kilpatrick, & Resnick, 2013), if alcohol and/or drugs are involved (Clay-Warner & Burt, 2005; Orchowski & Gidycz, 2012), or if the attacker used no physical violence (Littleton, Axsom, Breitkopf, & Berenson, 2006)—trends that have remained consistent since the 1990s. Rather than contact law enforcement officials, survivors instead may disclose sexual assaults to campus agencies, trusted faculty, or female peers (Orchowski & Gidycz, 2012; Richards, Branch, & Hayes, 2013) via off-campus crisis lines (National Institute of Justice ([NIJ], 2010; Paul, Walsh, McCauley, Ruggiero, Resnick, & Kilpatrick, 2013); to professional counselors (Amstadter et al., 2010); or through anonymous surveys (Orchowski, Meyer, & Gidycz, 2009). Indeed, outcries are generally uttered to informal support providers to gain moral support, not to seek practical or legal advice (Fisher, Daigle, Cullen, & Turner, 2003; Orchowski & Gidycz, 2012). Fears of retaliation by the assailant; public disclosure of the attack's details; unsympathetic responses by family, friends, and police; and further victimization by the

court system keep many assault survivors from filing charges against their attackers (Rape, Abuse, and Incest National Network [RAINN], 2009a). And with an estimated 100,000 sexual assaults involving alcohol each year (Campbell, 2011), victims may also be silenced by the fear of underage drinking citations (Gray, 2014). In contrast, women who have been raped by strangers, who have been physically injured, and/or who fear STDs are more likely to contact police (Zinzow, Resnick, Barr, Danielson, & Kilpatrick, 2012).

To increase both the awareness of campus crime and the reporting of offenses, federally subsidized colleges and universities are required by The Jeanne Clery Disclosure of Campus Security Policy and Campus Statistics Act 1990 (20 USC § 1092(f)) to provide education on crime prevention and to maintain and publish statistics on criminality. As a result, national data on campus sexual assaults are a matter of public record through the United States Department of Justice ([USDOJ], 2013); but while existing literature has disclosed a plethora of research conducted on university-sanctioned sexual violence prevention strategies, few studies are available on the often-conflicting directives encountered by the advocates themselves.

### **Statement of the Problem**

Female students are at substantial risk for sexual violence while attending American institutions of higher education. But while upwards of 25% of co-eds will be assaulted before they graduate—a rate five times higher than in the non-college population (Carey, Durney, Shepardson, & Carey, 2015)—fewer than 15% of survivors will report their victimization to authorities (Wolitzky-Taylor, Resnick, Amstadter, McCauley, Ruggiero, & Kilpatrick, 2011).

Additionally—while the Clery Act requires federally subsidized colleges and universities to maintain student-focused crime statistics (USDOE, 2011)—a recent campus climate survey commissioned by the Association of American Universities (Cantor, Fisher, Chibnall, &

Townsend, 2015) indicates that undercounting of rape reports is common; and the Clery Center (2014a) itself estimates that only 37% of universities routinely report statistics accurately as required by law despite the threat of punitive action by the government.

In order to create safer environments on college campuses, stronger communication and more accurate information are needed among the principal actors in higher education administration: victims' advocates, Title IX coordinators, campus police officers, and other Campus Security Authority officials. Currently, universities lack a coordinated, transparent system for victim outcry; and its advocates are often marginalized workers who struggle to balance professional and moral obligations. Student safety is vital to these advocates who value both the education they supply and the reputations they earn.

### **Purpose of the Study**

The purpose of this study was to examine the disparity and commonality of responses revealed by informants to the central question: What factors do university victims' advocates identify as affecting their ability to educate students about and to assist students after sexual assaults?

Emerging themes included community response to the problem of sexual assault and to its prevailing social mythos. Vocal conservatives, for example, question the accuracy of oft-quoted statistics (Boguhn, 2014; Lukianoff, 2014; Will, 2014) and the methodology (Contorno, 2014) behind researchers' data gathering. Other critics decry the notion that sexually assaulted women are blameless in their "victimization" (Hayes, Lorenz, & Bell, 2013; Whisnant, 2013) and that they are in fact being disempowered by feminist propaganda (McElroy, 2001). Paglia (1992, p. 63) even challenges women to accept the risk of sexual assault in order to interact with men:

Stay home and do your nails if that's the kind of person you are. My Sixties attitude is, yes, go for it, take the risk, take the challenge—if you get raped, if you get beat up in a dark alley in a street, it's okay. That was part of the risk of freedom; that's part of what we've demanded as women. Go with it. Pick yourself up, dust yourself off, and go on.

We cannot regulate male sexuality. The uncontrollable aspect of male sexuality is part of what makes sex interesting. And yes, it can lead to rape in some instances.

So while partnerships with CSA officials as well as community police officers, mental health counselors, medical personnel, and crisis center workers are positive factors in the educating and assisting of students before and after a crisis, such prevailing social myths—often perpetuated by conservative and neoliberal critics—that blame sexual assault survivors for their own victimization continues to plague the work of the advocate so that "many women fail to view their experiences as rape even when what occurred to them legally qualifies that way" (Martin, 2005, p. 5).

Additional factors included each advocate's perception of her university's adherence to federal and state laws as well as its level of support for victim advocacy (Clery Center, 2014a; Kingkade, 2014c). The organization hierarchy of each studied program—that is, where an advocate's office is physically located, how many persons are employed in the office, and to whom those agents report—combined with the budget allotted that program to suggest university administrators' prioritization of and commitment to student safety.

The ultimate goal of my research was to propose ways in which advocates—and by extension, universities themselves—might better serve survivors of sexual violence, a historically underreported crime (Kamenetz, 2014; Tjaden & Thoennes, 2006). One of the most immediate and obvious outcomes may be that these students more effectively rejoin the



academic community from which they—via their unwanted sexual encounters—have been marginalized. Longer-term benefits may include greater academic success (a personal gain) coupled with higher graduation rates (an institutional gain) and a better understanding of the needs of victims (a societal gain).

### **Significance of the Study**

While contributing to the body of knowledge concerning campus advocacy, research findings may also provide university agents with previously unexamined data on the issue of sexual violence on campus. By identifying obstacles encountered by advocates in the performance of their duties, the study may be utilized at the university level to develop coherent strategies for streamlining communication among CSA officials. As a result, campus policies and procedures concerning sexual assault may be amended, leading to a more accurate and transparent documentation of this underreported crime with students benefitting from a collaborative system of receiving safety information, reporting sexual assaults, and obtaining vital assistance. Additionally, the results of this study may influence public policy as constituents become more aware of the scope of sexual violence on campus; for institutions of higher learning are not closed communities and “have considerable influence on the character of a society's overall culture” (Parsons & Platt, 1973).

### **Research Design**

A Qualtrics survey was sent to advocates serving twelve public co-educational universities located in the Southern seaboard states of Virginia, North Carolina, South Carolina, Georgia, and Florida. These purposively selected schools serve average undergraduate populations of 21,000; have affiliations with victim advocates who assist student survivors of sexual violence; and are recognized as research universities by the Carnegie Classification of

Institutions of Higher Education (2015). The response rate was low (33%) despite my having distributed the survey twice, each with a time limit of two weeks. But to have expanded the survey for the sake of a higher response rate may have compromised the results. For example, disregarding the Carnegie classification or including outlier schools with populations significantly higher or lower than 21,000 may have skewed data on the availability of funding for advocacy programs.

After the data were examined, I selected three universities—furtively referred to here as Arkin, Griffith, and Piaster—whose mission statements emphasize service but whose organizational models are in contrast. Primary information was collected for each office via its official Website and social media presence, including Clery reports for the previous three years, before interviews were arranged with each university's primary advocate.

The beginning of each interview focused on the history of the physical office itself; its organizational home within the university; its staffing by employees, volunteers, and interns; and its availability of internal and external funding. Next, partnerships with community crisis programs, LGBT centers, specially trained counselors and safety officers, and Title IX administrators were discussed. Open-ended questions were directed toward ascertaining the campus rape climate itself.

Background data shared by the respondents also included organization hierarchies, program histories, budgetary estimates, and community partnerships. Together, these variables aided in the exploration of how advocates adapt their missions in response to external cues. A personal coding system was created, and drafts of respective sections were sent to appropriate informants for validation of factual information. Analytic generalizations were sought using case study procedures recommended by Yin (2009).

## **De/limitations of the Study**

This study focused on advocates who serve their respective universities—directly or indirectly—by assisting female students who are survivors of sexual violence. However, most of these professionals also assist faculty, staff, and students who have been victims of a variety of crimes. And although an online survey was sent to advocates serving twelve public co-educational universities located in the Southern seaboard states, formal interviews were delimited to the experiences and perspectives of primary advocates at three of these institutions. The homogeneous sampling of predominantly white universities between 2013-2015 helped me to juxtapose comparable actors in three divergent organizational hierarchies.

Further research is necessary to determine whether my findings reflect the experiences of advocates in other regions and/or university classifications or whether student variables such as race, socio-economic background, and/or gender identification affect crime-reporting rates.

The sensitive nature of the topic potentially limited the richness of collected data, as I had no long-term relationships with the respondents. Likewise, the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA) and the Health Insurance Portability and Accountability Act of 1996 (HIPAA)—federal laws protecting the privacy of student records—may have prevented participants from revealing the full breadth of experiential data. Therefore, mutual trust may have been an issue. Other considerations included the dearth of scholarly research focusing on victim advocacy in higher education and the interviewing of only one agent at each institution.

## **Conceptual and Theoretical Framework**

To better understand the often-conflicting roles of university advocates, I sought out the storied experiences behind the statistics; for "without some process of understanding what they mean, the facts are merely a data set" (Rossiter & Clark, 2007, p. 13). These narrative inquiries

provided context and the opportunity for interpretation, offering voice and validity to historically marginalized personal and communal experiences in what Martin (2005) calls "rape work."

A conceptual framework based on Weick's (1995) theory of sensemaking was utilized initially to create a semi-structured interview protocol and subsequently to organize data on factors affecting university victims' advocates. An interminable social activity, sensemaking allows for self-definition and self-analysis by each agent. This structural tool—presented by Weick as "properties of sensemaking"—assisted my understanding of respondents' perceived roles on their respective campuses and of how each advocate interprets and manages unstable variables such as conflicting obligations, societal attitudes, and evolving laws. I established foundational questions from which I then intentionally deviated to determine—if possible—the credibility of their stories.

Advocates' shared experiences—albeit at different universities—provided insights in to the complex conditions under which these professionals must operate or "make sense" of their multiple obligations. For example: If an advocate were to have defined her role in response to cues discouraging the public display of ephemera on rape prevention, she may have focused the bulk of her attention instead on sexual assault victims. Conversely, a belief that administrators desire to publicly minimize the scope of campus sexual violence may have led an advocate to re-define her role as "educator," potentially allowing her office to be co-opted by external forces in order to mirror a collective identity that markets safety to current and potential constituencies.

The basic principles of feminist standpoint theory—which acknowledges the unique sensibility of marginalized persons to recognize oppressive actions—comprised the overarching philosophy that informed this study: Knowledge is socially situated and members of low-status groups within masculine-dominated organizations such as public universities are uniquely

qualified to identify their own needs and to question the priorities of their superiors (Bowell, n.d.). Therefore, research on gendered power structures must begin with a study of marginalized workers such as victims' advocates who hold little standing in their universities' largely androcentric hierarchies.

Specifically, the organization-focused "rape work" of standpoint feminist Martin (2005) established the foundation from which I set out to discover whether advocates believe their universities make prevention of and education about sexual assault their priorities.

### **Operational Definitions**

In the late 1920s, the Federal Bureau of Investigation (2012) defined rape as “the carnal knowledge of a female, forcibly and against her will,” a classification that originally included only forcible male penile penetration of a female vagina. But *Brown v. State* (1906) had codified the standard of proof over two decades earlier: “There must be the utmost resistance by the woman by all means within her power.”

But following a 1992 Supreme Court decision—*State of NJ in Interest of M.T.S* (1992)—alleged rape victims no longer needed to present evidence of “unusual or extra force” or threats; and the ruling established physical force as being any amount of or perception of coercion against another person in the absence of what a “responsible person would believe to be affirmative and freely-given permission to the act of sexual penetration.” Gone too was the antiquated language that required penile penetration, the Court establishing that any forced sexual act constituted sexual assault. Finally, the opinion contained gender-neutral language, recognizing that men can also be victims of rape.

The FBI’s *Uniform Crime Reporting Handbook* (USDOE, 2013)—which began publication in 1930—specifically disregarded sexual violence perpetrated against men,

classifying these crimes as assaults or other categories of sexual offenses until the official definition of rape was revised in 2012 (USDOJ, 2012). According to a Bureau of Justice Statistics study (Planty, Langton, Krebs, Berzofsky, & Smiley-McDonald, 2013, p. 2):

[Rape includes] forced sexual intercourse including both psychological coercion as well as physical force. Forced sexual intercourse means penetration by the offender(s).

Includes attempted rapes, male as well as female victims, and both heterosexual and homosexual rape. Attempted rape includes verbal threats of rape.

National statistics began to be gathered under this new designation in 2013 (Johnson, 2013), and supporters of the change anticipate that data will be more accurate and will result in increased funding for anti-sexual-violence campaigns (O'Reilly, 2012; Sheppard, 2012). The U.S. Department of Education (2014) sets specific geographic locations on and off campus for which these data must be gathered and reported. "On campus" locations include buildings and properties utilized by students and real estate—including residence halls—that are owned by or are of benefit to the university regardless of whether an outside actor manages them. "Non-campus" buildings and properties may be controlled by university-recognized student organizations but which may not necessarily be located immediately adjacent to the institution. Finally, "public property" is defined as "a contiguous geographic area of the institution...[that] is adjacent to a facility owned or controlled by the institution if the facility is used by the institution [for] educational purposes."

For simplification purposes, I have used the generic term "sexual assault" to include all forms of unwanted sexual activity: forcible and incapacitated date, acquaintance, and stranger rape; forced fellatio, cunnilingus, and/or anal penetration without vaginal intercourse; and attempted rape against both genders. This definition is in line with both FBI (USDOJ, 2013) and

Campus Security Act (Cornell, 2010) standards:

[Sexual assault includes a] wide range of victimizations, separate from rape or attempted rape. These crimes include attacks or attempted attacks generally involving unwanted sexual contact between victim and offender. Sexual assaults may or may not involve force and include such things as grabbing or fondling. It also includes verbal threats.

Additionally, the general term “sexual harassment” was used to encompass a pattern of phone calls, text messages, social network postings, stalking, and other forms of unwanted personal contact—in short, any undesired verbal or physical contact of a sexual nature (Farlax, 2010). This definition also reflects the FBI’s updated standards (USDOJ, 2012).

"Victim" and "survivor" were used interchangeably in this dissertation to avoid repetitive sentence construction, but I must acknowledge the terms' connotative differences often debated in feminist circles. Kelly (1988, p. 163), for example, notes, "[The word] 'victim' refers to someone who has been killed or destroyed or who has suffered a loss...[ignoring] the active and positive ways in which women resist, cope, and survive." In contrast, says Akhila (2014), "[the term] 'survivor' displays the individual's resistance...[and] implies ingenuity, resourcefulness, and inner strength." I, however, see the validating power of both words: The former "recognizes the enormity of the system...and its brutalizing potential" while the latter "celebrates the individual" (Gupta, 2014).

“Outcry” is used to denote a victim’s confiding of an assault to a confidant even if that survivor chooses not to initially report the crime to authorities. According to *People v. McDaniel* (1993), "evidence that a victim of sexual assault promptly complained about the incident is admissible to corroborate the allegation that an assault took place."

Finally, while “advocate” may be defined as “one that pleads the cause of another before a tribunal or judicial court,” the term was used here in its vernacular sense, as “one that supports or promotes the interests of another” (“Advocate,” 2014); for by law, university victims’ advocates—whether they are employed directly or indirectly by the State—cannot impart legal advice (American Bar Association [ABA], 2012). Their role is a supporting one; and they are restricted to disseminating only authorized information to survivors and their families, according to best practices established by the National Organization for Victim Assistance (as cited in Ohio Department of Safety, 2010). Advocates are generally defined as “confidential” employees, not “anonymous” agents, and thus

[while maintaining] a victim’s confidentiality *vis-à-vis* the College, they may have reporting or other obligations under state law...If the College determines that the alleged perpetrator(s) pose a serious and immediate threat to the College community...[advocates] may be called upon to issue a timely warning to the community. Any such warning should not include any information that identifies the victim. (White House Task Force, 2014, p. 3)

### **Organization of the Study**

Chapter 1 has provided a brief overview of this study.

Chapter 2 presents a review of literature that begins with a comprehensive description of the dissertation's conceptual and theoretical frameworks followed by a historical overview of second-wave feminists' call for campus safety initiatives during the 1970s. Federal legislative responses to this rape-law reform movement, which led directly to the hiring of advocates within higher education, will be put in to context to illustrate the enormity of need for qualified



professionals to help universities comply with relevant laws. Finally, factors that may affect campus advocacy will be discussed.

Chapter 3 details the research design and methodology.

Chapter 4 opens with an analysis of data collected from the Qualtrics survey and segues in to a discussion of three individual case studies. Information in this chapter is then analyzed thematically. The replication logic and its connection to the theoretical base required by external validity also appear in this chapter.

Chapter 5 concludes the dissertation with recommendations for action and a call for further study.

## CHAPTER 2: REVIEW OF LITERATURE

“He knows, or thinks he knows, how much you imagined;  
he knows, or thinks he knows, what you secretly wanted.”

Adrienne Rich

Chapter 2 provides a review of literature relevant to the study of victims' advocacy in higher education, beginning with a discussion of a conceptual framework based on Weick's (1995) theory of sensemaking and a justification for the use of narrative case studies (Hollway & Jefferson, 2000; Rossiter & Clark, 2007). Factors that may affect university advocates' ability to educate students about and to assist students after sexual assaults are explored through the lens of standpoint feminism, echoing Martin's (2005, p. 3) work with institutional/ized "rape workers."

### Conceptual Framework

A conceptual framework based on Weick's (1995) theory of sensemaking was utilized initially to create a semi-structured interview protocol and subsequently to organize data on factors affecting university victims' advocates. Sensemaking allows for self-definition and self-analysis by individual agents as well as an emergent strategy for researchers to create "a map of a shifting world" (Ancona, 2012, p. 3). This structural tool—presented by Weick (1995) as "properties of sensemaking"—assisted my understanding of respondents' perceived roles on their respective campuses and of how each advocate interprets and manages unstable variables such as conflicting obligations, societal attitudes, and evolving laws. The inclusion of background information on the rape-law reform movement as well as a discussion of political rhetoric, rape mythos, and rapidly evolving legislation reflects Weick's call for a comprehensive exploration of external data.

Because sensemaking is a social activity, the sharing of narrative accounts was encouraged, as “[the] basic idea of sensemaking is that reality is an ongoing accomplishment that

emerges from efforts to create order and make retrospective sense of what occurs” (Weick, 1993, p. 635). Additionally, these semi-structured interviews provided unexpected insights, revealing a framework for focused discussion.

Provisional codes pulled from extracted cues were identified. These codes included mandates, responsibilities or priorities, constituency feedback, internal conditions or constraints, illustrative narratives, on- and off-campus relationships, and educational activities. Jargon, setting, and verbal cues were also noted; and categories were added and/or segmented as themes revealed themselves.

### **Theoretical Background**

While positivist paradigms extol the utilization of quantitative statistics, narratives offer context to data sets, giving life to the "voices of the field" (Czarniawska, 1998, p. 17) and experiences behind the numbers and "stay[ing] closer to actual life events than methods that elicit explanations" (Hollway & Jefferson, 2000, p. 32). The narrative model provides "a fundamental structure of human meaning making" (Rossiter & Clark, 2007, p. 13) that is too-often viewed by academics as contrary to the logico-scientific approach inherent in traditional research methodology.

But this dichotomy is a false one: Multiple truths may co-exist (Bruner, 1991) in a fluid continuum with narratives embracing and creating symbolism that helps reveal meaning to shared experiences and static numbers. Narratives help to "create collective identity, to mobilize others, and to promote...understanding" (Schmitt & Martin, 1999, p. 369). Thus, number-focused scientists must not overlook the perspectives and revelations supplied by these emic actors (Hundleby, 1997). No truth may be privileged over another; and indeed, "interviewing can teach us about the human condition" (Weiss, 1994, p. 1).

Acknowledging "the inter-relationship between the subjectivities of both the researcher and her participants in the social construction of knowledge" (Henwood & Pidgeon, 1995, p. 9), I have used standpoint feminist theory as the lens through which I have sought patterns of communal experiences and by which I have analyzed harvested data. Its basic tenets acknowledge the unique sensibility of marginalized persons to recognize oppressive actions, focusing on power hierarchies and holding that knowledge is socially situated.

The process of achieving knowledge begins when standpoints begin to emerge. They emerge when those who are marginalized and relatively invisible from the vantage point of the epistemically privileged become conscious of their social situation with respect to socio-political power and oppression, and begin to find a voice. (Bowell, n.d.)

Grounded in post-Marxism's emphasis on gendered epistemology and influenced by Hegel's master-slave dialectic, standpoint feminism is built on the premise that social institutions are "agents of the patriarchy" (Bird, 2004, p. 53) wherein males hold the majority of power in organizational hierarchies (Henwood & Pidgeon, 1995). This patriarchy, however, encompasses "activities, ideas, beliefs, and values that are *associated* with men, maleness and masculinity" when those concepts "are valued more than those associated with women" (Zalewski, 2003).

Feminist researchers (Acker, 1990, 2012; Moss Kanter, 1977) have defined organizations as fundamentally masculine in their arrangement, creating gendered inequities in salary, status, and promotion through traditional hierarchies that encompass both bureaucracy and patriarchy. The purpose of this study, however, will not be to look at salaries or hiring behaviors, but rather to observe whether advocates believe that their educational institutions are "practicing gender" (Martin, 2006, p. 254) when considering, investigating, and/or prosecuting sexual assaults on women. Acker (1990, p. 146) posits that androcentric organizational models dictate "allowed

behaviors... locations in physical space...[and perceived] power" within institutions. Martin and Powell (1994) further advance that these models echo cultural norms and expectations about gender—assigning priorities accordingly—and, in fact, frames gender itself as a foundational social institution working within other institutions. To "practice" gender (Martin, 2006, 2004), therefore, is to act unreflectively at work, adhering to learned behaviors that reflect traditional roles.

Federal and state laws disallow overt sexism; however, university administrators' non-reflexive behaviors—albeit by definition, inadvertent—may be creating barriers that reinforce injurious stereotypes. These obstacles may include language choices that echo prevailing social myths; in/action that disguises the prevalence of rape on campus; and/or reinterpretation of laws that conceal the crime's existence altogether. Even the official acknowledgement of sexual violence is often camouflaged in a masculine cloak, directing its infantilizing message at women—"girls" in need of rescuing—instead of men who have the capacity for committing this crime. This "paternalistic masculinity" (Martin, 2006, p. 263) may be well intentioned, but it fortifies the androcentric power structure and creates often-conflicting objectives that may not necessarily position the rape survivor's welfare at the forefront of its mission (Martin, 2005).

The inequality of power forces women to occupy different "epistemological terrains" than do their male colleagues (Zalewski, 2003): But "a standpoint...offers more than a different perspective; the lack of privilege has potential advantage for contributing to knowledge" (Hundleby, 1997, p. 27). This is not to imply that women and men innately think in different ways or that universal experiences are shared within each gender. But as traditionally marginalized actors, women occupy positions of "epistemic privilege" (Zalewski, 2003) where being "marginal is also central to patriarchal power" (Hirschmarm, 2008, p. 86). As a result,

they are more involved with the social construction of their own positions and the positions of other people...[and have the] potential to see political relationships more clearly than those who simply rely on them... Focusing on social and political structures can reveal problems and interpretations that are hard to recognize from a central political position. (Hundleby, 1997, p. 28)

True standpoint is not embodied insight; it can only be achieved "through a critical, conscious reflection on the ways in which power structures and resulting social locations influence knowledge production" (Intemann, 2010, p. 786). Knowledge relies on experience, as standpoint's Marxist origins dictate (Hundleby, 1997); but the theory does not seek to discredit scientific empiricism, only to add to society's body of evidence.

Specifically, Martin's (2005, p. 3) research on institutional/ized "rape workers" shows that their choices were—and are—often predicated on "political, economic, and cultural conditions [that] shape their orientations and practices" and involve legal and medical specialists whose jobs require the collection of empirical data. Therefore, victims themselves become socially constructed, viewed through different organizational lenses by various agents with often-conflicting agendas. Victims must even occasionally "prove" their worthiness to crisis workers who possess their own biases and expectations and who hold power over those seeking assistance from them.

[In a socially constructed narrative] is written the defense of the sexual offender: [the victim] was somewhere she should not have been, moving her body in ways that she should not have, carrying on in a manner so free and easy so as to convey an utter abdication of her responsibility of self-protection, that is, of self surveillance. (Cahill, 2000, p. 56)

Founding my research on Schmitt and Martin's (1999) linking of street theory and discursive politics through the use of narratives, I have explored methods utilized by university victims' advocates to identify and to react to possible co-optation—gendered or otherwise—of their program missions. This "street theory," which is distinctly different from the more rigidly cast feminist theory often taught in the academy, is the "fluid and continually evolving body of meanings" that helps individuals navigate the myriad levels of constituency expectations (Mansbridge, 1995, p. 29). And an ongoing discourse among field professionals reciprocally strengthens individuals and organizations (Katzenstein, 1990) through the use of debate and the sharing of successful strategies.

Several parallels are evident between these university advocacy programs and early rape crisis centers: Each entity may be viewed as an "institutionalized social movement" (Schmitt & Martin, 1999, p. 367), an established program that associates with and affects mainstream internal and external constituents in a formalized manner. To varying levels, advocates in each setting may engage these agents within the framework of discursive politics to further the agenda of women's safety, utilizing public resources and interacting with the public for the purpose of sexual assault education--whether or not these advocates identify themselves as "feminist."

[This strategy is] the politics of meaning making. It is discursive in that it seeks to reinterpret, reformulate, rethink, and rewrite the norms and practices of society and the state. It is about cognition...Discursive politics rely heavily but not exclusively on language. Its vehicle is both speech and print--conversations, debate, conferences, essays, stories, newsletters, and books. (Katzenstein, 1990, p. 35)

But unlike early crisis center activists who engaged in the unambiguously named "street theory"—overtly protesting for political change while living near and interacting on multiple

levels with victims—university-employed advocates may seek to "mobilize unobtrusively inside [their] institutions" (Schmitt & Martin, 1999, p. 28), negotiating rather than confronting, educating rather than indoctrinating. Still, the latter may be the exception to the publicly perceived "ivory tower" isolationism.

[For] discursive process is always collective...The "movement" is made up of women [sic] figuring out and telling one another what they think makes sense...We can think of it as "street theory" as opposed to feminist theory *taught* in the academy...Talking and acting creates street theory and gives it meaning. (Mansbridge, 1995, pp. 18-19; emphasis added)

Finally, drawing on Meyerson and Scully's (1995) theory of "tempered radicalism," I sought to determine what—if any—leadership role each advocate plays in her home university to prevent this mission appropriation. Attributes identified as being vital to these "outsiders within" (Meyerson & Scully, 1995, p. 589) include voicing unpopular truths, maintaining strong and varied support networks, focusing on attainable goals (and less on role conflict and ambiguity), and leading by example.

Working in a profession straddling the boundaries between disparate constituencies, each advocate elected to both support and critique her university and her program by carefully adjusting her language, deferring her passion, and / or embracing what Weick (1984) calls "small wins" in order to satisfy higher education's traditional mission of serving the public good; for, indeed,

tempered radicals may be playing parts in movements bigger than themselves and their organizations. In the course of effecting change, they are helping prepare for bigger



changes that more radical outsiders may be better positioned to advance. (Meyerson & Scully, 1995, p. 598)

### **Rape-Law Reform Movement**

In the late 1960s, grassroots campaigns by radical feminists throughout the United States focused on women's safety as a central issue in the fight for gender equality. Viewed through a political lens, rape—even the threat of rape—was defined as a "tool to subordinate women to men" that prevented "women's full participation in the public sphere" (Bumiller, 2008, p. 2).

The call for codified safety initiatives followed via a more widespread rape-law reform movement in the 1970s when student and community activists first publicly demanded that the criminal justice system take reasonable measures to prevent the "foreseeable" crime of rape (Seghetti & Bjelopera, 2012).

Second-wave feminists...articulated the physical and emotional trauma of rape victims and noted the extent to which their trauma was ignored and exacerbated by traditional medical and police practices. (Schmitt & Martin, 1999, p. 1)

In 1971, New York radical feminists held a conference on and public "speak out" against sexual violence, attracting over 300 attendees to what became a watershed event in the anti-rape movement (Bevacqua, 2000). The first government-backed victim assistance programs began the following year, relying on trained volunteers to aid sexual assault and domestic violence survivors with their emotional, mental, and practical needs; and by 1978, federal shield laws prevented prior sexual histories of rape survivors from being used as evidence in court (Anderson, 2002, Bumiller, 2008; National Organization for Women [NOW], 2013). But overall,

the silence was deafening. This issue [of rape] was one that society didn't want to think about, didn't want to hear about. The individual survivors felt incredible isolation.

(Young & Stein, 2004)

Brownmiller's landmark book *Against Our Will* (1975)—which coined the term “date rape” and which defined rape as an act of power, not of sex—would give an early voice to the anti-victimization movement. Brownmiller's controversial research explored the cultural forces that prevent women from reporting and/or prosecuting their rapists, the former having been socialized to remain passive and self-blaming in a patriarchal society dominated by traditionalists.

Men, Brownmiller (1975) argued, have historically been the definers of rape both in American society and in American courts; and female victims have too-often been shamed into silence by the government's archaic and androcentric classification of the crime. Indeed, she concluded, rape has traditionally been viewed by Western society as “nothing more or less than a conscious process of intimidation by which all men keep all women in a state of fear” (Brownmiller, 1975, p. 15), a sentiment that would be echoed by contemporary white feminist critics over the next four decades (Dworkin, 1981; Griffin, 1986; Rich, 1980). Said MacKinnon (2000, p. 1,718):

The liberal state coercively and authoritatively constitutes the social order in the interest of men as a gender through its legitimizing norms, relation to society, and substantive policies.

In one of the nation's first significant studies on “unacknowledged” rape, Koss and Oros (1980) assessed data provided by 3,862 college students at a mid-Western university, using a 12-question Sexual Experiences Survey. Of the 2,016 women who completed the survey, 36.5%

indicated that they had been “moderately” or “highly” victimized since entering college. But in a parallel survey, only 8.7% of men indicated being “moderately” or “highly” sexually aggressive.

A subsequent study (Koss, Gidycz, & Wisniewski, 1987) using a national sample of 6,159 students in 32 universities found the victimization rate for women to be 44%—many assaults of which were not reported to authorities—with 19% of men indicating that they had obtained sex through coercion. The researchers concluded that the victimization rate was upwards of 15% higher than was indicated by the Federal Bureau of Investigation’s annual report.

### **Factors That May Affect Advocacy**

#### **External Influences**

The country's shift toward neoliberal public policy originated under the presidency of Ronald Reagan in the 1980s, and "the call for state responsibility for preventing and treating victims was [viewed as being] in direct contrast to the new ethics of personal responsibility" (Bumiller, 2008, p. 5). The ensuing popular-press attention to sexual violence created a "sex panic," perpetuating the notion that women needed to be protected by the State against "deviant strangers" lurking in the shadows of society (Bumiller, 2008, p. 8). Concurrently, conservative analysts began to publicly criticize oft-quoted rape statistics as inaccurate—yea, hysterical—propaganda created by "hypersensitive, even delusional" women (Will, 2014) to “rename a harmless, albeit confusing and unsatisfactory, sexual experience as date rape” (Mardorossian, 2002, p. 743) despite evidence to the contrary (Black et al., 2011; Wolitzky-Taylor, Resnick, Amstadter, McCauley, Ruggiero, & Kilpatrick, 2011).

Paglia (1991b) decried what she construed as the Western ideology of rape, a culture that views women only as potential victims of lustful, rapacious men. Denying the contention that

advertisers objectify the female body to sell products or that social construction of gender roles perpetuates violence against women, Paglia instead embraced sexual expression in *all* of its forms. Acts of sexual aggression—if they indeed can be defined as such, said this social critic—are not the result of oppressive social constructs but of a natural hierarchy of sexuality, a view that is endorsed by evolutionary psychologists such as Thornhill and Palmer (2000).

Paglia (1991b, p. 276) warned that it is women who should take responsibility for their own actions, for “flirtatious arts of self-concealment mean man's approach must take the form of rape.” Indeed, she indicated that women are excited by this power inequity but that they “will never know the temptation of forcibly invading the sanctity of another body” (Paglia, 1991b, p. 24).

Paglia (1991a) petitioned to remove the discussion of rape from the “disaster of women’s studies” classrooms and to place it in a more philosophical context in order to avoid the hysterical reactionism she sees innate in the former. In an ethics class, she argued, students would learn that rape is a white, middle-class concept condemned by “honorable men” for centuries and that the accompanying rhetoric is not the purview of modern feminists. Instead of focusing on what men have done to women, she contended, “we must look back and acknowledge what men have done for women.”

Marcus (1992) echoed Paglia’s view of rape as being sexually motivated, blaming the tone of the discourse itself for the perpetuation of sexual violence and citing activists’ “apocalyptic tone” (p. 168) as reinforcing a “rape script” (p. 172) that defines women as vulnerable. This mating dance—a brief, non-verbal interaction between the genders in a highly charged sexual situation—may be either embraced or rejected by women, said the critic; and it is up to each woman to determine if an assault is going to occur. Rape, then, becomes “a scripted

interaction in which one person auditions for the role of rapist and strives to maneuver another person into the role of victim... a process of gendering which [women] can attempt to disrupt” (Marcus, 1992, p. 391).

Marcus (1992) envisioned this temporal continuum as an opportunity for a potentially violent situation to be defused, and it is this education that she believed women need: to reject the “self-defeating rules (that) govern polite, empathetic feminine conversation” and that lead to “non-combative responses to rapists” (p. 389).

Roiphe (1993) took these arguments a step further, positing that activists working against rape are actually infantilizing—and thus, disempowering—women by promoting a Victorian view of passive femininity. The statistics on sexual assaults are inflated, she contended, to include micro-aggressions in order to support a false sense of urgency; and what she viewed as feminist propaganda allows women to reinterpret unsatisfying sex as rape. Thus, Roiphe argued, women are being taught to embrace the moniker of victimhood rather than to acknowledge responsibility for their own sexuality. Since young, inexperienced women are naturally anxious about sex, she maintained, it is often easier for them to blame their partners than to admit that they themselves were willing participants. Therefore—continuing her *argumentum ad ignorantiam*—Roiphe concluded that since all claims of sexual violence cannot be substantiated, rape itself does not exist.

Finally, Sommers (1994) defined rape not as a crime of gender bias but as a subset of crime in general, perpetuated by criminals who are the products of a misogynist society. While acknowledging that rapes may occur, she questioned the validity of the statistics, pondering whether a woman who regrets a sexual encounter in which she participated while drinking can truly be labeled a victim of assault or whether an attempted rape should be counted as a crime at

all. Some women, she continued, are merely confused; many do not define their experiences as rape until professionals coerce them into doing so. Therefore, Sommers deduced, because the numbers of actual assaults cannot be accurately determined, campus feminists inflate the statistics in order to maintain government funding and validate their anti-male agenda.

These much-publicized critics have continued their rhetoric into the 21<sup>st</sup> Century, helping to perpetuate a myriad of rape myths—defined by Burt (1980, p. 217) as “prejudicial, stereotyped, or false beliefs about rape, rape victims, and rapists”—that keep women in danger. These conservative ideologies, based on archaic notions of male dominance and female submission, require that there exists the threat of or actual force (Kahan, 2010) utilized by an attacker. “No,” then, may be viewed by the assailant—and often by jurors—as a negotiable “maybe” (Husak & Thomas, 2001) if no “real” threat can be proven. Said Paglia (1992, p. 40), “No' has always been, and always will be, part of the dangerous, alluring courtship ritual of sex and seduction, observable even in the animal kingdom.”

Like her predecessors, MacDonald (2008), a fellow at the conservative think tank Manhattan Institute, denied the existence of a “rape crisis”—believing the numbers of rapes to be exaggerated and the victims, complicit:

College girls drink themselves into near or actual oblivion before and during parties...[freeing themselves] from responsibility...[To hold them] completely without responsibility requires stripping women of volition and moral agency.

## **Rape Myths**

Despite evidence to the contrary (Rape, Abuse, and Incest National Network, [RAINN], 2009), Americans are more likely than not to imagine the dark-figure-in-the-bushes attacker when they envision sexual violence (Gavey, 2005; Whisnant, 2013); and the more an assault

deviates from this expectation, the more the victim is mocked and maligned (Frese & Megías, 2004; Sawyer, Pinciaro, & Jessell, 1998). Likewise, if a woman's pre-assault behavior or reputation has violated society's traditional view of feminine morality—as "evidenced" by her clothing (Moor, 2010), her actions (Chamallas, 2001), and/or her consumption of alcohol (Hayes-Smith & Levett, 2010)—she may be seen as complicit in her own rape (Hayes, Lorenz, & Bell 2013; Whisnant, 2013). This "just world belief" (Lerner, 1980)—a perverted interpretation of karma—is one factor that leads to self-devaluation by the victim (Moor, 2007) and victim blaming by others (Frese, Moya, & Megías, 2004; Hayes, Lorenz, & Bell, 2013). So while the rape laws themselves have evolved since the 1970s, the socially constructed beliefs that *women* must prevent rape and that survivors may be complicit in their own assaults still dominates Western society, echoing the views expressed by a San Quentin warden in the early 20th Century:

Many [women] break the most elementary rules of caution every day. The particularly flagrant violators, those who go to barrooms alone, or accept pickups from strangers, or wear usually tight sweaters or skirts, or make a habit of teasing, become rape bait by actions alone. When it happens, they have nobody to blame but themselves. (qtd. in Cullen-Dupont, 1998, pp. 5-6)

Popular media—from literary classics like *Gone with the Wind* (Xojuje, 2010) to public support of basketball professional Kobe Bryant after his 2003 rape arrest (Murphy, 2004) to Ford's advertising campaign showing women held in bondage (Snively, 2013)—perpetuate the myth that women want to be “persuaded” to engage in intercourse (Emmers-Sommer, Pauley, Hanzal, & Triplett, 2006; Franiuk, Seefelt, & Vandello, 2008)—a collective delusion that transforms forceful rapists in to romantic icons (Gavey, 2005). Consequently, this objectification

of women by Western media has dehumanized rape victims (Franiuk, Seefeldt, Cephess, & Vandello, 2008; Loughnan, Pina, Vasquez, & Puvia, 2013), often making sexual assault survivors reluctant to seek justice in the courts (Deming, Covan, Swan, & Billings, 2013) and influencing verdicts rendered by jurors (Gray, 2006).

Other prevailing misconceptions resist or deny the possibility of acquaintance rape (Frese, Moya, & Megías, 2004; Kahn, 2004; Littleton, 2011); see the concept of rape itself as a misnomer, a mere lack of "communicative sexuality" (Pineau, 1989, p. 239), or as a weapon used by vengeful or remorseful women (Edwards, Turchik, Dardis, Reynolds, & Gidycz, 2011; Wiscombe, 2012); and posit that only deviant men are capable of sexual assault (Lonsway and Fitzgerald, 1994). Indeed, even legislators help perpetuate misinformation: Republican Representative Todd Akin from Missouri, for example, denied that victims of "legitimate rape" are physically capable of being impregnated (Moore, 2012).

And while Suarez and Gadalla's (2010) meta-analysis concerning rape-myth acceptance—involving 37 studies and 11,487 participants—indicates that men are more likely than women to embrace these myths, both genders "benefit" from the collective delusion. Franiuk, Seefeldt, and Vandello (2008) suggest that society holds on to these myths in order to feel safe: If "they" are responsible for their own victimization, then "we" are not vulnerable to rape. Accepting this "just world" vision (Lerner, 1980) allows women to emotionally distance themselves from their violated sisters by behaving within the traditional confines of acceptable womanhood (Lonsway & Fitzgerald 1994).

Ironically, it is this "them-not-me" attitude that may actually put women in more danger by giving those who view themselves as moral a feeling of superiority and by mislabeling sexual



violence when it does occur (Muehlenhard & MacNaughton, 1988; Norris & Cubbins, 1992; Peterson & Muehlenhard, 2004). Notes Chamallas (2001, p. 786):

Many women believe that they can avoid rape...provided they do not 'assume the risk.'

In this way, patriarchal norms about the way women should behave (particularly that women should be passive, modest, and under male protection) are reproduced and reenacted even by those who claim not to embrace the ideology.

Similarly, Lonsway and Fitzgerald (1994) found that by endorsing the notion that only "bad men" commit rape, males might distance themselves from the deviant behavior of their brethren, justifying their own aggressive sexual behavior. This rationalizing attitude is especially true on college campuses where the lines between the "rape script" and the "seduction script" are often blurred (Littleton & Axsom, 2003) due to a range of variables that include the use of alcohol and the miscommunication between acquaintances. Perhaps as a consequence, an estimated 63% of rapists are repeat offenders with an average of 5.8 assaults per perpetrator (Lisak & Miller, 2002).

Burt (1980, p. 217) defined such myths as "prejudicial, stereotyped, or false beliefs about rape, rape victims, and rapists" that create a hostile climate for victims. The social scientist developed the Illinois Rape Myth Acceptance Scale—known as IRMA or RMA—in 1980 as a tool for measuring acceptance of these beliefs. While the results showed no significant differences between the genders on overall rape myth acceptance, the instrument found that men were more likely to adhere to traditional gender roles, to accept interpersonal violence as the norm, to embrace sexual conservatism, and to see sexual relationships as adversarial (Morrow, 2010). And despite criticism that IRMA measures only hostility toward women and not

acceptance of rape myths, the tool remains the standard by which sexual aggression is measured (Peter & Muehlenhard, 2004).

Collectively, these misconceptions may be a factor in the low rate of outcry among rape victims so that even women whose assaults conform to the legal definition of rape may be reluctant to report their attacks (Peterson & Muehlenhard 2004). And ironically, the very pervasiveness of the crime itself may also be keeping victims silent. "Commonness is a cue women used to determine if an incident was rape. If it is a common, normative situation, it must not be rape because rape is uncommon" (Deming, Covan, Swan, & Billings, 2013, p. 482).

Despite criticism, the preponderance of evidence—as well as a wealth of anecdotal evidence—indicates that sexual violence is a major problem on college campuses throughout the country (Cantor, et al., 2015; Johnson, 2006; WHCW&G, 2014). Perpetrators of this crime are most often persons who are familiar with their victims—they travel in the same circles, attend the same parties, and sign up for the same classes. Peterson and Muehlenhard (2004) found, in fact, that victims are often reluctant to report their attacks in order to protect the reputations of their assailant or to not be seen as victims by their peers.

An electronic survey of 6,800 random undergraduate students at two universities revealed that over 80% of reported sexual assaults on both genders involve alcohol and/or other drugs that were ingested by the victims with or without their knowledge or consent (Krebs, Lindquist, Warner, Fisher, & Martin, 2009). Other research indicates that survivors may be reluctant to report their assaults for fear of being penalized or criticized for drinking (Ahrens, 2006; Friedrich, 2013). Some survivors harbor a false sense of complicity in the crime (Mardorossian, 2002; Suarez & Gadalia, 2010); or feelings of shame, fear, or guilt (Abbey, 2002; Wakelin & Long, 2003) for actions real or imagined—what Littleton and Breitkopf (2006, p. 106) call

"maladaptive avoidance coping"—particularly when physical force was present and/or when individuals to whom the victims outcry are emotional. "The sexual revolution has come at a cost," noted Robinson (1978, p. 99), and "permission to be unchaste has not freed women from the object-role we occupied when it was chastity that was the valued commodity."

Campbell-Ruggard and Van Rysuyk (2001) found that only 42% of victims report their assaults to police officers, victims' advocates, or personal confidants. But even when rape survivors do seek assistance, many will experience post-rape trauma as a result of non-supportive responses of police (DuMont, Miller, & Myhr, 2003; Frese & Megías, 2004) and/or friends (Ullman, 1996). As a consequence, an unknown number of assaults—with estimates ranging from 60% (RAINN, 2009b) to 95% (Black et al., 2011)—are never reported to the police. Indeed, Fisher, Cullen, and Turner (2000) estimate that 3% of American college women will experience rape or attempted rape during the average school year—equating to one rape a day on each 6,000-student campus.

Approximately 6% of male college students have also reported being raped while in college (National Institute of Justice [NIJ], 2010); but these statistics are seen by scholars as inherently unreliable as men are even less likely than women to report being victimized because of the added fear of being labeled as homosexual if raped by another man (White, 2006; White & Yamawaki, 2009) or viewed as not capable of being raped by a woman (LeTrent, 2013).

Because only crimes that occur on or adjacent to campus must be reported under The Clery Act, the deflated numbers may give current and future members of the university community a false sense of security. For example, news accounts indicate that the Department of Education recently advised University of Georgia-Athens police to "remove third-party reports" from its 2014 Clery report, adjusting the number of sexual assaults from 71 to 11 because

“reports from outside organizations, or any report with an unknown location, should not be included in the official statistics” (Harris, 2015). According to Loshun, an advocate interviewed for this dissertation, Piaster University’s numbers also do not reflect the

5-10 phone calls and 3-5 visits from students each week throughout the academic year. I think our [real] numbers are staggering, and the sad part is that we don’t have the clear numbers...Let’s face it: college campuses don’t want to report those high numbers because some areas around campus may be more unsafe than other campuses, so I am sure that there is going to be a push not to disclose that information...If [the university] could somehow anonymously have a survey on campus, I think it would just rock us if we knew how many students are victims.

### **Federal and State Regulations**

In response to the growing national call for equality, Title IX of the Education Amendments of 1972 was enacted to prohibit discrimination on the basis of gender in federally funded educational programs and events. But while this civil rights law is perhaps traditionally identified with sports equity, it also legally compels schools to protect students against all forms of gender-based discrimination, violence, and harassment (American Civil Liberties Union [ACLU], 2011; Bolger, 2014). *Alexander et al. v. Yale* (1980) set legal precedence by expanding the scope of Title IX when five female students brought suit against Yale University, claiming that the institution provided no means by which they could report sexual harassment. While the students lost their appeal, they achieved their ultimate objective: Yale—as well as most American universities—created grievance procedures for sexual harassment complaints (Suran, 2014). Approximately 100 universities are currently being investigated by the U.S. Department

of Education's Office for Civil Rights for Title IX violations (California Assembly Committee on Public Safety, 2015; Otani, 2015).

In 2011, a Title IX supporting document—known as the "Dear Colleague Letter"—helped clarify the obligations administrators have in addressing sexual violence and other issues that create hostile campus environments, policies that were re-established in its "Revised Sexual Harassment Guidance" report (Ali, 2011). To be fully compliant, according to the U.S. Department of Education's Office for Civil Rights (2011), schools must provide and make available grievance procedures concerning gender bias, violence, and harassment; must publish a notice of nondiscrimination; and must have a designated Title IX coordinator. Both the accuser and the accused must be afforded the opportunity to call witnesses, present evidence, and appeal the verdict. Additionally, all allegations of sexual violence must be investigated, with the school taking steps to "end the sexual violence, prevent its recurrence, and address its effects, whether or not the sexual violence is the subject of a criminal investigation" (Ali, 2011).

Other current federal legislation includes the Crime Awareness and Campus Security Act—also known as The Student Right-To-Know and Campus Security Act of 1990—signed into law as an amendment to the Higher Education Opportunity Act (HEOA) of 2008 (U.S. Department of Education Office of Postsecondary Education, 2012). At the time, only 352 of the 8,000 postsecondary institutions participating in federal student aid programs reported annual crime statistics to the Federal Bureau of Investigation, and much of the data from the remaining universities were fused with state statistics (Clery Center, 2014a). The landmark legislation—Title II of Public Law 101-542—called for the standardization of national security policies and procedures that would address sexual assaults and racial violence on university campuses. Subsequently established was the appointment of a designated Campus Security Authority,

officials that include campus police and other security personnel; University officials responsible for athletics, judicial proceedings, student activities, on-campus housing, and/or human resources; and specific persons or offices designated by the University and provided in its *Statement of Campus Security Policy*. Pastoral and professional counselors are exempt (U.S. Department of Education Office of Postsecondary Education, 2012).

In 1990, Congress renamed this legislation “the Jeanne Clery Disclosure of Campus Security Policy and Campus Crime Statistics Act” in memory of a nineteen-year-old Lehigh University freshman who was sexually assaulted and murdered in her Bethesda, PA, dormitory room in 1986 (Shapiro, 2010). The Clery Act—20 U.S.C. § 1092(f)—mandated that all American colleges and universities receiving federal funding must

prepare, publish, and distribute, through appropriate publications or mailings, to all current students and employees, and to any applicant for enrollment or employment upon request, an annual security report containing [information] with respect to the campus security policies and campus crime statistics of that institution. (Cornell, 2010)

The Ramstad Amendment—titled the Campus Sexual Assault Victims’ Bill of Rights—was signed in to law in July 1992, becoming incorporated as subsections V and VI of The Clery Act. The amendment requires that survivors be informed about available counseling and mental health services, options for altering academic and living situations, and choices concerning the filing of official police reports. In addition, both the accuser and the accused must be given the same opportunity to call witnesses, have support persons present at a hearing, and be informed of the outcome of that hearing. A campus sexual assault prevention program is also required (Cornell, 2010). Modifications enacted in 2000 required the tracking of registered sex offenders who are either enrolled as students or who are working or volunteering on campus. Federally-

funded universities were also mandated to make available to constituents sex offender registration information; disclose the number of student arrests for alcohol, drug, and weapons violations; and illustrate on-going crime prevention and safety policies (Storch, 2011).

To further strengthen the country's crime laws, Congress passed the Violence Against Women Act ([VAWA], 2015) in 1994 as Title IV of sweeping federal legislation known as the Violent Crime Control and Law Enforcement Act (H.R. 3355, Pub. L.103-322). VAWA established the Office on Violence against Women under the U.S. Department of Justice and has since awarded grant monies exceeding \$3 billion, which have been used for victim services, violence prevention programs, criminal investigations and prosecutions, and research studies on campus sexual violence (Seghetti & Bjelopera, 2012).

But while the Supreme Court upheld the establishment of the DOJ office and its designated budget, it found unconstitutional the VAWA's allowance of civil suits to be brought against alleged perpetrators in its landmark ruling *United States v. Morrison* (1999). The litigation involved Virginia Tech student Christy Brzonkala, who had accused James Crawford and Antonio Morrison of rape in 1994. Although the men admitted to having sex with the freshman even after she resisted them, the university declined to discipline Crawford. Morrison was suspended, a decision that was quickly reversed by university administrators; and a Virginia grand jury declined to indict either man.

When Brzonkala learned that Morrison would be returning to Virginia Tech with his full football scholarship intact (AAUW, 2006), she dropped out of college (Masters, 2000). Then, utilizing VAWA, Brzonkala filed suit against the men—*Brzonkala v. Morrison, et al*—a case that went before the Rehnquist court in 2000. In a 5-4 decision, the Supreme Court ruled that the subsection of VAWA that gave women the right to sue their alleged rapists violated both the

Commerce Clause and the Equal Protection Clause as the men were private citizens, not State agents.

Citing Title IX, Brzonkala sued the university for creating a hostile environment by its inactions and by its unequal treatment of the disputing parties during its disciplinary proceedings. While the latter claim was dismissed, the 4th U.S. Circuit Court of Appeals reinstated her hostile environment claim (AAUW, 2006). Brzonkala settled with the Virginia Tech for \$75,000 (Masters, 2000).

The 2008 Higher Education Opportunity Act (HEOA)—Public Law 110–315—reauthorized the Higher Education Act (HEA) of 1965 and further strengthened Clery, broadening the scope of reporting to include crimes occurring on and near campuses (Janosik & Gregory, 2009). Legislation also established October 1 of each year as the deadline for reporting annual statistics, better defined campus geographic boundaries for reporting purposes, and clarified advocates' legal obligations and limitations.

Crime reporting forms were standardized (Clery, 2012a) and campus crime statistics began to be compiled using the FBI's *Uniform Crime Reporting Handbook* (UCR) and *Hate Crime Data Collection Guidelines* or the UCR *National Incident-Based Reporting System* (NIBRS). Three years of statistics are required to be made available in each report.

The three-year range of statistics may provide some basis for demonstrating the foreseeability of crimes on campus. If a plaintiff demonstrates statistical evidence of campus crime, is the victim of a reported crime, and shows that the college's security procedures were ineffective or were inefficiently implemented, she is almost assured recovery, since she will have proven foreseeability and the breach of due care requisite for liability. (Griffaton, 1992-1993)



In 2011, the HEOA added an emergency notification requirement as well as directives to establish emergency response and evacuation procedures (Storch, 2011). To be in compliance with Title IX, universities were also required to begin using the “preponderance of the evidence” standard when dealing with campus crime instead of the "clear and convincing" criterion previously used (Stratford, 2014; USDOE, 2014) despite criticism (Shibley, 2011) that the new rules interfere with due process. The Clery Act itself originally set no such conditions on evidentiary procedures but required "prompt, fair and impartial" proceedings (Clery, 2014a), generating remonstrations from critics such as the Foundation for Individual Rights in Education (2014) who saw the "lower" standard required by Title IX as circumventing Congress' intent when updating Clery (Stratford, 2014).

However, perhaps one of the most broad-reaching changes to Clery occurred in March 2013 when VAWA was reauthorized with the federal government providing \$1.6 billion for the investigation and prosecution of gender-focused crimes of violence (National Organization for Victim Assistance [NOVA], 2014). VAWA's Campus Sexual Violence Elimination Act (Campus SaVE) updated the Clery Act and complemented Title IX with requirements that directly affect post-secondary institutions participating in Title IV financial aid (American Council on Education [ACE], 2013). According to the U.S. Department of Education's (2011) "Campus Safety and Security Reporting," schools must more accurately report data on sexual assault, domestic violence, dating violence, and stalking and must include clear definitions for each of these crimes—including an explication of what constitutes "consent"—beginning with 2014 Annual Security Reports. Each report must also contain a statement explicitly prohibiting these crimes; a list of specific procedures for preventing, reporting, and prosecuting gender-focused crime; a policy demonstrating an ongoing commitment to prevention and awareness

programs; and a checklist of procedures that may be followed by victims, including whether to notify law enforcement. VAWA emphasizes that both the accuser and the accused must be treated equally (Clery, 2014a).

Still, while Congress' 1991 amending of the Campus Security Act had severed campus law enforcement records from Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (1974)—known as FERPA—universities were reluctant to comply with the law for fear of lawsuits alleging breach of privacy. This decision followed earlier rulings in *Bauer v. Kincaid* (1991)—which determined that "education records" do not include campus crime reports—and *Student Press Law Center v. Alexander* (1991)—which determined that there are no privacy expectations inherent in arrest records. *Gonzaga University v. John Doe* (2002) further limited FERPA's privacy rights. And the following year, the United States Department of Education determined that Georgetown University was in violation of The Clery Act when it required victims to sign nondisclosure agreements "as a condition of receiving information to which he/she is unconditionally entitled to receive" (Lepper, 2013) and the requirement that "both the accuser and the accused must be informed of the outcome of any institutional disciplinary proceeding brought alleging a sexual offense" does not violate FERPA (USDOE, 2012, p. 144).

In late 2013, the National Center for Campus Public Safety was created by the federal government and housed at the University of Vermont as a [clearing house] for resources, advice, training, and best practices on all the issues that campuses generally must grapple with alone: threat assessment, emergency management, and compliance with federal laws such as Title IX and the Clery Act" (Grasgreen, 2013).

The following year, the White House Task Force to Protect Students from Sexual Assault—partnering with the Department of Education and Department of Justice—was

established to create a coordinated Federal response to campus violence. The interagency team was co-chaired by designees of the Office of the Vice President and the White House Council on Women and Girls and was comprised of senior government leaders (Obama, 2014). In April 2014, the White House premiered *Not Alone: Together against Sexual Assault*, a Website whose purpose is multifold and whose information is written in easy-to-understand language. Links explain students' rights and schools' responsibilities under Title IX and IV, FERPA, and Clery; and maps indicate investigations conducted by and/or resolved by the Departments of Justice and Education. National resources for advocates and survivors are also included.

The accompanying report (Levy, 2014) called for a national survey of campus climates whose stated purpose was to help sculpt national comprehensive policies on sexual misconduct in schools, advanced training for school officials, prevention programs that include both genders, and improved enforcement and response. To further garner feedback from constituents, Missouri Senator Claire McCaskill—chair of the Subcommittee on Financial and Contracting Oversight—facilitated a series of roundtables, calling the current laws "a complex labyrinth between different rules, different standards of proof, different state statues" and noting that "we can't even agree on the definition of consent" (Levy, 2014).

As a result, §668.46 of title 34 the Code of Federal Regulations (2014) was amended to reflect Clery's earlier statutory updates. The new regulations require universities to compile more accurate statistics on crimes that occur on or near campuses, including instances of sexual assault, stalking, dating violence, and domestic violence that have been reported to safety authorities both on *and* off campus. In addition, gender identity was added to the definition of hate crimes, national origin and ethnicity were separated in to distinct classes, and confidentiality safeguards were strengthened.

Echoing earlier criticism of the rape-reform movement, analysts (Boguhn, 2014; Lukianoff, 2014) have challenged the White House Task Force to Protect Students from Sexual Assault (2014) report's purported statistical inaccuracies and have condemned what they see as the government's call for violating the accused's due process. Additionally, the methodology of the research utilized by the task force has been called in to question (Contorno, 2014), underscoring the fact that since data were gathered from two unnamed large universities, the information may not be comparable to smaller or more rural colleges. *Washington Post* columnist George Will (2014) alleges:

[Colleges and universities] are learning that when they say campus victimizations are ubiquitous ("micro-aggressions," often not discernible to the untutored eye, are everywhere), and that when they make victimhood a coveted status that confers privileges, victims proliferate. And academia's progressivism has rendered it intellectually defenseless now that progressivism's achievement, the regulatory state, has decided it is academia's turn to be broken to government's saddle.

### **University Response**

"[Clery] has proven to be a challenge for many colleges, whose disciplinary processes are often better suited for infractions like plagiarism or cheating than interpersonal violence" (Sander, 2013). But while penalties for noncompliance of Clery are currently \$35,000 for each violation and the loss of Title IV funding (Clery Center, 2014a), no university has had its federal student aid monies reduced or eliminated for noncompliance (Kingkade, 2014a), a response that would serve only to penalize students (Brown, 2014; Reese, 2014).

Even when noncompliance is blatant, comparatively few penalties were imposed in the act's first two decades, averaging three fines a year.

[In 2013,] the Department imposed a record-high, 8 fines, ranging from \$82,500 to \$280,000 and totaling \$1,455,000. That figure approaches the cumulative total of \$1,650,000 for all fines issued in the previous 22 years of the Act's existence. (Lacher & Ramos, 2014)

Concurrent with the demand for improved safety on and accountability by university campuses in the 1970s came the call by students for increased independence from parental and societal controls (Griffaton, 1992-1993). In response to this collective shift, *Bradshaw v. Rawlings* (1979) determined that higher education administrators no longer held the collective status of *in loco parentis*; and "foreseeability" became the standard by which university crime liability was and continues to be assessed.

[Foreseeability] casts upon the institution the duty of protecting those whom it invites onto its campuses and into its programs from dangers that the institution could have foreseen, either because of a history of crime or because of the dangerousness of persons involved. (Smith, 1988, p. 86)

While the courts have yet to establish clear guidelines on what constitutes "foreseeability," this ruling established three criteria by which universities' obligations are to be measured: the duty to be forthcoming about risks; the duty to warn about risks; and the duty to provide adequate security (Smith, 1989). To better serve the interests of safety, legislation was enacted in Pennsylvania in 1991 requiring institutions of higher learning to report annual crime statistics to the FBI. The state's College and University Security Information Act (1991) became the model for the Clery Act, and its schools soon began hiring advocates to assist student crime victims (Griffaton, 1992-1993). As federal guidelines have tightened and the number of highly publicized sexual assaults has increased, more advocates have been hired by public universities to provide a myriad of services for victims of campuses crime. From providing safety education

to counselor referrals, court accompaniment to paperwork filing, these specially trained professionals assist students, faculty, and staff before and after a crime has been perpetrated against them (National Center for Victims of Crime [NCVC], 2008).

In addition, an increasing number of students in the mid-1970s began to express interest in gendered education that would address issues such as violence against women. Calls for caution and patience abounded, and faculty members throughout the country were asked by their colleagues to “tone down” their rhetoric lest they lose momentum in establishing Women's Studies programs, a new interdisciplinary model of scholarship (Boxer, 1998). Organized opponents of Women’s Studies programs—and of the women’s movement itself—resorted to scare tactics aimed at university benefactors, proclaiming that core courses were little more than “pop therapeutic support groups” and that feminist leaders were calling for censorship of “everything masculine” in the name of equality (Patai, 2000, p. 519). Furthermore, detractors claimed, students were not learning “correctly”—specifically, there were reports that students were being given exaggerated data on sexual and domestic violence against women and that instructors devalued men’s contributions to society (Patai, 2000, p. 523). Leaders of the academic movement were also warned by radical feminists such as Robin Morgan “not to contract contagious patriarchal thought” in the process of designing women-focused university courses (qtd. in Goodrich, 2008).

In response to the largely conservative mid-century society view that feminism was “trendy” and “anti-male,” many universities refused to pay instructors to teach courses that seemingly trivialized the curriculum for fear of enraging established patrons. As a result, faculty interested in teaching gender-focused courses often had to do so on overload schedules without additional compensation (Ginsberg, 2008, p. 11).

But with the support of progressive faculty members across the country, Women's Studies came to be viewed by its proponents as the intellectual arm of American society's movement toward gender equality, citing its support of sexual violence awareness and empowerment. Many "second wave" feminists had been frustrated by the male-dominated political and social movements of the 1960s—including those groups supporting civil rights and the New Left—where women had often been relegated to secondary support roles, making placards and serving coffee (Crowley, 1999, p. 131). Explicitly political, the aim of this new discipline was to "transform the university so that knowledge about women was no longer invisible, marginalized, or made 'other'" (Ginsberg, 2008, p. 10).

Religious conservatives demonized the discipline and its companion movement toward gender equality, citing negative effects on the nuclear family. Said evangelist Pat Robertson in a 1988 fundraising letter:

The feminist agenda is not about equal rights for women. It is about a socialist, anti-family political movement that encourages women to leave their husbands, kill their children, practice witchcraft, destroy capitalism, and become lesbians. (qtd. in Schuett, 2004)

And while feminist academics like Lorber (1994) continued to explore society's construction of gender roles as a cause of violence against women, Robinson (1986, p. 99) lamented that "the sexual revolution has come at a cost;" and that, in fact, "permission to be unchaste has not freed women from the object-role we occupied when it was chastity that was the valued commodity."

Most recently, constituents have begun suing universities and their agents for "institutional failures to comply with government regulations" (Lauerman, 2013) to protect

students from sexual assault and to punish their rapists. For example, James Madison University banned three fraternity members found guilty of sexual assault and harassment from campus—but their punishment would take effect upon their graduation. The victim—whose assault was captured on video and shared via social media—filed a complaint with the U.S. Department of Education's Office for Civil Rights in January 2014 (Kuruvilla, 2014). This followed the expulsion of an Occidental College student found guilty of rape in 2013. He was allowed back on campus after writing a book report on sexual assault (Lauerman, 2014).

### **Summary**

Shapiro (2010) indicates that The Clery Act is having a positive effect on safety: In the past decade, for example, campuses have reported a 9% drop in violent crime; and more officers are being hired on campuses throughout the country. But statistics on campus assaults remain unreliable; for with few exceptions, official data reflect only those crimes that have been reported directly to police officers (Walters, 2010)—with an estimated 95% of rapes remaining unreported (AAUW, 2015; Black et al., 2011; RAINN, 2009b). Despite data showing that sexual assault is the most underreported crime on university campuses (NIJ, 2010; WHCW&G, 2014), Mardorossian (2002, p. 743) states that the discussion of rape

has been relegated to introductory women's studies courses, where it is predominantly subjected to issue-oriented and experiential analyses. Its discussion in that context typically follows a predictable pattern, namely, that of identifying the source of violence (gendered power relations) and its effects (trauma).

And despite the enormity of the problem of sexual violence, federal resources for universities remain low. In April 2013, for example, the Education Department's Office for Civil Rights—charged with enforcing Title IX—employed half the number of staff members it utilized



in 1980 (Kingkade, 2014b). Indeed, the department currently has no designated investigator for sexual assault complaints (McCaskill, 2014), preventing the government from investigating the 63% of schools that are not in compliance with Clery (NAGPS, 2014).

To better understand advocacy on an institutional level, the following chapters will examine the disparity and commonality of responses revealed by informants to the central question: What factors do university victims' advocates identify as affecting their ability to educate students about and to assist students after sexual assaults?

## CHAPTER 3: METHODOLOGY

“There is no private life which is not determined by a wider public life.”

George Eliot

This chapter discusses the specific process I underwent to collect, synthesize, and examine data gathered from informants purposively chosen for this dissertation according to regional location, student population, and mission commonality. Interview data were coded using an *a priori* approach in order to discover recurring themes based on established protocol and theory. Actor feedback helped to establish triangulation, and research ethics were maintained throughout the process to protect the identities of the informants.

### Strategies and Procedures

A Qualtrics survey was sent to advocates serving twelve public co-educational universities located in the Southern seaboard states of Virginia, North Carolina, South Carolina, Georgia, and Florida. These purposively selected schools serve undergraduate populations averaging 21,000; have affiliations with victim advocates who assist student survivors of sexual violence; and are recognized as research universities by the Carnegie Classification of Institutions of Higher Education (2015). Since victim advocates primarily interact with students residing on or near campus, institutions with comparable undergraduate enrollment numbers were surveyed; and institutions with expressively smaller or larger populations were discarded from the comprehensive list of Southeastern schools. Additionally—because a research designation may signify a level of monetary resources not found in exclusively undergraduate universities because of the potential for outside funding—the variable was used as equipoise. The Qualtrics questions are listed in Appendix B.

From the twelve universities surveyed, I chose three whose mission statements emphasize service but whose organizational models are in contrast: Arkin, Griffith, and Piaster. Advocacy

offices at Arkin University are housed in a university-affiliated health center; and the school itself is one of the oldest state-funded educational institutions in the country. In contrast, Griffith University, a historic land-grant university, has advocates who are located in a highly visible central Women's Center that provides a myriad of gender-based violence services as well as opportunities for student and community involvement. Finally, Piaster University, a regional school, serves a rural population of largely first-generation students with a single advocate whose office location has been in flux for eight years.

Although advocates are responsible for assisting faculty, staff, and students who are victims of a variety of crimes—including, but not limited to, aggravated assault, hate crimes, identity theft, credit card theft, property theft, and/or robbery—this narrow study focused on advocates' experiences in aiding female students who have been victims of sexual assault. While the homogeneous sampling revealed unexpected anomalies, recurring themes were closely examined to better understand the collective role of victim advocacy in higher education.

A conceptual framework based on Weick's (1995) theory of sensemaking was utilized initially to create a semi-structured interview protocol and subsequently to organize data on factors affecting university victims' advocates. An interminable social activity, sensemaking allows for self-definition and self-analysis by each agent. This structural tool—presented by Weick as "properties of sensemaking"—assisted my understanding of respondents' perceived roles on their respective campuses. Themes included conflicting obligations, societal attitudes, and evolving laws as well as organization hierarchies, program histories, fluctuating budgets, and community partnerships. Together, these variables aided in the exploration of how advocates adapt their missions in response to external cues.

Advocates' shared experiences—albeit at different universities—provided insights in to

the often-fluid conditions under which these professionals must operate. For example: If an advocate had defined her role in response to cues discouraging the public display of ephemera on rape prevention, she may have focused the bulk of her attention instead on sexual assault victims. Conversely, a belief that administrators desire to downplay the scope of campus sexual violence may have led the advocate to re-define her role as "educator," perhaps allowing her office to be co-opted by external forces in order to mirror a collective identity that markets safety to current and potential constituencies.

The basic tenets of feminist standpoint theory—which acknowledges the unique sensibility of marginalized persons to recognize oppressive actions—comprised my dissertation's overarching philosophy. This paradigm values the experiences of the respondent and "[adopts] a perspective in which women's experiences, ideas and needs...are valid in their own right" (Duelli-Klein, 1983, p. 89). The gathered information in this dissertation was assessed by drawing parallels with Martin's (2005) "rape work" as a theoretical foundation and establishing Schmitt and Martin's (1999) linking of street theory and discursive politics as a catalyst to explore potential gendered co-optation of victim advocacy missions within the studied universities.

Finally, the cogency of the data was analyzed using the following procedures established by Yin (2009): construct validity, internal validity, external validity, and reliability. Construct validity requires the examination of multiple evidentiary sources—including interviews and artifacts—and a review of draft reports by informants. Internal validity necessitates a close inspection of patterns and an identification of potential causal links while external validity deals with analytic generalizations. Finally, reliability may be assured if future researchers—given identical evidence and access to informants—would reach the same results and conclusions.

## **Data Collection**

Public data such as mission statements, organizational hierarchies, and program outreach were first collected for each of the three victims' advocate offices via its official Website and social media presence. Most notably, Clery reports from the previous three years were examined, reflecting Federal requirements that all funded schools publish three successive years' worth of crime statistics in their annual reports (Clery Center, 2012a) in order to provide statistical evidence of crime trends (Griffaton, 1992-1993). Assembling this information beforehand eliminated the need to spend interview time with background questions.

Foundation questions (see Appendix C) asked of personal interviewees were gleaned from trends and curiosities discovered through the Qualtrics replies. For example, 75% of online respondents indicated a positive view of administrators while 50% saw this same group as having a negative effect on advocates' ability to assist sexual assault survivors. Likewise, the unanimous choosing of "rape mythos"—false assumptions about women's responsibility for their own victimization—as a negative factor that impact advocates' ability to educate and assist survivors called for elaboration from respondents.

After receiving approval from my home university's Institutional Review Board (IRB), I contacted principal advocates from each school via email, detailing the purpose of the study, its future use, and its potential benefits. Interview times and conditions were negotiated with meetings scheduled on the advocates' home campuses. Informed consent documents were then emailed to each informant with a cover letter reiterating details of the study.

Personal telephone numbers were provided by the advocates, and semi-structured interviews were conducted during business hours at pre-arranged times. After the purpose of the study was reviewed, the potential use and benefits of the study were discussed, any possible

concerns were allayed, and signed informed consent documents were collected. Each interview began with a discussion of the history of the office itself; its organizational home within the university; its staffing by employees, volunteers, and interns; and its receiving of internal and external funding. Next, partnerships with such entities as community crisis programs, LGBT centers, specially trained counselors and safety officers, and Title IX administrators were discussed. However, the majority of the open-ended questions were directed toward ascertaining the campus climate itself—the embracing or rejecting of rape myths by various actors and the expressed or implied policies and actions of university administrators—and its effect on the advocate. Each informant was reminded and re-assured throughout the meeting about anonymity, and personal experiences and perspectives were encouraged.

Sessions were audio-recorded using a hand-held Olympus Digital Voice Recorder and were transcribed with notes to a privately owned MacBook Pro. Constructivist-inspired protocols were adjusted when the social actors' responses precipitated progressive focusing.

The study included the inspection of online artifacts and archival records. Most notably, Clery reports from the previous three years were examined from each university, as this number reflects Federal requirements that all funded schools publish three successive years' worth of crime statistics in their annual reports (Clery Center, 2012a) in order to provide statistical evidence of crime trends (Griffaton, 1992-1993).

### **Data Organization**

During the continual process of collecting and assessing data, I paid special attention to how each advocate's experiences fit in to a broader narrative plot: what the events mean to the informant rather than in to what static category each event may "fit." In addition, a field journal was updated following each interview to note observed changes in voice tenor.

Polkinghorne's (1995/2006) interdisciplinary philosophy of "narrative knowing [as] a fundamental mode of understanding by which people make sense of their own and others' actions and life events"" (p. 77) provided inspiration for the diachronic construction of the collected narratives and for the examination of their contexts. I coded, organized, and synthesized the data in to a unified dissertation through the examination of emergent common themes and experiences rather than through static categories. His attention to the "embodied nature" of the respondent insists that the narratives be received as authentic; therefore,

the criterion for the significance of narrative data is not whether the events reported are "true" or "false," that is, whether they actually happened or not. Rather the criterion is whether they are expressive of the subject's current assessment of their [sic] value and importance in contributing to the episode that is the topic of the story. (Polkinghorne, 1995/2006, p. 95)

Provisional codes included mandates, responsibilities or priorities, constituency feedback, internal conditions or constraints, illustrative narratives, on- and off-campus relationships, and educational activities. Verbal cues were also noted; and categories were added and/or segmented as themes revealed themselves.

Because of the sensitive nature of the profession and the need to maintain the anonymity of advocate-informants and their clients, pseudonyms have been utilized and university names have been disguised. I have composed the dissertation itself in first person singular with a realist design, taking care to remove subjective data that may identify individuals or their universities. The discussion and conclusion chapters interpret and analyze the data with this anonymity in mind.

Interview notes, recordings, and transcriptions were stored in password-protected files.

Transcripts were coded using an *a priori* approach to reveal recurring themes and potential causal links, a stipulation of the establishment of internal validity. These codes were based on interview protocol and research discoveries, and *foci* included each actor's use of key word and metaphor repetition as well as causal connections and discursive transitions. Analytic generalizations were sought through the use of multiple case studies, each linked to the other by its recurrent themes; and theoretical analysis was modified due to the constantly evolving coding frame. Replication logic and its connection to the theoretical base required by external validity appear in the discussion chapter.

Finally, separate sections in Chapter 4 focus on individual advocates, their experiences re-storied in to coherent narrative chronologies while preserving multiple realities and reflecting recurring themes. Early drafts of relevant dissertation chapters were emailed to respective informants both to ensure facticity of the information and to re-assure anonymity to the informing agent. This multi-layered focus established a triangulation that increased the validity of the data.

### **Disclaimers**

My interest in victim advocacy has strengthened during my academic association with a university gender-focused program. Students have often shared their victimization stories in the "safe spaces" created within the program's introductory courses I have taught and in my private office, and these intimate—yet communal—conversations continue to become threads that help students to heal themselves and each other. The university's advocate is invited early each semester to speak informally to students in my classes, frequently engendering disbelief that the existence and location of her office are not "better known." Additionally, the numbers of sexual assaults listed on the university's annual report are often in stark contrast to the magnitude of



outries to which I have been privy. Together, these factors have inspired the exploration of a system that appears to at once officially support yet in actuality undermines student safety.

However, I have no relationship with any of the interviewed agents beyond their collective role as informant. Their credibility may be assumed by their professional status. Informant validation of the facts contained in respective chapters will be sought, and responses will be incorporated in to the discussion chapter. No transferability of experience is implied; however, the discourse analysis revealed a commonality of experiences, which has been explored in the discussion chapter. No State funds were sought or used in the creation of this dissertation.

### **Limitations**

Limitations included the lack of an established relationship with each informant. Trust was to be assumed unquestioningly; and rapport, developed quickly. Therefore, in-depth information and illuminating stories that may have been revealed over the course of a longer acquaintanceship was perhaps instead "held back" for caution's sake; so this self-reported data may not be independently verified. Selective recollection issues or the "misremembering" of facts, events, or attributions by the respondent—whether intentional or deliberate—may have occurred.

Time too was a factor: Meetings with agents were arranged, canceled, and rescheduled only to be interrupted by emergency calls that demanded the immediate attention of the informants. Expediency dictated a temporal constraint on the part of the researcher as well, being responsible for teaching while researching and composing the dissertation.

The sample size itself and the sparse availability of research limited the richness of data that could be attained; thus, the homogeneous sampling is not meant to represent the experiences of all advocates, only to more clearly "hear" the voices of the chosen subgroup. Few studies have

been published on victim advocacy in higher education, making this area ripe for future studies.

And finally, the ethical responsibility for full disclosure dictates that the researcher reveal her own intrinsic ideology: an adherence to radical feminism, which espouses that patriarchy is a social construct that oppresses women and that the act of rape—or even the "mere" threat of it—is a weapon that keeps the balance of gendered power unequal, the control of women's bodies "legitim[izing] all kinds of boundary violations" (Daly, 1978, p. 69). While the concept of a "rape culture" on American campuses has recently been challenged (Berkowitz & O'Connor, 2014; Matchar, 2014), perpetrators—albeit ultimately responsible for their crimes—thrive in androcentric climates that favor image over reality, dollars over safety.

## CHAPTER 4: DATA

"The man in black said, 'You won't mind; it'll be over before you know it.  
You can pretend that you are blind if it will help you to get over it!'"

Nerissa Niels

Primary data were collected from three sources: a 20-question Qualtrics survey, targeted Internet searches, and three in-depth interviews. The survey was sent to twelve victim advocates who are attached to public co-educational universities located in the Southern seaboard states of Virginia, North Carolina, South Carolina, Georgia, and Florida. These purposively selected schools serve undergraduate populations averaging 21,000; have affiliations with victim advocates who assist student survivors of sexual violence; and are recognized as research universities by the Carnegie Classification of Institutions of Higher Education (2015).

Data collected from this online survey—which included drop-down options as well as areas for comments—were used to formulate questions to be asked of three pre-selected university advocates—at Arkin, Griffith, and Piaster—whose institutions' mission statements emphasize service but whose advocacy offices are housed respectively in a university-affiliated health center, in an on-campus Women's Center, and under the auspices of an institution's police department.

An Internet search of the twelve institutions revealed that only one reserve advocate is male, an African American staff member whose duties include organizing volunteers. "Male students gravitate to the center because of his presence there," noted one online respondent, "helping to create intersectional conversations on rape prevention." No men are lead advocates at any of the surveyed universities, however; and the vast majority (92%) of advocates at these institutions are white females.

Additional data—including Clery reports and news articles—on the respective universities were collected through Internet searches before the interviews and are current as of fall 2015. Background information on each victim advocacy office was also collected via the respective school’s official Website and social media presence.

### **Qualtrics Results**

Only four (33%) of the twelve recipients completed the Qualtrics survey, so no solid trends may be gleaned from the results. Still, unexpected information emerged about university victim services through this online survey, information that helped to craft foundational questions for the personal interviews.

Three of the four (75%) responding universities provide off-campus referrals to survivors and/or have specially trained Title IX officers, police officers, and Dean of Students personnel to whom victims may consult. However, only two (50%) have designated, campus-based victim advocates. Two (50%) offer an anonymous reporting form via the advocate’s website while only one (25%) maintains a confidential crisis line that is staffed by professional counselors.

In addition to professional advocates, Women’s Centers (75%), LGBT Centers (50%), and off-campus referral programs (75%) provide trained personnel who may assist sexual assault survivors. Individual counseling services (75%) and survivor-focused support groups (50%) are offered on campus—both led by specially trained, professional crisis counselors—and one advocate (25%) noted that reading material is also available to recovering victims.

Three (75%) institutions have advocates who will accompany survivors to their respective police stations and will assist victims with completing restraining orders and complaints, and two (50%) provide counseling and will accompany victims to medical facilities. But only one (25%) is charged with supporting victims during off-campus trials, the same

number that may accompany students to Title IX hearings, on-campus proceedings that allow both the plaintiff and the defendant the opportunity to “present relevant witnesses, cross-examine witnesses, and present other evidence” (Bolger, 2014). At no time, however, may university victims’ advocates—whether they are employed directly or indirectly by the State—impart legal advice (American Bar Association [ABA], 2012). Their role must remain a supporting one; and they are restricted to disseminating only authorized information to survivors and their families, according to best practices established by the National Organization for Victim Assistance (as cited in Ohio Department of Safety, 2010) and the White House Task Force to Protect Students from Sexual Assault (2014). Finally, a survey respondent added “crisis intervention” as a service provided by her university although she included no explanatory details. The responding advocates are considered confidential agents—each being obligated to share sensitive information with authorities without a victim’s consent only if danger to the victim or to the community is imminent or if she is required by law to do so.

Women’s Centers physically house half (50%) of the responding advocates—with an affiliation to the Dean of Students’ office; the remaining two (50%) are housed in a counseling center and a student union.

On-campus educational duties are numerous and nearly homogeneous among the surveyed respondents: Each advocate coordinates presentations by nationally recognized speakers who may convey testimonials of personal struggles or speak of the dangers of illegal substances; campus events for students such as Take Back the Night marches and/or stagings of *The Vagina Monologues*, Eve Ensler’s iconic play that includes soliloquies about sexual abuse; and classroom presentations by victim advocates, student peers, and police officers on personal safety and responsibility. Respondents also noted that they speak about their services at freshman

orientation sessions, in academic classrooms, for student groups, and at occasional functions for external constituents. In addition to the frequent updating of social media sites, advocates maintain common area posters, program brochures, and other informational ephemera; and professional development workshops for staff and faculty are offered on both personal safety and victim assistance. Three (75%) advocacy offices also coordinate with Women's and/or Gender Studies programs to teach courses on personal safety.

Internal funding for sexual assault programs—excluding salaries—ranges from less than \$2,500 per academic year to over \$10,000. However, external grants range from less than \$25,000 to over \$75,000; and funding fluctuates from one academic year to another for reasons not expounded upon by respondents.

When surveyed respondents were asked what factors affect each advocate's ability to educate students about sexual violence, community support in the form of attendance at campus events (75%) as well as monetary gifts (50%) were viewed as positive factors; and two respondents (50%) commended their respective universities on the funding of advocacy programs. But while administrative support (75%) was viewed as a positive factor in the assistance of sexual assault survivors, 50% of respondents indicated that "administration" was also a negative factor.

The majority (75%) of surveyed respondents indicated that "political climate" was both a positive and a negative issue affecting their work, later generating extensive discussion in the personal interviews to differentiate perceptions about internal and external agents' attitudes. "Rape myths," however—false assumptions about women's responsibility for their own victimization—were unanimously seen as negative factors that impact advocates' ability to educate and assist survivors.

Regulations and the requisite paperwork received mixed reviews: federal (100% positive; 25% negative), university (75% positive; 25% negative), and state (25% positive; 50% negative). “University’s support for victim advocacy” received no responses. Changing laws would also become a major focus of the interviews.

Large-scale research is needed to sieve through the seemingly contradictory responses. Still, the answers provided foundational questions (see Appendix C) of which I asked three purposefully selected interviewees following the analysis of the survey data and an exploration of previous empirical studies.

### **Interviews**

Because the survey was anonymous, I had pre-selected three universities in the Southeast whose mission statements emphasize service but whose organizational models differ: Arkin, Griffith, and Piaster. Each interview was conducted before federal mandates were instituted in fall of 2015.

Advocacy offices at Arkin University are housed in a university-affiliated health center; and the school itself is one of the oldest state-funded educational institutions in the country. In contrast, Griffith University, a historic land-grant university, has advocates who are located in a highly visible central Women's Center that provides a myriad of gender-based violence services as well as opportunities for student and community involvement. Finally, Piaster University, a regional school, serves a rural population of largely first-generation students with a single advocate whose office location has been in flux for nine years.

The beginning of each interview focused on the history of the physical office itself; its organizational home within the university; its staffing by employees, volunteers, and interns; and its availability of internal and external funding. Next, partnerships with community crisis

programs, LGBT centers, specially trained counselors and safety officers, and Title IX administrators were discussed.

For the protection of the advocates, I have chosen to disguise their identities and those of their institutions. Attributed quotations have not been altered, but it is important to note “the social situation of each epistemic agent both formed and limited the data that could be gathered” (Bowell, n.d.).

### **Arkin University (Dawn Asternale)**

Arkin University is a land-grant institution with a majority white (73%), majority female (57%) student population of 35,000+. Undergraduate students account for 26,000+ of this total. Freshmen are required to live on campus, which is situated in a small city 1.5 hours from the nearest metropolitan area.

Dawn Asternale has served as the university’s lead relationship and sexual violence prevention advocate for three years. Her duties also include conducting and assessing a variety of health-related surveys, developing crisis intervention protocols for two deputy advocates, and co-advising a health-related student group. She has a background in psychology and sexual health as well as substance abuse prevention and earns an annual salary of approximately \$41,000.

Although the health facilities were first accredited in the late 1980s, an extensive Internet search revealed no history of the medical clinic itself; and Asternale could provide no contextual background about the advocacy program, as “the previous person didn’t take [the position] seriously.” Her office is assigned no budgetary lines, but a university endowment to educate students about drug and alcohol awareness also includes available funds for relationship and sexual violence prevention. Funding is currently being explored to set up a victim-assistance program, which will help survivors with legal, medical, counseling, and/or moving expenses.



Asternale's office is located on the first floor of a multi-acre, state-of-the-art health complex adjacent to the student center. This university-owned medical center is a department within student affairs; and advocates are situated—both physically and hierarchically—in a unit within that department, offering relationship and sexual violence prevention education and crisis intervention as well as information on alcohol and drug prevention, general nutrition, and sexual health.

Glass-and-wood facades and marbled columns greet visitors throughout the facility, as do sterile, shiny floors and impersonal décor. Spacious hallways lead to various clinics, which are located across three multi-storied, angular units; and professional signage creates a feeling of professionalism, modernity, and efficiency. The waiting area for the advocate's office is semi-private, but its clinical atmosphere does not appear embracing to survivors or conducive to student gatherings or confidential discussions.

From the university's homepage, a search for keywords "victim" or "rape" will first take visitors to information about the university's advocacy certificate, to student-composed visual presentations, and to news stories about the county's police department. Halfway down the first page is a link to "Relationship and Sexual Violence *Prevention*" [emphasis is mine]; and the accompanying link takes visitors to the relationship and sexual violence prevention coordinator, not the primary advocate. Likewise, "sexual assault" reveals a confusing array of information—over 2,000+ results—primarily written for employees. Many of the links will take the viewer to the homepage of the Equal Opportunity Office, which also administers disability and anti-discrimination policies and houses the Title IX coordinator. Its website includes information about the confidential, survivor-centered advocacy program; but the messages read as clinical and impersonal.

Direct marketing for the advocate's office is conducted via the university's health center, but this website too is difficult to navigate. An exhaustive listing of administrative staff connected with the center includes no hyperlinks to individual units. However, once the relationship and sexual violence prevention site is accessed, an "emergency" button is available as are clear instructions on how to locate and contact the relationship and sexual violence prevention office.

Asternale and the university's two back-up advocates provide crisis intervention for sexual assault survivors and will meet students at either the university health center or the county emergency room. These advocates act as confidential liaisons between the survivors and medical, legal, and other actors—both internal and external—and are also available for academic assistance and a discussion of reporting options. The advocates work with instructors, advisors, and other internal university agents to provide appropriate modifications such as relocating the victim from a classroom and/or a residence hall where she may have daily contact with her rapist. Professionals also educate each survivor on university investigative protocols, levels of confidentiality, and options for reporting the assault.

In academic year 2014-2015, Asternale's office logged 41 visits by students who had been sexually assaulted, a number that may reflect multiple visits by the same student(s). The Clery report for the same period recorded 11 forcible rapes. During the preceding three years, Arkin averaged 9 on-campus forcible assaults—increasing by 4 reported attacks each year—according to its published Clery reports.

Personnel affiliated with the health center provide STD testing and medical exams; and an on-site pharmacy is available. Counselors trained in crisis intervention are also available at the health center albeit no designated sexual assault therapist is identified on the unit's website.

And while the university employs no sexual assault nurse examiner (SANE), community forensic nurses provide training for health center staff members who assist sexual assault survivors.

A 24-hour hotline is outsourced to a national network hotline whose professionals forward a call to Asternale via a “warm hand off” if an outcrier is in immediate need of an advocate or of medical assistance. Funding for this service is paid through the health center budget, not her department’s budget. In addition, a community-based rape crisis hotline, staffed by trained volunteers, is available for students and citizens of the surrounding counties; and a domestic violence shelter is also available.

Accordion-style wallet cards are distributed to incoming freshmen during orientation and at all events attended by advocates and/or the Title IX coordinator. These cards include definitions of consent, information about sexual and relationship violence, and a listing of campus and community resources. Asternale noted a conscious moving away from ephemera such as brochures and flyers; however, the advocacy program has no public presence on Facebook or Twitter. Programming is occasionally co-sponsored with other departments, but there is little coordination or communication with the Women’s Studies program.

Asternale and/or one of the other advocates attend upwards of fifteen sessions of orientation a year, each comprised of 300+ students.

They are given a lot of information at orientation. So I don’t think they are thinking at the time “oh, that’s going to be me” or even “I am never going to need that.” But when they later come in to the clinic as victims, they say, “Oh, yeah, I remember you saying...”

She also speaks with parents—as a group and individually—at every orientation session. “It is scary for them...but I reassure them that rape is not a rampant problem that is all of a

sudden happening.” Indeed, she stresses that—statistically—21<sup>st</sup> Century students carry the same risk of being sexual assaulted as their parents and grandparents did when they were in college (Kamenetz, 2014). Perspective is important, as is continuity of messaging; so “I let them know that I will be giving their sons and daughters the exact same information when I meet with them later in the day.”

### **Griffith University (Yasmin Shole)**

With a student population exceeding 34,000, Griffith University is comprised of 44% female students and 38% female faculty. The majority white (73%) institution has an undergraduate population of approximately 25,000 with first-year students being given the option whether to live on campus.

Yasmin has directed the Griffith University women’s center for five years, serving constituents both on and off campus. The unit has six full-time professional staff members—all of who are trained in crisis intervention—as well as a fluid number of student workers and interns, Literacy AmeriCorps members, and teaching assistants. A broad-based volunteer organization makes it one of the largest university-based women’s centers in the Southeast, and its staff works closely with “sister centers” throughout campus and with police officers both on and off campus.

“Born with a feminist passion,” Sholes holds a doctorate in public policy with a focus on gender and social policies. Her earliest memories are of wanting to work towards social justice; and she wrote her first successful grant in college. The awarded funding for a summer program assisted the children of women who resided in or who had recently moved from domestic violence shelters. In addition to directing the center, Sholes’ cognate duties include teaching

gender studies and researching equity issues with a continuing mission to “engage in research to practice,” earning her an annual salary of \$75,000+.

Established in the mid 1980s, an Office of Women’s Concerns was created through and housed in Student Health Services. The coordinator often met with sexual assault survivors in its examination rooms, and a task force was soon created to study the scope of sexual violence on campus. The office was reassigned under the auspices of the Department of Student Development with a rape prevention education coordinator on staff; and within a decade of the original office’s inception, a Women’s Center had been created with a 24-hour hotline—albeit the office space itself was “grungy and dark.”

Restructured seven years ago from a student affairs model, the center now serves under the auspices of the university’s Office of Institutional Equity and Diversity, which reports directly to the university’s provost. Sholes manages an operating budget of <\$100,000, which is derived from student fees and internal grants and varies annually according to enrollment. This budget line funds student workers and AmeriCorps employees, and a separate foundation account is also available. External monies include a \$1.5 million grant that is focused on interpersonal violence.

Fundraising is ongoing through a community advisory board. Through its efforts, a viable “survivor fund” has been established whereby rape survivors can apply to receive reimbursement for costs associated with sexual assault: financial assistance for students who do not wish to utilize their health insurance or who need specialized care, relocation costs for survivors who no longer feel safe in their current living environments, or reimbursement for legal fees and court costs. In addition, monies may be available to bring survivors’ family members to campus for campus hearings or court appearances.

The women's center itself is a bright, welcoming space inside the campus' student union. A bank of windows illuminates the common area; and the entrance is glassed to create a "friendly and open" environment. All six full-time staff members are trained in crisis intervention although two staff members—a woman and a man—are assigned the primary duties of "advocate." Response protocol training is also available for faculty and staff throughout campus, and campus officers frequent the office to help establish a "friendly" and "familiar" presence for students.

Eight offices are contained within the suite, six of which face the common area and two of which house offices where survivors can meet discreetly with advocates. Less public meeting spaces are available away from the center.

The well-identified office is open during the week while classes are in session and provides a plethora of programs that include discussions of women in politics, the social construction of gender, and intimate partner violence. Moveable, "funky" chairs are available for visitors—about a third of who are male-identified—to utilize in the communal spaces; and computer-friendly desks and free coffee help facilitate education, discussion, and fellowship. In addition, a drop-down screen allows for the viewing of educational films and PowerPoint presentations; and gender-focused books and DVDs are available to lend.

A break area is shared with the LGBT office, encouraging daily communication among units; and the student union activities board and multicultural affairs offices are housed nearby. And in a partnership with the School of Design, the center houses both static exhibits and rotating displays celebrating gender.

Although hardcopy flyers are distributed before events, a list of services and programs provided by victim advocates is primarily available online, a successful marketing strategy that connects to constituents

through different levels of emails for students and community members, including volunteers and alumni. We make contact early and often and have a visible presence on Instagram, Facebook, and Twitter as well as on electronic billboards throughout campus. We also have a designated Women's Center "app."

A web search for the Women's Center is immediately successful via various key words—"sexual assault," "victim advocate," and "violence"—and the unit's site is easily navigable. Information about a myriad of services can be accessed, including a 24-hour crisis line.

Contractors through the Counseling Center...are available to assist survivors in the middle of the night. If survivors have more time-sensitive needs like a SANE nurse or a forensic exam, there are protocols in place to call the Women's Center so that an advocate can meet them at the hospital or be there in whatever way the students need them to be, including connecting them back to campus resources.

As the director of the Women's Center, Sholes coordinates educational programming with Griffith's "sister centers," units with LGBT, multicultural, and safety foci. The leaders of these centers meet often and help to co-sponsor an average of 3-5 events per week throughout the academic year and to advise 6 or 7 student groups. Representatives from the counseling center also serve on the center's sexual assault prevention board with a collective mission of "educational advocacy, leadership development, and social justice on campus." Finally, a community advisory board includes faculty of the Women's and Gender Studies Program, a "robust" academic program that provides "lots of conversation to promote theory to practice."

Sholes and two other advocates are on call to provide confidential crisis intervention; to accompany survivors to conduct hearings and court appearances; and to provide information about academic, emotional, legal, and medical resources. “Secondary survivors”— intimate partners, close friends, and family members—are also served; and a non-university affiliated victim advocacy program, located two miles from campus, assists the center with community resources.

Current-year data were unavailable; but Griffith averaged 4.3 on-campus forcible assaults, according to its 2011-2013 published Clery reports.

### **Piaster University (Mae Loshun)**

Mae Loshun has worked at Piaster University for nine years as its lone victim advocate. With a student population of slightly fewer than 30,000—approximately 20,000 of who are freshmen—the majority white (71%) school is comprised of 60% female students across two major campuses. In addition, Loshun serves over 7,000 faculty and staff, the majority (61% combined) of who are female. She has no support staff, assistant advocate, or graduate interns, despite serving a student population that is one of the fastest growing in the Southeast; and her annual operating budget of \$9,000 was eliminated several years ago due to system-wide financial reductions.

The advocacy office at Piaster University was established in the 2006-2007 academic year, following recommendations by the Chancellor’s Safety and Awareness Task Force. Loshun, who holds a Master’s degree in organizational management and leadership, was hired that year as the institution’s “victim/witness advocate coordinator” at an annual salary of approximately \$52,000. Despite her contractual obligation to be on call 40 hours a week, she often works in excess of 50 hours, as she is the only advocate employed by this rural university.



The murder of a close family member 20 years earlier had prompted her to help other survivors of crime and their families, and she was hired by Piaster on the strength of her court advocacy experience.

The director's budget line has been reassigned numerous times: first, under the auspices of the University Counseling Center; next, to the Office of Student Affairs. She currently serves under the campus police unit but does "not feel the camaraderie and respect that I would like to have" from the officers. She is viewed as "an outsider," she contends, because—being neither officer nor counselor—she "doesn't fit in" and is unwilling to divulge the names of those victims whose confidence she holds.

At the time of our interview, Loshun's office was physically housed in Piaster's student center. A dark, narrow passageway led to her office where visitors had to first pass a service elevator and a dark brick wall. The 8' x 5' *mise-en-scène* was stacked with folders, boxes, and a penumbra of electronic equipment; and the beige-colored walls held no artwork. There was no private area in which she could talk with students and no discreet waiting area. Within a month of our interview, however, the Office of Victim Services was moved to a more easily accessible location on Piaster's main campus. The bright, second-story office at the end of a quiet hallway is more spacious (approximately 20' x 20') and provides separate areas for victims to fill out forms and receive guidance. However, no signage indicates the location of the office either from the first story or near the location. Only on the door of the office itself do the words "victim advocate" appear.

The program's brochure shows a young woman whose face is turned away from the camera. The Office of Victim Services' phone number appears on the front; inside is a list of procedures sexual assault survivors should follow including keeping one's clothes, getting to a

safe place, seeking medical attention, and preserving evidence by not showering. Nowhere on the brochure, however, is the office's location provided; and the unit has no presence on social media.

A search for the key terms “victim advocate” on the university’s homepage first reveals a series of news stories about events associated with the office, not a link to the program’s site itself. Experimenting with key search terms helps to locate the office’s Webpage, but this inability to quickly find the advocate’s contact information in a time of crisis “is frustrating for victims.”

There is a link to the victims’ advocate website under “related offices” on the campus police webpage, but—curiously—accessing this link will connect searchers to the Division of Academic and Student Affairs. However, the information is updated regularly; and the site provides additional links to available resources, information about victims’ rights, and forms by which groups and faculty can request safety programs. A phone number and email address are shown—along with a guarantee that an advocate is on call 24 hours a day, 7 days a week—but once again, Loshun’s name and office location are not indicated.

Off-campus intervention services are available, which includes education and prevention services and support groups not associated with the university. These community programs manage a Sexual Assault Response Team whose board members include the local district attorney as well as specially trained nurses, law enforcement officers, and advocates. However, there is no coordination of services or standardized sharing of statistical data among on- and off-campus groups.

As part of her contractual obligations, Loshun assists students, faculty, and staff who have been victims of aggravated assault, hate crimes, identity theft, credit card theft, property

theft, and/or robbery—even if those crimes occurred off campus and do not need to be officially recorded as part of the university's required annual safety report. She helps them fill out the requisite paperwork and provides them with information about ordering new drivers' licenses; canceling stolen credit cards; and seeking medical, legal, counseling, and other services.

While her prescribed duties require her to assist with a plethora of crimes, those of the sexual nature are the ones that keep her the busiest as Piaster records an average of 9 on-campus forcible assaults, according to 2011-2013 Clery reports. Loshun receives upwards of 10 phone calls and 5 visits from students each week throughout the academic year—some have been sexually assaulted; others “are not sure” if they have been victimized because of the presence of alcohol and/or drugs; still others are in violent relationships with their sexual partners. When she receives a request to assist a sexual assault survivor, she is contractually obligated to respond within 45 minutes. Said Loshun:

The first six weeks of fall semester are my busiest time. And I really believe—and [scholars] have done some research on this—that it is usually freshmen, first time away from home, who are the most vulnerable. They want to fit in, so they are willing to do a little more risky behavior by doing a lot of drinking. And upperclassmen have actually disclosed to me that they look for freshmen—they call them “fresh meat” and “easy pickings”...They know that freshmen are unaware of even what resources are available on campus.

Educational offerings include visiting classes, fraternities, and sororities where she shares information about her office and about personal safety. Speaking to these intimate groups of 25-40 students, she said, provides the opportunity to answer specific questions students may have about sexual assault.

To keep their attention, I offer prizes for asking questions such as whistles and key rings with my phone number on them. Many of their comments begin with “my friend was raped” or “a friend asked me about,” so I make certain to have extra business cards and brochures available. I also hang around after class in case someone wants to talk with me further.

In addition, Loshun helps to coordinate annual Take Back the Night and Walk a Mile in Her Shoes events. Recently, over 700 students attended the showing of the biographical film *A Life Interrupted*, which depicts the events surrounding one woman’s sexual assault. The focus of the movie, Debbie Smith, attended the showing of the film and spoke with students about her experiences, telling how her case led to the 2004 passing of an eponymously named federal law that provides funds for states to examine backlogged DNA samples and to train DNA specialists. The bill was reauthorized in 2014. Another sponsored program featured Horatio, a dog who had lived in an abusive home. Horatio would protect his elderly mistress from the brutal beatings by her son by blocking the blows with his body. Explained Loshun, “This [discussion] let students know that [abuse] does happen even to pets. And that’s a warning sign.”

She had advised a campus-based student group whose purpose was to train peer educators. However, in the timespan between our initial interview and the writing of this dissertation—approximately a year—the once-active student group disbanded as activists graduated and Loshun’s budget was eliminated, discontinuing the opportunity to bring speakers to campus as recruitment and educational tools. No coordinated fundraising efforts are conducted at Pilaster to assist Loshun with safety education, and no monies are available to assist survivors with court or moving expenses.

## **Interpretation**

The three telephone interviews—lasting an average of 90 minutes—were conducted following an examination of the Qualtrics data. Once the conversations were completed and transcribed, I randomly assigned each respondent a color and saved her documented answers accordingly. For example, Loshun—the first advocate to be interviewed—was assigned the color red; so the document containing her interview was saved in red lettering. After creating the coding system, I methodically read through Loshun’s answers, noting empirical evidence found in my literature review while being alert to variants in the emerging research.

Contextual information was moved to a separate document with subheads enumerating the following categories: educational background of the advocate, a history of victim advocacy at the university, a thick description of and organizational hierarchy of the advocate’s office, budgetary estimates, and community partnerships. Corresponding information from the other two respondents—each in a separate defining color—was added to these documents.

Data remaining in each initial document were then examined closely for recurring patterns of word usage and topic focus. Initial codes—such as “regulations,” “support,” and “attitudes”—helped to organize the information; and analytic notes containing self-reminders and potential inquiries were attached to the Word documents. These codes were then refined several times in to broader themes of “political influences,” “rape myths,” “federal and state regulations,” and “university response”—categories that were based on common ideas, terminology, and experiences voiced by the respondents. Together, these variables aided in the exploration of how advocates adapt their missions in response to external cues. Overviews of individual programs and their lead advocates are presented first with a discussion of emergent themes afterwards.

Finally, the basic principles of feminist standpoint theory—which acknowledges the unique sensibility of marginalized persons to recognize oppressive actions—comprised the overarching philosophy that informed this study: Knowledge is socially situated and members of low-status groups within masculine-dominated organizations such as public universities are uniquely qualified to identify their own needs and to question the priorities of their superiors.

The three respondents are practitioners of what Martin (2005, p. 2) calls “rape work,” advocates who share a basic contractual obligation to educate and assist survivors of sexual assault. These epistemic agents are institution-bound, so their social locations affected both their responses and my understanding of their shared knowledge.

Each program hosts annual Take Back the Night marches and co-sponsors a variety of other campus events focused on personal safety and empowerment. All three respondents are designated “responsible employees” whose legal obligation is first to the university. Yet despite their employment within that setting, none define themselves as agents of institutional change or as leaders in the traditional sense; for their roles contrast with the transactional-transformational dichotomy established by Burns (1978). In the former, recognized institutional leaders create working environments whereby the status quo is maintained through a system of rewards and punishments; in the latter, acknowledged leaders work with subordinates to affect positive change within an institution. But advocates fit neither of these categories, for they are marginalized workers whose leadership is often unacknowledged by their superiors. As a result, they view themselves as advocates working within an institutional setting and have become, in essence, tempered radicals, “individuals who are committed to their organizations and also to a cause, community, or ideology that is fundamentally different from and possibly at odds with the dominant of their organization” (Meyerson & Scully, 1995, p. 586).

The respondents are female—as are the lead advocates of all 12 surveyed universities—and have earned advanced degrees. Each answers to an organizational hierarchy dominated by middle-aged white males and interacts with police forces that are also male dominated.

Arkin's Dawn Asternale holds a master's in psychology with a focus on sexual health and is trained in substance- and sexual-abuse prevention. Her office, located in a campus health center, is clinical and efficient in appearance; and her budget is attached to that facility. Two other advocates are available to assist students. She was friendly and forthcoming during the interview but was conscious about providing examples that might reveal her or her university's identity. "I could give you horror stories to illustrate our police chief's attitude [about rape], but to tell you about them would be instantly recognizable." She did, however, disclose a myriad of problems she has encountered with members of her institution's hierarchy who embrace "a conservative ideology" and who do not "think we are needed because rapes are not happening." Her observations are included later in this chapter.

In stark contrast is Griffith's Yasmin Sholes, who holds a doctorate in public policy with a focus on gender and social policies. Her office, housed under the auspices of Office of Institutional Equity and Diversity, is located in a newly renovated Women's Center, which employs six full-time professional staff members trained in crisis intervention. She stressed that no territorialism exists between internal and external constituents and that her budget is adequate for her needs. Indeed, she indicated that she is "appreciative" of the support she receives from her superiors and simply admitted to being "frustrated" that universities do not get enough "clarity on what [reported information] is mandatory."

Only as I was transcribing the interview did I realize a possible reason for her uncomfortably upbeat manner; for, indeed, this awkwardness seemed mutual: While I was asking

follow-up questions to discern details about possible hindrances to how she assisted sexual assault survivors, she was using hyper-positive language—“amazing,” “cooperative” relationships and “robust” academic programs—to describe the totality of her experiences at Griffith. But when I had asked whether the center had received criticism from external agents, she casually noted that interns from a Southern-based “think tank” that funds the advancement of conservative public policies had recently called the center, posing as university students. The lowered tone of her voice indicated that perhaps she feared that *my* questions were also intended to provide fodder for what has become a systematic attack (Adely, 2014; Jaschik, 2009; Kiley, 2013) on university women’s centers and women’s studies programs by conservative ideologues who posit that activists are making “victimhood a coveted status that confers privileges” (Will, 2014).

Finally, Piaster University’s lone advocate, Mae Loshun, holds a master’s degree in organizational management and leadership. Despite her discipline, she does not define herself as a leader, as she “often feels invisible” on campus. Counselors “do not respect [her] as being like them,” she said, because she holds no degree or certificate in psychology and thus “is not seen as being really qualified” to perform her duties. Instead, she had been hired at the university largely on the strength of 20 years of court advocacy experience. And she is not invited to speak to students at orientation, she contends, because “administrators do not want to scare students and their parents in to thinking that there is a rape problem on campus...I wonder sometimes that they believe the problem will go away if we just don’t talk about it.”

She has no support staff and is “on call 24/7 and am required to respond to calls within 45 minutes.” She also has no operating budget although she is able to request funds from the student activities board.



Loshun emphasized that her office has been reassigned five times in nine years. And while the victim advocate's office is now loosely coupled with the campus police department, she has no collegial or personal interaction with its staff beyond those she encounters in the performance of her duties. "My position is constantly in danger of being eliminated because it is viewed [by some administrators] as a luxury position." In short, there is little evidence of shared organizational values or culture; and Loshun emphasizes her dedication to the victims, not to her employer. "Before I can speak with you, I must first get permission from my superiors." Once she received that permission, she was eager to speak, her frustration with administration evident in her un-self-conscious rhetoric. From the frequent moving of her office to the curtailing of her budget, Loshun wondered aloud if "they are just trying to get rid of me because I make too much noise."

### **Identified Factors**

#### **External Influences**

In the late 20<sup>th</sup> Century, "the personal is the political" (Hanisch, 1969/2006) became a mantra of Second Wave feminists who "came to understand that there were no rigid boundaries between organizers and women who [seek] help" (Bumiller, 2008, p. 3). The rape-law reform movement had given birth to university activism, which in turn saw the rise of women's studies programs, women's centers, and on-campus victim advocates.

Organized opponents of gyno-focused curricula and policies—and the premise that society's construction of gender roles is the root cause of violence against women (Lorber, 1994)—resorted to scare tactics aimed at university benefactors, proclaiming that core courses were little more than "pop therapeutic support groups" and that feminist leaders were calling for censorship of "everything masculine" in the name of equality (Patai, 2000, p. 519). Furthermore,

detractors claimed, students were not learning “correctly”—specifically, there were reports that students were being given “exaggerated” data on sexual and domestic violence against women and that instructors devalued men’s contributions to society (Patai, 2000, p. 523).

Recently, conservative critics have shifted strategies, condemning what they see as the university system’s violation of the accused’s due process (Foundation for Individual Rights in Education [FIRE], 2014) and challenging the methodology of research conducted by the White House Task Force to Protect Students from Sexual Assault (Contorno, 2014). In response to the government report, FIRE (2014) president Greg Lukianoff said that “only the most meager sense of the rights necessary to secure fundamentally fair hearings” was being used to “safeguard an alleged perpetrator’s right to notice and to be heard.” Will (2014) alleges that colleges and universities are “learning that when they say campus victimizations are ubiquitous...they make victimhood a coveted status that confers privileges, victims proliferate.”

Griffith University’s lead relationship and sexual violence prevention advocate, Yasmin Sholes, reported one unsettling tactic:

I have not been approached directly by conservative groups although interns at [a conservative think-tank] have called the Center posing as students—and some of them might actually be students—trying to play GOT YOU. Our Women’s Studies Program has received some scrutiny, and the size of diversity offices within the university system has been questioned.

Likewise, Piaster University’s Mae Loshun reported hearing unofficial reports of external agents wanting to “sit in” on Women’s Studies classes to “hear what is being said.” Continued Sholes:

[Anticipating potential criticism] is frustrating because [we are] trying to do right by students. Still, we are a state agency; so it is fair to be asked *where is my money going?* We have to show quantitatively that what we are doing is important—promoting critical thinking, keeping students safe, that we are open minded and do not have an agenda. But it is hard to quantify because we do not really know how many we touch...[We must remember that] we all want to make the best use of resources.

## **Rape Myths**

The prevailing social mythos that blames sexual assault survivors for their own victimization continues to plague the work of victim advocates so that "many women fail to view their experiences as rape even when what occurred to them legally qualifies that way" (Martin, 2005, p. 5). Indeed, Loshun indicated that students often arrive at her office seeking "validation that their instincts are correct" and that they were, indeed, assaulted. They may have been forced to perform oral sex but are not sure if that act constitutes rape—it does, according to the law (Cornell, 2010)—or a woman may have awoken in a stranger's room with her clothes disheveled but have no memory of what had occurred in the previous hours. Said Loshun:

I even had a student say to me, "He said, 'I'm almost done. Let me finish.'" It's so hard for me not to react. You've just got to focus and not react when they say that. So I'll say to them, "Do you think that you were sexually assaulted because he just had to finish even though you said 'no'?" She's like, "Well, I don't know. I'm not sure. Do you think that was sexual assault?" And I'll go, "Yeah, that definitely was."

But even under such blatant circumstances, some survivors are reluctant to prosecute because, she continued, "they are embarrassed that they put themselves in that situation."

Hambleton (2001) suggests that this adherence to rape mythos may have its historical roots in

Western society's private property laws wherein women were defined as being the legal and sexual possessions of men. Whether this hypothesis is wholly valid will require more study; but Littleton and Axsom (2003) have noted that such learned "sexual scripts" play a role in rape misperceptions, influencing how victims perceive their attacks: "This disconnect between individuals' ideas about rape and the reality of most actual rape experiences also helps explain why so many victims themselves do not conceptualize their experience as a rape" (Littleton, 2011, p. 794).

In addition, a victim may have acquaintances in common with her rapist (Chen & Ullman, 2010; Paul, Zinzow, McCauley, Kilpatrick, & Resnick, 2013), and potential allies might instead accuse her of complicity or malice (Mardorossian, 2002; Suarez & Gadalia, 2010). Loshun noted that women to whom she has spoken are often harsher on rape victims than are men. "They ask what she was wearing, if she was drinking, if she was making out with him. Some can be quite cruel."

Such "slut shaming"—often-public reminders of women's "gendered role in the heterosexual script" (Almazon & Bain, 2015, p. 2)—too often serves to silence victims. But relegating victims to the status of "other" also emotionally and psychologically distances women from their victimized sisters. "Women are likely to feel more personally similar [than men] to the victim of a rape scenario and as such will employ defensive attribution as a means of protecting themselves from a similar fate" (Grubb & Turner, 2012, p. 16).

There is anecdotal evidence that this (re)education may be having a positive effect although Asternale still occasionally hears the university police chief mockingly say, "She went to his apartment. What did she think was going to happen?" But these "beliefs, stereotypes, and

just plain ignorance about rape must be challenged. Most people do not understand rape as a violent assault; they must be educated" (Martin, 2005, p. 216). But, said Sholes:

Students and parents are beginning to ask questions about campus safety because of publicity generated by the [White House] task force; and some external constituents are still surprised at the national statistics on sexual violence...So I do not hear students being openly biased against victims or denying rape like I did five years ago.

### **Federal and State Regulations**

The Clery Act (USDOE, 2011) requires federally subsidized colleges and universities to maintain student-focused crime statistics. According to the U.S. Department of Education's (2011) "Campus Safety and Security Reporting," institutions receiving federal monies must accurately report data on sexual assault, domestic violence, dating violence, and stalking and must include clear definitions for each of these crimes—including an explication of what constitutes "consent" (Clery, 2014). However, all three advocates agree that the reporting protocol contains often-conflicting directives. Said Sholes, "We need clarity on what is mandatory. There is no clear rule on what needs to be done and who needs to be responsible for doing it."

The respondents are not alone in this perception: A recent campus climate survey conducted by the Association of American Universities [AAU] (2015) indicates that undercounting of rape reports is common; and the Clery Center (2014a) itself estimates that only 37% of universities routinely report statistics accurately as required by law despite the threat of punitive action by the government. In addition, "during audits, universities submit sexual assault incident reports that are an estimated 44% higher than prior submissions (Yung, 2015, p. 6). But even when noncompliance is blatant, comparatively few penalties were imposed in the act's first

two decades, averaging three fines a year. “[In 2013,] the Department imposed a record-high, 8 fines, ranging from \$82,500 to \$280,000 and totaling \$1,455,000. That figure approaches the cumulative total of \$1,650,000 for all fines issued in the previous 22 years of the Act's existence” (Lacher & Ramos, 2014).

A weakness in the reporting system, Loshun notes, is the way universities can "skirt the gray areas" of crime statistic reporting by omitting information involving students who are victimized off campus. Said Loshun:

If [the university] could somehow anonymously have a survey on campus, I think it would just rock us if we knew how many students are victims. I think our [real] numbers are staggering, and the sad part is that we don't have the clear numbers.

Because only crimes that occur on or adjacent to campus must be reported under The Clery Act, the deflated numbers may give current and future members of the university community a false sense of security because, Loshun continues, “the numbers do not reflect the numbers of phone calls and visits she receives from students throughout the academic year.” Indeed, the University of Georgia-Athens police recently removed third-party reports from its 2014 Clery report, reducing the recorded number of sexual assaults from 71 to 11—a 545% downward adjustment—because the university was “told by the U.S. Department of Education that...reports from outside organizations, or any report with an unknown location, should not be included in the official statistics” (Harris, 2015). When asked about her own view of information required for—and omitted from—Clery reports, Asternale responded:

Sometimes, more information can be better; but [the government needs] to clarify what that means. The Clery stats are important, and I am glad that we are putting them out there; but I don't think it is telling the whole story. Right now, Clery stats only include

attacks that happen on campus, which really only happens to people living in residence halls because it just doesn't usually happen with outsiders. Attacks that happen between students off campus are counted. But we also have attacks that happen to students by non-students, and those are not.

The White House Task Force to Protect Students from Sexual Assault (2014) set new reporting protocols, which were to be implemented in fall 2015. And while Sholes is "surprised that the mandates are being rolled out piecemeal," she is "grateful" that the national dialogue on sexual violence is moving from anecdotal to quantitative:

Now, everyone prefers statistics; and the conversation has morphed because there is more of a national discussion about how prevalent sexual violence is on college campuses. We are able to start those conversations at a deeper level, and I am appreciative of that; and I am seeing more students willing to come forward.

### **University Response**

Griffin (qtd. in Klein, Berube & Rhodes, 2000) calls sexual violence "a chief tool of the patriarchy," equating it to "a male protection racket" where women are forced to rely on the protection of men. Brownmiller (1975/1993, p. 5) concurs:

[Rape] is nothing more or less than a conscious process of intimidation by which *all men* keep *all women* in a state of fear," an act of brute power, "a thoroughly detestable physical conquest from which there could be no retaliation in kind.

But it is not just rapists who have power; it is also the male hierarchy that dominates the studied universities. My study focused on the experiences of victim advocates in institutions of higher education who "stay in touch with, inform, support, and assist rape victims...[but] are regularly asked to place their organization's interest ahead of the victims" (Martin, 2005, p. 16).

Male administrators, say both Loshun and Asternale, frequently "practice gender" (Martin, 2006, p. 254) when considering, investigating, and/or prosecuting sexual assaults on women in their respective institutions. Such androcentric organizational models dictate "allowed behaviors... locations in physical space...[and perceived] power" within institutions. Martin (2004) further advances that these models echo cultural norms and expectations about gender—assigning priorities accordingly—and, in fact, frames gender itself as a foundational social institution working within other institutions. To "practice" gender (Martin, 2006, 2004), therefore, is to act unreflectively at work, adhering to learned behaviors that reflect traditional roles. Indeed, said Asternale, male superiors who “have their own agendas” often thwart her efforts to assist survivors, reinforcing the masculine authoritative voice:

The [Arkin University] police chief has ruled the roost for a long time. He does not appreciate what we do; he does not want us anywhere near [victims in crisis]. He says that we can accompany survivors [to the hospital], but then he will not let us in the room because he says we are hindering his investigation. He and most of his officers have a conservative ideology; and he doesn't believe we are needed because he doesn't believe rapes are happening...He thinks the numbers are inflated and that women are coming forward because of regret.

Having a police official publicly undermine the authority of the campus advocacy program is disconcerting for some survivors, Asternale continued, because they fear she holds the same judgmental view of sexual assault victims. Having to overcome that mistrust makes assisting them problematic. Said Loshun,



They have to make life-changing decisions under pressure; and if they feel that I cannot be trusted, those decisions are even more stressful. So I give them options and let them know that the more difficult decisions like pressing charges can be made later.

In addition, said Asternale, “it is difficult for the [community] to understand what we do when the police chief is not respectful...He is often vocal in the community, and he has a lot of local power because he has been here a long time.” She went on to say that both internal and external constituents have questioned her need for more funding if “there isn’t really a problem.”

Such discursive political ideology may work to silence the voices of victims who do not mirror the archaic stranger-in-the-darkness scenario and reinforces “patriarchy’s marginalization of women and their experiences” while adhering to “rape myths [that] serve to legitimize sexual violence against women” (Edwards, Turchik, Dardis, Reynolds, & Gidycz, 2011 p. 762).

Loshun “was once told that the advocate’s office is a luxury position.” And while the United States Department of Education (Ali, 2011) mandates that universities should make every effort to uphold victim confidentiality, Loshun sees herself as being pressured to do otherwise—perhaps because her office is housed under the auspices of the police department and not a counseling center.

Our state's statute says that victim advocates are protected to not have to disclose the names of victims. But administrators are telling me that [Piaster University] doesn't care what the statute says. They want me to break the law because they want the names of students who have been victims of sexual assault...My supervisor in the police department also wants me to disclose, and I explained that the kids won't come to see me if think they cannot trust me.

Instead, she informs them of the services she can offer; but stresses that "if you want to be confidential and you do not want anyone to know what you are going to tell me, do not give me your full name, especially if it is about a sexual assault." And while she will assist the student in securing a requested appointment with the Piaster's counseling center, she will not reveal the survivor's name when doing so in case the student decides not to keep the appointment.

Victims also may need her presence when they inform their parents of the assaults. Loshun is not allowed under federal code § 99.5 of the Family Education Rights and Privacy Act Regulations—commonly known as FERPA—to speak with parents of majority students without the latter's written permission (USDOE, n.d.); but she is willing to meet with the parents in the presence of the victims:

Sometimes, I'm available as a little bit of a buffer between the victims and their parents...but [parents] may just need that support also. [Victims] also want me to assure the parents that this was not her fault because students—all victims—always blame themselves right away. Other times, I am available to let [survivors] just sit and talk so that they will begin to feel more comfortable talking about what has happened.

### **Summary**

Research (Ahrens, Stansell, & Jennings, 2010) indicates that the very presence of a sympathetic person after an assault may increase a victim's likelihood of disclosing an attack, a decision that may have long-term effects on her mental, emotional, and/or physical health. Still, fewer than 15% of sexual assault survivors will report their victimization to authorities (Wolitzky-Taylor, Resnick, Amstadter, McCauley, Ruggiero, & Kilpatrick, 2011).

One variable that needs further study is the effect university officials' public endorsement or discounting of advocacy offices may have on outcry rates. Respondents at Arkin and Piaster

indicated that they receive little overt support from their superiors; but more surprising were their disclosures that campus police officers themselves—overwhelmingly male—often hinder their “rape work” (Martin, 2005, p. 2) by denying the existence of sexual assaults and/or by not allowing the advocate to be a visible, vocal agent. Neither advocate is the “public face” of university safety—that role falls to their respective institution’s police chief. And although the revelation that rape myths were unanimously viewed by surveyed and interviewed respondents as negatively impacting advocates’ ability to educate and assist survivors, discovering that male university officers at Arkin and Piaster—overtly or not—blame survivors for their own victimization was disturbing, given the officials’ authoritative positions. Likewise, preventing these female advocates from being the identified public voices of sexual safety may serve to undermine their—and perhaps their clients’—credibility in the collective mind of internal and external constituents.

A second commonality between Arkin and Piaster is the uncertainty of funding, a factor that may signify the lack of support from university and state officials. Neither advocate has a stable annual budget nor is targeted fundraising conducted. Therefore, long-range program planning is difficult; and advocates often spend hours each week soliciting co-sponsors for desired speakers and/or projects. In contrast, the advocacy office at Griffith—housed in an on-campus women’s center—has an annual operating budget, a foundation account, and external monies that include a \$1.5 million grant. In this organizational model, programming appears to lift the public profile of Griffith’s advocate, making fundraising more feasible and the assisting of survivors more valued by internal and external agents.

But a larger study is needed to determine if there is a correlation between vocal and/or financial backing by university officials and reporting rates by students. Arkin and Piaster

receive little support, and their common Clery number of nine is double that of Griffith, whose advocate is “grateful” for the support she receives. Whether these former numbers reflect a higher rate of campus violence or a higher rate of reporting is unclear.

Ironically, none of the interviewed advocates is responsible for composing Clery reports for their respective universities, a fact that seems counterintuitive given that these professionals are the initial points of contact for student victims. Coupled with the federally regulated omission of off-campus assault counts, all three advocates expressed skepticism about the accuracy of the annual reports.

Since over 100 universities are currently being investigated by the U.S. Department of Education's Office for Civil Rights for Title IX violations (California Assembly Committee on Public Safety, 2015; Otani, 2015), each of the three advocates is conscious of potential scrutiny by a variety of external agents. But the three respondents all expressed frustration about federal and state regulations for their perceived lack of requirement continuity. “Why can’t the reporting requirements be the same and include a space to record *all* of the rape victims who come to my office?” lamented Loshun (emphasis hers). The respondents are not alone in their confusion. Indeed, the Clery Center (2014a) itself estimates that only 37% of universities accurately report statistics as required by law despite the threat of punitive action by the government.

In addition, conservative analysts (Boguhn, 2014; Lukianoff, 2014; Will, 2014) have begun to openly question the accuracy of oft-quoted statistics showing that 20% of female students become victims of rape while attending American universities (Carey, Durney, Shepardson, & Carey, 2015; White House Council on Women and Girls [WHCW&G], 2014) and the methodology (Contorno, 2014) behind researchers' data gathering techniques.

Taken together, these factors affect advocates' ability to educate students about and assist students after sexual assaults. In Chapter 5, I will offer recommendations based on theory and empirical evidence to help advocates—and by extension, universities themselves—better serve survivors of sexual violence.

## CHAPTER 5: CONCLUSION

“The master's tools will never dismantle the master's house.”

Audre Lorde

In *The Return of the Native*, Hardy (1878/1980) wrote of The Quiet Woman, a pub whose moniker has been ubiquitous throughout the British Isles since the 18th Century. A more common variant is The Silent Woman with ancillary signage displaying a decapitated or de-tongued woman and the couplet: "Here is a woman who has lost her head / She's quiet now—you see, she's dead" (Jack, 2012; Smith, 2014). Hauntingly, its visual and subliminal message echoes throughout 21st-Century American college campuses: Society may judge women who speak out.

For this dissertation, I have studied a small, select group of university-employed advocates whose challenge it is to give voice and solace to survivors of sexual violence. Along the way, I have discovered that a shared passion to educate students about and to assist them after a sexual assault is affected by several of the same factors despite the advocates having to function under disparate organizational hierarchies.

The first section of this concluding chapter contains a brief overview of my study: its purpose, focus, theoretical framework, research design, and findings. Following this synopsis is a connection of my data to feminist standpoint theory and to empirical evidence cited earlier in the dissertation. Concluding this chapter are practitioner- and policy-oriented recommendations for how to make university campuses safer. While this advice does not constitute an exhaustive list of possible actions, the suggestions are gleaned from information shared by or recommendations made by respondents during the interviews.

### Overview of the Study

Research (Carey, Durney, Shepardson, & Carey, 2015) estimates that upwards of 25% of American co-eds will be sexually assaulted before they graduate, a rate five times higher than in

the non-college population. Yet fewer than 15% of survivors will inform authorities (Wolitzky-Taylor, Resnick, Amstadter, McCauley, Ruggiero, & Kilpatrick, 2011) and an undercounting of reported rapes is common (Cantor, Fisher, Chibnall, & Townsend, 2015; Clery Center, 2014a).

The purpose of this study was to examine responses revealed by informants to the central query: What factors do university victims' advocates identify as affecting their ability to educate students about and to assist students after sexual assaults? To answer this question, an anonymous Qualtrics survey was sent to advocates serving twelve comparable public co-educational universities located in the Southern seaboard states of Virginia, North Carolina, South Carolina, Georgia, and Florida.

After the data were examined, I selected three of the surveyed universities—referred to in this dissertation as Arkin, Griffith, and Piaster—whose mission statements emphasize service but whose offices are housed under different organizational models: a health center, a women's center, and a police department, respectively. The lead advocates at these universities were then contacted and interviewed using foundational questions listed in Appendix C. The basic principles of feminist standpoint theory—which acknowledges the unique sensibility of marginalized persons to recognize oppressive actions—comprised the overarching philosophy that informed this study.

### **Summary of the Findings**

Knowledge is socially situated, according to the tenets of standpoint feminism; and members of low-status groups within a hierarchy are uniquely qualified to identify their own needs and to question the priorities of their superiors (Bowell, n.d.). It is through this lens that I examined the responses given by the questioned advocates. Specifically, the organization-

focused "rape work" of standpoint feminist Martin (2005) established the foundation from which I set out to uncover what factors affect victim advocacy in higher education.

Not surprisingly, the lack of stable funding was cited as a negative factor by a majority of the surveyed respondents. And indeed, financial insecurity was identified by two of the three interviewed respondents as having a prohibitive effect on both the educating of students about and the assisting of survivors after sexual assaults as programming and materials must be negotiated and working hours must be extended without additional pay. Loshun—the sole advocate at Piaster—saw the eliminating of her operating budget as a “denial of a rape problem” by predominately male administrators, a sentiment echoed by Arkin University’s Asternale, whose campus police chief is on record as having publicly disavowed the need for victim advocacy if “girls would just stop putting themselves in these situations.”

According to Bird (2004, p. 53) social institutions such as universities are "agents of the patriarchy" wherein males hold the majority of power in organizational hierarchies (Henwood & Pidgeon, 1995). This patriarchy may encompass "activities, ideas, beliefs, and values that are associated with men, maleness and masculinity" when those concepts "are valued more than those associated with women" (Zalewski, 2003). But whether the lack of funding for the respective advocacy offices at Arkin and Piaster directly correlates to the perceived misogynist attitude of university administrators is unclear; for each institution also employs trained counselors, a Title IX officer, and a Dean of Students, all of whose units offer advocacy services such as rape crisis intervention. Perhaps, then—as State budgets continue to dwindle—the issue of underfunding lies with this duplication of services or the territorialism inherent in such redundancy.

The physical location of an advocate’s office is an additional factor that may affect



funding. Loshun and Asternale are housed within other units—the former in the campus police department; the latter in the student health center. Neither victim advocate office is autonomous and neither is given priority marketing by the university throughout the academic year. The respondent who expressed satisfaction with her office’s funding, however—Sholes from Griffith University—is housed in an identifiable women’s center whose mission of advocacy is clearly marketed and whose office is centrally located. Further research is needed to determine if the establishment of such a gender-focused center may diminish the number of sexual assaults, eradicate rape myths, and/or increase outcry rates.

Perhaps most commented upon by the respondents, however, are the changing federal and state regulations. While the interviews were conducted before mandated updates would go in to place in fall 2015, all three advocates were being trained in these VAWA amendments to Clery. Updates include—but are not limited to--the clarification of “hate crimes” to reflect gender identity, ethnicity, and national origin bias; the clarification of the definition of “rape” to align with the FBI’s inclusion of rape, sodomy, and the use of objects as weapons of sexual violence; and the requirement that campus officials maintain statistics on sexual assault, stalking, dating violence, and domestic violence. In addition, new rules dictate the limited conditions under which institutions may remove reports deemed “unfounded.”

Despite their extensive re-training, the three interviewed respondents expressed frustration at the seemingly contradictory requirements of federal, state, and university reporting requirements as well as the lack of public acknowledgement of off-campus assaults. While the new regulations are “a good first step,” said Asternale, having advocates testify before Congress would be a better second one.

But more than the examination of quantifiable data that arose during the researching of this dissertation, however, is the self-confirmation that the narrative model provides "a fundamental structure of human meaning making" (Rossiter & Clark, 2007, p. 13); for [the] process of achieving knowledge begins when standpoints begin to emerge. They emerge when those who are marginalized and relatively invisible from the vantage point of the epistemically privileged become conscious of their social situation with respect to socio-political power and oppression, and begin to find a voice. (Bowell, n.d.)

The ultimate goal of my research was to propose ways in which advocates—and by extension, universities themselves—might better serve survivors of sexual violence. What follows are recommendations derived from conversations with the respondents.

### **Recommendations**

The Clery Act is having a positive effect on campus safety: In the past decade, universities have reported a 9% drop in violent crime (Shapiro, 2010); and researchers (Stampler, 2014) estimate that a higher percentage of sexual assaults are being reported. But reliable statistics remain elusive; for with few exceptions, official data reflect only those crimes that have been reported directly to police officers (Walters, 2010) with an estimated 95% of rapes remaining undocumented (AAUW, n.d.; Black et al., 2011).

According to the respondents, having clearer guidelines is essential. Frequent climate surveys called for in the new VAWA regulations may be a good foundation to gauge on-campus attitudes and knowledge about sexual violence and to help universities adapt prevention and response measures to specific groups. But reliable, relevant data must be collected; and climate reviews should include an opportunity for respondents to anonymously report sexual violence that has occurred on campus, allowing evaluators to more precisely assess the frequency and

locations of assaults. Annual or biennial surveys may also help track trends, measure the accuracy of Clery reports, and aid administrators in targeting specific groups for increased resources. And while prevention education must continue, meaningful changes in the way sexual assaults are reported, investigated, and prosecuted need to be made.

### **Preventing Sexual Assaults**

Research (Carey, Durney, Shepardson, & Carey, 2015; Krebs, Lindquist, Warner, Fisher, & Martin, 2007) indicates that the first six weeks of one's freshman year—known colloquially as the “red zone”—is a time of heightened danger for women.

The studied universities distribute safety guidelines during orientation sessions and affiliated clubs hold special sessions on personal welfare, but students may spend the remainder of their college careers without hearing these messages again. To combat this dearth of information, I recommend that students be required to complete university-specific online modules on sexual violence and alcohol use in the first six weeks of *each* fall semester with measures put in place to prevent registration for the following semester until this requirement is successfully fulfilled. Having students complete these units would serve as informative reminders each new academic year and may function as an efficient way to disseminate updated policies. Notes DeGue (2014, p. 8):

Brief, one-session educational programs conducted with college students, typically aimed at increasing knowledge or awareness about rape or reducing belief in rape myths, comprise the bulk of the sexual violence prevention literature...Although these brief programs may increase awareness of the issue, it is unlikely that such programs are sufficient to change behavioral patterns that are developed and continually influenced and reinforced.

Universities may further assist with student edification by not relegating discussions of sexual violence to niche communities, as such education is not just the purview of “life skills” seminars or Women’s Studies classes, the latter of which conservative critics deem to be spaces of “hysterical reactionism” (Paglia, 1991a) that create an “apocalyptic tone” (Marcus, 1992, p. 168). The Centers for Disease Control’s Division of Violence Prevention (2015) recommends multi-session curricula such as Safe Dates and Shifting Boundaries, two models that have shown some success in middle and high schools (DeGue, 2014).

Discussing sexual violence both in orientation sessions and in classrooms across the disciplinary spectrum with a strong, constant message illustrating the university’s commitment to rape prevention and student safety may help to eradicate the current rape mythos and silence these critics. Central to the message should be the roles of personal responsibility and bystander intervention as well as information about services provided by the victim advocate. Says Littleton (2011, p. 795):

Rape education programs need to focus on broadening individuals’ scripts for rape rather than focusing on dispelling specific rape myths in isolation... These problems should also focus on defining sexual assault as a societal problem for which all individuals share responsibility.

In addition, visual messages should be evident wherever students gather: in dorm hallways, in campus common areas, and in university dining halls. Banners denouncing sexual violence and informing students about where to seek assistance—switched out during the semester to prevent perceptual inattention—should remain visible throughout the year despite potential concerns that such information may discourage students and parents away from the university (Cantalupo, 2011). On the contrary, students and parents may actually be reassured by

the visibility of such messages, as they illustrate the university's commitment to safety and may be used as catalysts for reiterating the message at home. Said Dawn Asternale, a university advocate who was interviewed for this dissertation:

I explain the research [and explain that rape] is not a new phenomenon, this has been happening for a long time. *But look at all of these resources we have now to help your son or daughter...*The parents often have their own histories of experiencing something like sexual violence, and so they are appreciative that we are talking to the students about it. A lot of them don't know how to have a conversation with their sons or daughters, so I let them know at orientation that I will be having this same conversation with the students and introduce myself so that if something happens to them or their friends, they will know where to go.

Such an ongoing commitment to safety education by agencies throughout the university—coupled with student awareness that sexual violence will be prosecuted by criminal courts—may help decrease the number of assaults and increase the percentage of outcries. Continuity of message is essential, and internal and external agents should coordinate their programming efforts, to thwart the territorialism voiced by Asternale:

Because my office has not publicly supported the creation of a Women's Center on campus, [some administrators] have cut us out of a lot of programming that they do. In fact, we were not even asked to assist with the most recent climate survey... Their approach is not collaborative, and what happens is a confusing duplication of services.

Ongoing, place-specific research is needed to see what messages are most successful and what targeted audiences are benefitting from the education.

## **Reporting Sexual Assaults**

Research (Cantalupo, 2011; Chen & Ullman, 2010) indicates that fewer than 15% of sexual assault survivors will report their victimization to authorities, remaining silent for fear of retaliation by the assailant; public disclosure of the attack's details; unsympathetic responses by family, friends, and police; and/or further victimization by the court system (Maier, 2008; RAINN, 2009a). Trained advocates, therefore, are crucial in helping survivors navigate the judicial system and obtain the psychological assistance they may need.

I recommend that extensive research be conducted to establish an appropriate student-to-advocate ratio for federally funded universities. Each of the lead professionals should hold advanced counseling degrees with a minimum of three contact hours in rape crisis training. Currently, no specific licensure is required for sexual assault advocates (“Victim Advocate Training,” 2015).

In order to avoid potential internal conflicts of interest or privacy paradoxes, however, universities should not be the employers of these professionals. Instead, an autonomous advocacy office should be located inside an easily accessible, institution-affiliated women’s or gender center on or near each campus. Professional advocates would be in charge of collecting and disseminating Clery-mandated data as well as information about crimes committed off campus. Such an organizational model may help to discern patterns of violence in the extended community, in turn helping to keep internal and external constituents safer. In addition, assessment of the data would not be affected by university administrators’ desire to show that “there isn’t really a problem,” as noted by Aternale.

Furthermore, a non-university employed, Clery-trained liaison could be available in each campus’ police station to better facilitate communication between “town and gown;” and deputy

advocates—without the formal power to counsel or the legal obligation to divulge details without each victim’s consent—could be stationed throughout campus to encourage survivors to contact a professional advocate and/or the university’s Title IX coordinator. Forbidden to impart legal advice (American Bar Association [ABA], 2012), advocates and trained deputy advocates could, however, assist victims with paperwork such as Domestic Violence Protective Orders and accompany victims to court.

Whether or not victims choose to make a formal complaint, they should always be given the option of having their identities and their health information forwarded to campus officials; and all “parties must comply with applicable confidentiality and privacy laws and obligations, consistent with federal civil rights requirements” (White House, “Building Partnerships,” p. 4). Furthermore—with an estimated 100,000 sexual assaults involving alcohol each year (Campbell, 2011)—policies must be in place to assure victims that they will not be cited for underage drinking when they report a crime.

Before the Clery Act was passed in 1990, victims of campus sex crimes could report only to university police officers, many of who had little sensitivity training and whose loyalty lay with their employers. “One of the fundamental tensions...is between maintaining the image of the university in order to attract and retain students and simultaneously managing and protecting existing students” (Walsh, 2011, p. 27).

The Clery Act has made compulsory the reporting of crimes that occur on campuses for colleges and universities that receive federal funds (Cornell, 2010); but stronger efforts are needed before American campuses are safe places to learn, work, and reside. Reporting only those assaults that occur on and immediately adjacent to university property may give the community—inside and outside the confines of campuses—a false sense of security as the

numbers do not reflect the actual number of attacks on students, faculty, and staff members. Coupled with an estimated 95% of rapes remaining undocumented (AAUW, n.d.; Black et al., 2011), society has a muddled picture of this crime's actual frequency.

### **Investigating Sexual Assaults**

Proposed updates to federal guidelines—supported by the U. S. Department of Education's Office for Civil Rights (2014)—may soon force universities to begin responding more aggressively to victimization that occurs both on and off campus (Ali, 2011; Bernstein, 2011; Sieben, 2011). But perhaps investigations of violent crimes—including sexual assaults—should not be left to campus police officers at all. While these professionals receive training comparable to peace officers in their respective states and may include both sworn officers and unsworn security officers (Bureau of Justice Statistics [BJS], 2015), they may not hold the same level of training as their off-campus brethren (Tucker, 2013). Additionally, the former—financially dependent on their employers—may owe their allegiances to their respective universities and not necessarily to the laws of the land, creating an inherent conflict of interest.

The pervasiveness of rape and universities' potential reluctance to investigate and act upon complaints creates a hostile environment for all students (Ali, 2011; Sieben, 2011). However, there may be an economic advantage to *not* including non-campus crimes in Clery reports: Tourism dollars may be affected if the community is viewed as dangerous by potential visitors and residents, and university applications may fall if promising students and faculty are frightened away by the statistics.

[Campus] police departments are under the immediate control or influence of college administrators. This relationship compromises the hallmark principles of American jurisprudence: objectivity, fairness, impartiality; due process; and, most important,



freedom from political interference in matters of law enforcement. (Wright & Beaver, 2014)

More focused, less potentially biased detective work is needed to investigate sexual assaults without regard to the reputation of the university under whose auspices campus police work. Just as constituents would not tolerate the in-house investigating of a student's murder, neither should the responsibility of other violent crimes be left to university employees to manage.

One solution may be to shift investigative powers off away from universities, charging campus police with only the investigations of non-violent, on-campus crimes such as theft, vandalism, and alcohol or drug abuse. Via a Memorandum of Understanding between each university and its host city, the local police departments could establish a College Victims Unit to investigate violent crimes committed by and directed at students and college employees. State and federal governments could make three-year grants available to establish and operate these forces, funding that would be available for renewal upon benchmarked successes.

College Victims Unit investigators would not answer to university officials; but a representative officer would serve as an *ex officio* member on each institution's campus safety board where s/he would present a monthly report to the dean of students, the provost, and the campus chief of police, cataloguing students who have been investigated or arrested for violent crimes. This sharing of information and the coordinating of duties would also fulfill the White House (2014) task force's recommendation that campus and community police officers synchronize efforts to combat sexual assault.

Recently, the trend to expand the jurisdictions of campus police to off-campus student communities has been gaining in popularity (Tucker, 2014). Technically, this action satisfies the

Clery Act's (2014) requirement that universities provide data for crimes committed "on campus, in unobstructed public areas immediately adjacent to or running through the campus, and at certain non-campus facilities including Greek housing and remote classrooms." But this geographic expansion of powers is fraught with potential liabilities. While approximately 92% of campus police carry weapons and have full arrest powers (BJS, 2014), many may not have adequate training for violent crime investigations. Smaller schools may even contract with private security firms whose officers have little real authority to arrest suspects or fully investigate crimes on campus (Engber, 2014), potentially hampering investigations and putting the privacy rights of students and their non-student roommates at risk.

Despite recommendations (DeGrue, 2014) that colleges follow best practices, Senate efforts (S. 674, 2015) to increase federal resources for "compassionate assistance and awareness for survivors of [campus] rape" remain stalled in committee as the end of 2015 drew near. In addition, the Education Department's Office for Civil Rights—charged with enforcing Title IX—employed half the number of staff members in 2013 as it did in 1980 (Kingkade, 2014b), slowing the government from investigating the estimated 63% of schools that may not be in compliance with Clery (NAGPS, 2014).

### **Prosecuting Sexual Assaults**

Title IX (USDOE, 2014) mandates that each public university establish disciplinary procedures to process all sexual assault allegations, led by a professional who is trained in both legislative and university grievance policies. Its "investigative phase"—which includes actual investigations as well as any hearings and disciplinary actions that may arise from the evidence—must "(comply) with the prompt and equitable requirements of Title IX... (allow) for appropriate interim measures to be taken to protect the complainant during the process...(and

provide) for remedies to the complainant and school community where appropriate” (USDOE, 2014, p. 25).

A formal Title IX hearing is not required, but all parties must be given an equal opportunity to present evidence and be represented by legal counsel. A “preponderance-of-evidence” standard is adhered to—a level of proof quite different from that found in public courts—and universities are encouraged to resolve the issue “promptly and equitably” (USDOE, 2014, p. 27) so that potential accommodations related to academic schedules and living arrangements may be made. University investigations remain parallel to but separate from formal police investigations for the purposes of protecting both the complainant and the accused while a more thorough “fact-finding” search is ongoing. Double jeopardy does not apply since university actions are viewed as educational and administrative in nature rather than punitive.

But while volunteers who serve on campus disciplinary boards may be uniquely qualified to judge potential academic violations, few university faculty members hold legal degrees or have experience in jurisprudence.

Moreover, colleges have created a dual system of justice, designed not by a legislature but by unelected administrators who are not accountable to the public. This system of justice, separate and unequal, leads to highly disparate and sometimes discriminatory treatment of individuals. (Wright & Beaver, 2014)

These agents may have conflicting loyalties, at once desiring justice while wishing to protect the reputations of their respective schools. University employees are not currently asked to investigate and/or judge felonies such as murder; so asking them to do so with sexual assaults is inconsistent, symbolically relegating sexual violence to a lower status of importance. All violent crimes should be prosecuted by criminal courts of law; and a student-perpetrator found

guilty of rape should be banned both from taking classes at his/her home university and from entering its system's affiliated campuses. In addition, an explanatory notation should be attached to the transcript of each person found guilty of rape, an action that will serve as a warning to other universities and to future employers.

But while criminal records must be made public to protect the community, HIPAA and FERPA privacy restrictions must remain inviolable to protect both the victim and the suspect with all health records remaining the property of the student, not the university. Codifying this status may assist victims—and perhaps (potential) perpetrators—in seeking medical and psychological help. A 2015 court case illustrates the current legal quagmire and its consequences: A rape victim who attended the University of Oregon sued the institution for mishandling her case after three basketball players assaulted her. While the male students—one of who had been previously suspended from another university for rape—were dismissed from school, none had formal charges filed against them. After the victim filed a lawsuit against the university, she discovered that her own campus health records would be used against her in court. She was neither consulted nor warned before her information was sent to university attorneys, and the university is currently under investigation by the Oregon Bar and the Psychologist Board. University officials successfully argued that since the student went to the school's health clinic, her health records belong to the school and therefore could be accessed. In addition, they argued that because the woman claimed emotional distress—a medical claim—the school was entitled to her health records. She has since successfully sued the university, settling for \$800,000 in compensation (Read, 2015; Sebens, 2015).

## **Personal Note**

The White House Task Force to Protect Students from Sexual Assault (2014) has focused a bright and long-overdue spotlight on the issue of campus violence. A national conversation has begun, but much work lies ahead. There are no private solutions to the problem of rape on American campuses, as “personal problems are political problems. There are no personal solutions at this time. There is only collective action for a collective solution” (Hanisch, 1969).

Contributing to the body of knowledge concerning campus advocacy, my research findings identified obstacles encountered by advocates in the performance of their duties; and my recommendations may be utilized by constituents in the future to develop coherent strategies for streamlining communication and services. As a result, campus policies and procedures concerning sexual assault may be amended, leading to a more accurate and transparent documentation of this underreported crime with students benefitting from a collaborative system of receiving safety information, reporting sexual assaults, and obtaining vital assistance. Additionally, the results of this study may influence public policy as constituents become more aware of the scope of sexual violence on campus; for institutions of higher learning are not closed communities and “have considerable influence on the character of a society's overall culture” (Parsons & Platt, 1973).

While existing literature has disclosed a plethora of research conducted on university-sanctioned sexual violence prevention strategies, few studies are available on advocates themselves. Future scholarship may focus on this dearth of information, paying special heed to the experiences and recommendations of university “rape workers” (Martin, 2004) throughout the country who see themselves “not [as] heroic leaders of revolutionary action...[but as]

cautious and committed catalysts that keep going and who slowly make a difference” (Meyerson, 2004, p. 16).

But perhaps—while the media spotlight is focusing on the rape culture found on many American university campuses—the time may have arrived for advocates to collectively reconsider their guarded approach and to embrace their offices as “institutionalized social movements” (Schmitt & Martin, 1999, p. 367), actively working to disrupt the status quo that too-often privileges university reputations over student safety. As the public academy becomes increasingly bureaucratic and technocratic, advocates are situated to redefine educational leadership by claiming a space for disruptive/subversive activity that can support the values of social justice university agents espouse. To create a unified and successful front, the need for senior administrators to publicly and sincerely commit to student safety is paramount. A continuity of message must be vocalized, stable funding for advocacy must be established, and transparency of information must be made available to all constituents.

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## APPENDIX A: IRB APPROVAL



**EAST CAROLINA UNIVERSITY**  
**University & Medical Center Institutional Review Board Office**  
4N-70 Brody Medical Sciences Building · Mail Stop 682  
600 Moyer Boulevard · Greenville, NC 27834  
Office 252-744-2914 · Fax 252-744-2284 · [www.ecu.edu/irb](http://www.ecu.edu/irb)

### Notification of Initial Approval: Expedited

**From:** Social/Behavioral IRB  
**To:** Cheryl Dudasik-Wiggs  
**CC:** David Siegel  
**Date:** 7/30/2015  
**Re:** UMCIRB 15-000372  
Qualitative Study of Victim Advocates in Higher Education

I am pleased to inform you that your Expedited Application was approved. Approval of the study and any consent form(s) is for the period of 7/29/2015 to 7/28/2016. The research study is eligible for review under expedited category # 6, 7. The Chairperson (or designee) deemed this study no more than minimal risk.

**PLEASE NOTE:** It is the opinion of the Chairperson that it may better protect the identity of the universities if you use another method of identification, such as region and type. However, this is merely a suggestion and implementation does not impact your IRB approval.

Changes to this approved research may not be initiated without UMCIRB review except when necessary to eliminate an apparent immediate hazard to the participant. All unanticipated problems involving risks to participants and others must be promptly reported to the UMCIRB. The investigator must submit a continuing review/closure application to the UMCIRB prior to the date of study expiration. The Investigator must adhere to all reporting requirements for this study.

Approved consent documents with the IRB approval date stamped on the document should be used to consent participants (consent documents with the IRB approval date stamp are found under the Documents tab in the study workspace).

The approval includes the following items:

Name	Description
Dudasik-Wiggs (dissertation proposal).docx	Study Protocol or Grant Application
Dudasik-Wiggs (informed consent).pdf	Consent Forms
Dudasik-Wiggs (protocol).pdf	Interview/Focus Group Scripts/Questions
Dudasik-Wiggs (Qualtrics consent).pdf	Consent Forms
Dudasik-Wiggs (Victim advocacy survey).pdf	Surveys and Questionnaires

The Chairperson (or designee) does not have a potential for conflict of interest on this study.

IRB00000705 East Carolina U IRB #1 (Biomedical) IORG0000418  
IRB00003781 East Carolina U IRB #2 (Behavioral/SS) IORG0000418

## APPENDIX B: QUALTRICS SURVEY QUESTIONS

A Qualtrics survey containing the following questions was sent to 12 purposively selected schools serving undergraduate populations of approximately 21,000; have affiliations with victim advocates who assist student survivors of sexual violence; and are recognized as research universities by the Carnegie Classification of Institutions of Higher Education (2015).

- What on-campus outcry services does your university offer victims of sexual violence?

Designated victim advocate(s)

Link on university website to anonymous form

Confidential crisis line

Anonymous reporting to Campus Security Authority

Title IX officer

Police

Dean of Students

Off-campus victim advocacy

Other

- What services does your outcry responder provide?

Accompany victim to hospital

Accompany victim to police

Accompany victim to hearings

Assist victim with forms (ie: restraining orders, complaints, etc.)

Provide counseling

Other

- If a crisis line is available to victims of sexual assault, by whom is it staffed?

Paid professionals (non-police)

Campus police officers

Community volunteers

Faculty volunteers

Staff volunteers

Student volunteers

- What on-campus support services does your university offer victims of sexual violence?

Campus-based victim advocate

Women's Center

LGBTQ Center

Individual counseling services

Support groups

Reading material that may aid recovery

Off-campus referrals

None

Other

- Where is your university's primary victim advocate physically housed?

Women's Center

Counseling Center

Dean of Students office

Student Life

Wellness/Health Center

Student Union

Campus police

Service is outsourced

Other

- Where in your organization is your university's primary victim advocate positioned?

Women's Center

Counseling Center

Dean of Students office

Student Life

Wellness/Health Center

Student Union

Campus police

Service is outsourced

Other

- What on-campus educational services does your university provide about sexual violence?

External speakers

Classroom presentations by advocate(s)

Classroom presentations by students

Classroom presentations by police officers

Orientation presentations

Student group presentations

Presentations to external constituents

Brochures, posters, and other ephemera



Academic courses

Professional development for faculty

Professional development for staff

Website informational links

Sexual assault awareness events

Other

None of the above

- How much annual program funding does your university provide for sexual assault education?

(Totals should not include salaries.)

<\$2,500

\$2,500-\$5,000

\$5,000-\$7,500

\$7,500-\$10,000

>\$10,000

None

- What other funding is provided by the university for the victim advocate's office?

<\$25,000

\$25,000-\$50,000

\$50,000-\$75,000

>\$ 75,000

None

- Approximately how much funding is provided via external grants for the victim advocate's office?

<\$25,000

\$25,000-\$50,000

\$50,000-\$75,000

>\$ 75,000

None

- What factors positively affect your ability to educate students about sexual violence?

Administration

Political climate

Funding

Rape mythos

Paperwork

Community support

Federal regulations

State regulations

University regulations

Organizational hierarchy

Other

None

- What factors negatively affect your ability to educate students about sexual violence?

Administration

Political climate

Funding

Rape myths

Paperwork

Community support

Federal regulations

State regulations

University regulations

Organizational hierarchy

Other

None

- What factors positively affect your ability to assist victims following a sexual assault?

Administration

Political climate

Funding

Rape myths

Paperwork

Community support

Federal regulations

State regulations

University regulations

Organizational hierarchy

Other

None

- What factors negatively affect your ability to assist victims following a sexual assault?

Administration

Political climate

Funding

Rape myths

Paperwork

Community support

Federal regulations

State regulations

University regulations

Organizational hierarchy

Other

None

## APPENDIX C: FOUNDATIONAL QUESTIONS

The following foundational questions were asked of sample respondents.

- What is the history of your university's victim advocacy program?
  - How long has it existed?
  - What precipitated its founding?
  - What changes (if any) have been implemented since its creation?
  - What factor(s) necessitated these changes?
- What is the program's organizational hierarchy?
- Has your university conducted a climate survey?
  - If so, when? What were the results as they pertain to sexual violence?
  - If not, is one scheduled? When?
  - Are the results publicly available?
- What information can you tell me about your position as the lead advocate?
  - What qualifications do you have? Additional training?
  - How long have you been working with victims?
- What are your duties? work hours?
- Does your routine deviate from your job description? Explain.
- What information can you tell me about your program's physical office?
- Where is it located in relation to police? Health center? Counselors?
- Do you find the facilities adequate for students' needs? If not, what changes are needed?
- Have your superiors been supportive of these needs?
- Is the office easily accessible?
- Is the signage clear and prominent?

- Is the office private?
- What information can you tell me about your office staff?
  - How many people work in the victim advocate's office?
  - How many are full-time? Part-time? Volunteers? Students?
  - What are their qualifications?
  - What are their specific duties? Limitations?
  - How often do they receive updated training? What kind?
  - How are employees paid--Grants? State? Other?
- How is information disseminated to students
  - ...about crimes and crime statistics?
  - ...about Title IX?
  - ...about sexual assault prevention?
- What programs are offered?
- How is a rape crisis call to your office handled?
- What is your standard protocol?
- Who is authorized to directly assist students in crisis?
- Is an advocate available 24/7?
- How many calls do you get a week? a semester?
- What percentage of students outcry by phone? text? email? walk-ins? other?
- Are you required to disclose the names of victims?
- Do you assist victims with protection orders?
- Do you accompany victims to the hospital? police? court? other?
- How often do you follow up with victims after an attack?

- What other resources do you offer? [ephemera? speakers? events?]
- What factors do you identify as governing your ability to educate students about preventing assaults?
- What factors do you identify as governing your ability to assist students after a sexual assault?
- With what actors do you interrelate when assisting an assault victim?
- What does your program need to better help students?

