

Background:

Sexual assaults are a serious issue on our college campuses, but unfortunately sexual assaults on college campuses continues underreported. According to the US Department of Justice, about 80% of college student sexual assault survivors do not report their sexual assaults to law enforcement (deHahn, 2017). While, a survey conducted in 2011 found that more than one in five students had been sexually abused (deHan, 2017). On average, 19% of females and 6% of males will be sexually assaulted sometime in college. Sexual assaults also happen to under-represented group including those from the LGBT community, men, people of color and people with disabilities. Approximately 34% of multiracial women, 27% of Alaskan Native/American Indian women, 22% of black women, and 14.6% of Hispanic women have been sexually assaulted (Know Your IX “Statistics”, 2016). Most sexual assault cases among college-age students go unreported because some victims find it personal, some fear of being attacked or shamed by the public for speaking up, and some believe law enforcement won’t help them. Due to underreporting, current statistics on sexual assault are not an accurate depiction of the problem occurring on many college campuses. Sexual assaults also have negative health and economic outcomes on sexual assault survivors. About 34% of college student sexual assault survivors suffer from PTSD and 33% suffer from depression (Know Your IX, 2016). The overall cost of sexual assault cases can range from anywhere between \$87,000 to over \$240,000 which includes the cost of medical and counseling services, and the added cost of school-related expenses.

Goals:

There are three primary goals: 1) Improve sexual assault education for students, faculty and staff; 2) Develop an online survey for students to determine their knowledge on sexual assault and resources for survivors; and 3) Develop an easily accessible national sexual assault database that provides current and accurate data.

Methods:

Policy research, using Bardach’s Eightfold Path and related policy tools, was used to understand the magnitude of sexual assault on college campuses, identify existing laws and policies on sexual assault, and the scope of these policies. A comprehensive literature review yielded a critical analysis of sexual assaults on college campuses, current actions, and gaps within existing policies. A Congressional testimony was developed with a structured argument summarizing the policy research results and offering solutions towards the prevention of sexual assaults on college campuses.

Findings and Recommendations:

Sending representatives from anti-sexual assault organizations to colleges to facilitate faculty and staff sexual assault training on how to handle sexual assault reports and help students seeking help. Developing an annual survey for colleges to see how knowledgeable students are on sexual assault, existing policies, resources available on their campus, and to determine the

effectiveness of existing sexual assault programs. This survey can be useful in determining how to enhance sexual assault education programs and make resources more readily available to student sexual assault survivors. A national sexual assault database that collects current data on sexual assaults on college campuses will improve the accuracy of sexual assault data and ensure it remains up to date and that it is readily accessible to the public.