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Anastacia Webb
Exploring Sexual Assault
Prevention and Education
Programs on College
Campuses

ABSTRACT

This exploratory study was undertaken to better understand the sexual assault prevention and education programming currently in place on college campuses. Additionally, this study sought to understand barriers to implementing programming and the impact that the recent national attention on sexual assault has had on this work. Ten professionals who are involved in sexual assault prevention programming on college campuses were interviewed using semi-structured interviewing. Participants were from a variety of educational settings across the country.

This study found that the biggest obstacles faced in implementing preventive programming are a lack of time and money, with an overwhelming need for increased levels of staffing and resources. All of the participants agreed that recent national attention on sexual assault and recent federal mandates have had a positive impact on their work. The effect of this national attention ranged from the creation of new positions and departments to simply increasing student awareness.

**Exploring Sexual Assault Prevention and Education Programs on College
Campuses**

A project based upon an independent investigation,
submitted in partial fulfillment of the requirements
for the degree of Master of Social Work.

Anastacia Webb
2016

Smith College School for Social Work
Northampton, Massachusetts 01063

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CHAPTER I

Introduction

Sexual assault on college campuses is a matter of public health and safety. Traditionally college aged women are at the highest risk of experiencing sexual assault. A 2015 survey of American colleges and universities found that 23.1 percent of women on college campuses reported being sexually assaulted (Cantor, Fisher, Chibnall, Townsend, Lee, Bruce, & Thomas, 2015, p. 13). Sexual assault on college campuses has received increased public attention in recent years. This increase in publicity is a result of specific high profile cases, new research and reports, and development of new models such as the bystander intervention model. Additionally, the Department of Education, Office of Civil Rights' *Dear Colleague Letter* in 2011, has spurred on the national dialogue about sexual assault on college campuses, as well as the development of new legislation (Fleck-Henderson, 2012). This study is an attempt to increase understanding of how colleges are responding to the problem of sexual assault on campus through proactive means, rather than simply responding once sexual assault has been reported.

Much attention has been focused on how colleges respond to sexual assaults, with significantly less attention focused on steps colleges take to reduce the risk of sexual assault on campus. Under Title IX, all institutions receiving federal funds are required to have a procedure in place to resolve all complaints regarding sexual discrimination, including sexual assault. The school's procedure for responding to sexual assault must follow specific federal requirements laid out in Title IX. However, until recently, there were no similar requirements for schools to implement prevention efforts with regard to sexual assault (U.S. Department of Education, Office for Civil Rights [OCR], 2014).

This changed with the Campus Sexual Violence Elimination Act (Campus SaVE Act) which was passed with the reauthorization of the Violence Against Women Act in 2013 and went into effect in 2015. The Campus SaVE Act was the first piece of legislation to mandate campus prevention programming. Under this law, colleges and universities must provide prevention programming for all new students and employees, as well as ongoing prevention and awareness campaigns (Heldman & Dirks, 2014). As a result of the relatively new nature for this legislation, there has not been much research on the programming currently being implemented at colleges and universities.

Despite the lack of federal requirements for specific prevention programming until recently, many colleges have been attempting to address sexual assault with prevention and education programming. A 2014 study surveyed 1,442 college and university administrators about the schools' approaches to sexual assault, including any prevention efforts. This study found that 85% of those schools provided some type of training to students with regard to sexual assault prevention. There was a great deal of variation in the programs offered and the audience that it was intended for. Specific groups that were required to participate in programming on different campuses included resident assistants, student athletes, and members of campus Greek life (Amar, Strout, Simpson, Cardiello & Beckford, 2014).

There is currently limited research exploring the ways in which schools are addressing sexual assault through proactive measures (Amar, et al, 2014). The limited studies that do exist, such as the one above, have primarily utilized surveys to know what is available for prevention programming as part of the larger picture of sexual assault. These surveys do not allow the same in-depth understanding of how colleges are

addressing the issue and what is driving their decisions that can be gained through interviews.

This qualitative, exploratory study will look at proactive approaches to sexual assault developed by colleges and universities. In-depth, narrative data will be gathered from interviews of 10 college employees who work to address sexual assault on campus. The findings from these interviews may contribute a more detailed understanding about prevention and psycho-education efforts implemented at 10 colleges and the perception of effectiveness. Furthermore, by conducting in-depth interviews rather than surveys, the findings may help to build an understanding of the processes involved in implementing programming and the reasoning that institutions may have for their specific programming. Additionally, individual interviews can help to understand barriers to implementing programming and whether recent public attention focused on sexual assault on college campuses has led to an increase in prevention programming. The findings of this study can serve as a resource to colleges and universities looking to add to their prevention programming, as well as anyone who is interested in better understanding what colleges are currently doing to address sexual assault on campus.

Gaining this understanding is crucial to improve upon efforts already being taken. Sexual assault is a serious problem of public health and safety. College campuses are an environment where sexual assault is experienced at higher rates, as well as an environment where education and prevention efforts can be more easily implemented. The findings of this study may help to identify barriers to implementing programming, as well as factors guiding decisions related to prevention efforts. Finally, the result of this

study may contribute to the development of best practices for sexual assault response teams to employ in the areas of prevention and education.

CHAPTER II

Literature Review

The purpose of this study is to understand what measures colleges are currently taking to reduce instances of sexual assault on their campuses. This chapter will address current literature on sexual assault, with a focus on colleges and prevention approaches. Sexual assault is an ongoing issue on college campuses, and has recently been the subject of a great deal of public attention. However, much of the recent literature on sexual assault on college campuses has focused on how colleges respond once there has been a report of sexual assault. The purpose of this study is to examine how colleges and universities address sexual assault prior to its occurrence. Specifically, this study will be looking at the prevention and education efforts of schools with regard to sexual assault.

This chapter will introduce readers to broader literature regarding sexual assault, its definitions and incidence rates. It will then discuss current legislation and its impact on college campuses. It will include literature on the guidelines and recommendations for proactive sexual assault approaches. I will look specifically at templates for prevention recommended in the literature and bystander intervention as a model. Most literature on what schools are currently doing focuses on reactive responses, however this chapter will explore the literature that does discuss current proactive programming, as well as the outcomes and perceptions of that programming.

Definitions and Statistics

Sexual assault is defined by the United States Department of Justice as any “nonconsensual sexual contact or behavior” (U.S. Department of Justice, Office on Violence Against Women [OVW], 2012, p1). A study conducted by the Association of

American Universities (AAU) (2015) surveyed students at 27 universities and fused more specific definitions in order to get a full understanding of sexual assault on college campuses. Their study found that 11.7 percent of students reported experiencing nonconsensual penetration or sexual touching by force or incapacitation while they were students at the universities. Additionally, the AAU found a wider range of rates of incidences of nonconsensual sexual contact by absence of affirmative consent across the participating campuses, with incidence rates ranging from 5 percent to 21 percent depending on the school. In total the AAU study found that 21.2 percent of college students reported experiencing sexual assault while at their respective schools, with significantly higher rates for female and transgender/genderqueer/nonconforming students. Thirty-three (33.1) percent of female students and 39.1 percent of students who identified as transgender, genderqueer, nonconforming or questioning reported experiencing sexual assault in contrast with 6.3 percent of senior males (Cantor, Fisher, Chibnall, Townsend, Lee, Bruce & Thomas, 2015).

The Campus Sexual Assault (2007) study prepared for the National Institute of Justice had seemingly similar statistics, finding that of the 5,446 women surveyed, 28.5 percent reported having experienced sexual assault. However, a key difference in this study was that almost 16 percent of those women reported experiencing sexual assault prior to attending college, while 19 percent of women reported experiencing sexual assault since entering college (Krebs, Lindquist, Werner, Fisher & Martin, 2007).

Current Legislation

Sexual assault on college campuses is addressed through several pieces of legislation. The key articles of legislation addressing sexual assault on college campuses

include Title IX of the Education Amendments of 1972, the Violence Against Women Act, the Jeanne Clery Act, and most recently, the Campus Sexual Violence Elimination Act. Each of these pieces of legislation interacts with and builds upon one another, creating guidelines and requirements for colleges and universities to follow.

Title IX applies to all schools, school districts, and colleges and universities that receive federal funding. This section of the Education Amendments prohibits sex discrimination, including sexual violence, in educational programs and activities. Title IX requires schools to respond quickly and thoroughly to complaints of sexual assault, as well as requiring schools to implement educational programs and have policies in place to protect students from sexual assault, (U.S. Department of Education, Office of Civil Rights, 2014).

The Jeanne Clery Act was passed in 1990 and expanded upon the requirements put in place by Title IX. In addition to the requirements put in place by Title IX, the Clery Act requires all colleges and universities that receive federal funding to share statistics about crime on campus and all efforts to increase campus safety. Title IX and the Clery Act require schools to provide survivors of sexual assault with specific information, options and resources, (Clery Center for Security on Campus, 2014).

In 1994, the Violence Against Women Act (VAWA) was first passed. VAWA is the most comprehensive piece of legislation addressing sexual assault and violence against women. The most recent Violence Against Women Reauthorization Act was passed in 2013. This Act expands upon the requirements set forth in both Title IX and the Clery Act. VAWA outlines specific discipline procedures and institutional policies with regard to sexual assault that colleges and universities are required to adopt. The

most recent authorization of VAWA in 2013, established the Campus Sexual Violence Elimination Act (Campus SaVE Act). This act explicitly requires colleges and universities to offer prevention and awareness programs that reduce the risk of sexual assault. Specifically, school education programs must include primary prevention and awareness programs for all new students and employees, positive options for bystander intervention, information of risk reduction and warning signs of abusive behavior and ongoing prevention and awareness programs. This legislation is designed to guide the prevention efforts of colleges and universities (The Campus Sexual Violence Elimination Act, 2014).

Guidelines and Recommendations

In order to help colleges and universities comply with the requirements of the legislation discussed above, both organizations and independent researchers have published guidelines and templates. These publications serve to guide institutions and give ideas of best practices for schools to follow. The American College Health Association publishes a tool-kit containing articles, flyers and handouts. Other researchers focus on providing explaining guiding theories, best practices, and parameters that should be met. Much of what is currently published regarding compliance with federal legislation focuses on the school's response to reports of sexual assault rather than prevention methods. For example, one article that strives to provide a template for federal compliance focuses on nine parameters. Only one of those parameters applies to prevention efforts and victim resources. The article states that it is important for institutions to demonstrate supports for ending sexual violence through prevention efforts and services. However, although prevention efforts sound promising, more research

needs to be done in order to understand the effectiveness of these practices (McMahon, 2008).

However, with recent legislation such as the Campus SaVE act, there is hope that there will be more emphasis on prevention approaches in the future. The needs of each campus community are unique and so there is no one-size fits all prescription for prevention approaches. However, some articles attempt to provide guiding standards and theories for colleges and universities to use when designing prevention approaches for their communities (Fleck-Henderson, 2012; Lee, Guy, Perry, Sniffen, & Mixson, 2007). Fleck-Henderson (2012) focuses on the importance of evidence-based prevention efforts, based on solid research and individualized to fit the needs of the campus community. Both Fleck-Henderson (2012) and Lee et. al. (2007) agree that the best prevention efforts must be continuing, multi-faceted and targeted to specific audiences. Additionally, both articles focus on the importance of going beyond simple statistics to understand the campus climate with regards to gender violence (Fleck-Henderson, 2012; Lee, et al 2007).

Prevention Approaches

Most of the current prevention models described in the literature focus heavily on bystander intervention education and attempts to change and challenge social norms. Lee et al (2007) posits that the best prevention strategies are derived from a combination of the feminist anti-rape movement and public health theory. This approach focuses on the importance of understanding the context of rape culture and making changes to social norms with regard to sexuality, gender and violence. Additionally, it is important to understand risk factors, protective factors and environmental factors that contribute to the

perpetration of sexual violence. In order to most effectively address all of these aspects, Lee et al recommend targeting education to three specific groups: potential victims, potential perpetrators and potential bystanders who could have the opportunity to intervene, (Lee et al, 2007).

Similarly to the suggested approach above, Potter (2016) also focuses on the importance of changing prevailing social norms and bystander intervention strategies. However, Potter specifically models her approach after Bronfenbrenner's social-ecological model and uses the anti-drunk driving movement of the 1980's as a guide for applying her approach. Using this approach, Potter looks at sexual assault prevention on five levels: individual, relationship, community, institutional, and societal. On each of these levels, she emphasizes ways to address changing social norms. Additionally, she suggests educating potential bystanders about ways to intervene as one tactic that can be used (Potter, 2016).

In contrast to the more comprehensive approaches discussed by Lee et al (2007) and Potter (2016), Banyard, Moynihan, & Plante (2007) and Coker, Cook-Craig, Williams, Fisher, Clear, Garcia & Hegge (2011), focused specifically on bystander intervention approaches. Although Lee et al (2007) and Potter (2016) viewed bystander intervention as one aspect to be addressed within a prevention framework, Banyard et al (2007) and Coker et al (2011) expanded on bystander intervention as its own extensive program. Bystander intervention strategies seek to increase awareness of the frequency of sexual assault, as well as educating potential bystanders on how to identify potential sexual assault and how to safely intervene (Coker et al, 2011). This explicit training on

how to get involved can increase the bystander's likelihood of intervening, thereby decreasing rates of sexual assault (Banyard et al, 2007; Coker et al, 2011).

Current Programming

Despite current federal legislation and the literature about prevention approaches, there is significantly less information about prevention approaches currently being employed on college campuses. A study conducted by Streng & Kamimura (2015) analyzed ten large public universities for their levels of compliance with federal policy. Although ten is a small sample size, this study found that none of the schools surveyed met full compliance. Additionally, the prevention measures were the most frequently missing from the school policies (Streng & Kamimura, 2015). This study is hampered by a small sample size, but the lack of attention to prevention measures is indicative of larger trends.

The Association of American Universities also conducted a study of 27 American Universities and found that most students who did observe someone in a possible sexual assault encounter did not intervene, and that only about a quarter of students were familiar with the resources available to them on campus (Cantor, Fisher, Chibnall, Townsend, Lee, Bruce, & Thomas, 2015). Although this study did not provide explicit information about programming on campuses, it demonstrates a clear need for prevention programming and education about resources available to students.

Literature about programming currently being used is primarily limited to specific program evaluations, such as the experimental evaluation of the Green Dot program (Coker et al, 2011). This evaluation examined the effectiveness of a specific bystander intervention curriculum that was being used on a college campus and compared the

results to two colleges that did not have a bystander intervention program. This study found that both victimization and perpetration rates were lower at the college with the Green Dot bystander intervention program, (Coker et al, 2011). Although this study only looked at one specific program being used at one college, it shows promising results, demonstrating the importance of prevention programming on college campuses.

Summary

The current literature attempts to address prevention approaches and programming that can be utilized by college campuses. Federal legislation also provides guidelines that colleges and universities are required to follow. However, there is not enough information about the prevention strategies currently being utilized on college campuses. More research is needed to understand the programming being used, and the role that it plays in preventing sexual assault on college campuses.

CHAPTER III

Methodology

This qualitative, exploratory study explores the question of what proactive approaches colleges and universities in the United States are taking with regard to sexual assault. The purpose of this study is to build an understanding of the types of sexual assault prevention education and programming that different schools are implementing. Exploratory studies, such as this one, seek to learn what is currently happening and investigate without expectations (Engel & Schutt, 2013). Qualitative methods are ideal for this type of research. Qualitative research typically seeks to uncover what people think, how they act, and their reasons, rather than testing a pre-formulated hypothesis. Qualitative methods offer increased opportunities for participants to share their unique perspectives, without being forced to choose between specific categories (Engel & Schutt, 2013).

This type of research allows this study to capture individual programming information, allowing for variation between each school's approaches. In the context of this study, every school could potentially address sexual assault in a different manner. By utilizing qualitative methods, the researcher is able to see the complexities of individual school practices. The openness and flexibility of qualitative methods allow the researcher to gain a fuller understanding and adjust methods as needed (Engel & Schutt, 2013). Specifically, this study utilized intensive interviewing with semi-structured, open-ended questions. According to Engel and Schutt (2013), intensive interviewing engages researchers more actively with participants and interviewers "actively try to probe

understandings and engage interviewees in a dialogue about what they mean by their comments” (p. 288).

Sample

Participants in the study were adults who work with Sexual Assault Response Teams at colleges or universities in the United States. In order to participate, they needed to be the person who was in charge of implementing sexual assault programming on campus. This ensured that the interviewees were the best qualified to speak to sexual assault prevention programming at their school. Additionally, as the person in charge of implementing programming, they have greater insight into the reasoning behind the programming, the process involved, and any challenges. They needed to have a minimum of a bachelor’s degree, and have worked in their position at the school for at least one year. The duration of time that they have worked at their university, allowed them to reflect on any changes in programming or any perceived results. In order to avoid any distortion of results, I only interviewed one employee with any given institution. The minimum number for my sample was 10 participants. Individuals were excluded from the study if they did not have at least a bachelor’s degree, had not been working at their institution for at least one year, or if I had already interviewed someone from that school.

Prior to recruitment of participants for this study, approval for the study and all safeguards to ensure ethical standards were obtained from the Smith College School for Social Work Human Subjects Review (HSR) Committee. Participants were recruited through a convenience sampling and snowballing. In convenience sampling, participants are selected because they are easy to find. According to Engel and Schutt (2013), this

type of sample is appropriate in social work research when the researcher is exploring a setting and trying to get a sense of dominant attitudes. Snowball sampling is useful when the participants are interconnected, by asking interviewees to then put the researcher in contact with additional potential participants (Engel & Schutt, 2013). Sexual assault response team members are often connected with teams at other universities through networking, conferences and listservs.

I began recruitment by reaching out to a personal contact that is the Sexual Assault Response Coordinator at a university. This contact offered to put the researcher in touch with her colleagues at other institutions, as well as sharing my recruitment letter on the various professional listservs for sexual assault responders to which she belongs. Additionally, after each interview, I asked the participant to please share my recruitment letter with anyone who qualified for my study.

Once the potential participants responded to my recruitment letter and confirmed that they met the inclusion criteria, I mailed two copies of an informed consent letter to an address provided by the participant, or handed them a letter if they were local to me. They were asked to review and sign the form prior to the interview, keeping the other form for their personal records. The participants were informed that they could refuse to answer any questions and that they had the right to withdraw from the research study at any time prior to March 15, 2016. Once the signed informed consent was received, I scheduled an interview using a method convenient to the participant, either in person, by phone or over Skype.

Ethics and Safeguards

Due to the nature of conducting personal interviews, it was not possible for participation in this study to be anonymous. However, all participation was kept confidential, with no identifying information connected to the participants' responses. Informed consent forms were stored separately from audio tapes and transcripts, with a numeric code assigned to each participant. I was the only person with access to both the informed consent forms and responses, in case a participant withdrew their consent. Informed consent forms were stored in a locked drawer in my home office. Audio recordings were stored in a password-protected file on my personal computer. The computer and the file were password protected with different passwords, known only to me. The recordings were used only for the purpose of transcribing and coding responses and were not shared. In accordance with federal law, all research materials are stored in a secure location for three years. In the event that materials are needed beyond this point, they will be kept secured until no longer needed, and then destroyed.

There were no foreseeable risks connected with participation in the study. The benefits of participation were that that the participant will contribute to a better understanding of proactive approaches to sexual assault. The findings of this study may help to build a greater area of knowledge in their field. Additionally, it is an opportunity to share programing and practices that you have developed with a larger audience. The benefits to social work/society are: an increased understanding of proactive measures being taken by colleges and universities and to identify strengths and potential areas of growth in this field.

As part of the informed consent process, participants were informed that participation in the study was entirely voluntary and that they could refuse to participate in the study at any time prior to March 15, 2017. Additionally, they were told they had the right to ask questions or report concerns at any time and were provided both with my personal contact information, and the phone number for the Smith College School for Social Work Human Subjects Review Committee.

Data Collection

For the purposes of this study, in-depth, narrative data was gathered from interviews of college employees who work to address sexual assault on campus. Through these interviews, I sought to gain a more detailed understanding of the prevention and psycho-education efforts implemented at 12-15 colleges, as well as the perception of their effectiveness. Qualitative methods are useful for developing a more authentic understanding of social processes, reflecting the various perspectives of participants in the process (Engel & Schutt, 2013). Following this reasoning, I elected to conduct interviews rather than fact-based surveys in order to better understand the thought processes behind the implementation of programming. Additionally, individual interviews can help to understand barriers to implementing programming and whether recent public attention focused on sexual assault on college campuses has led to an increase in prevention programming. Information regarding the existence of prevention programming could perhaps be gathered more quickly through brief surveys. However, the more intensive interview process allows me to develop a more thorough understanding of the nuances involved in the development and implementation of sexual assault prevention programming.

In order to maintain some uniformity throughout the interviews, I created a semi-structured interview guide. This guide was broken down into three parts. In the first part, questions were focused on understanding the demographics of the interview subject, as well as the school where they were in charge of programming. In order to maintain confidentiality for the study participants, the names of their institutions could not be affiliated with their interview. Therefore, establishing basic demographics help understand the more nuanced differences each school may face in response to varying demographics. For example, an all-women's college may design their prevention programming differently than a co-educational institution. A large, state university may need to act differently in implementing programming than a small, liberal arts college. For these reasons, it was important to understand the demographics of the schools involved. Furthermore, understanding the demographics of the individual participants might be helpful in understanding any biases, trends or other variations.

In the second part of the interview, I asked questions about the school. These questions sought to develop an understanding of the college or university's perceived campus culture in regards to sexual assault. Additionally, this section included questions about what proactive programming the institution has currently. I used open-ended questions and followed up with nondirective probes as needed. This enabled me to get as much information from the participants as possible, while minimizing chances of researcher bias in the process. Some examples of questions included in this section are: "what is the campus culture currently like with regard to sexual assault?" and "what proactive approaches to sexual assault are currently implemented on campus?"

The final part of the interview consisted of questions about the participants' individual experiences and perceptions. This section allowed the participant to give more subjective responses about how they feel their campus is doing, rather than focusing exclusively on the facts about programming that is offered. This section included questions such as, "what are your professional goals on campus", "do you feel what your school is currently doing is enough? Why or why not," "what obstacles do you face in implementing programming?" and "what next steps would you like to take?". These questions sought to gain a more comprehensive understanding of the participants' experiences and perceptions. By coding this data, it can be used to create a more complete picture of what college campuses are currently doing and why.

The use of a semi-structured interview guide helps to increase reliability of the results. The same questions are being asked of each participant. The names of institutions are kept confidential, and the questions primarily focus on the participants' experiences and perceptions of what is happening on their campus, this should increase the validity of the study because they do not have any reason to misrepresent the information. Participants are chosen who are in charge of programming on their campuses, therefore they would be the most knowledgeable. By the nature of being a qualitative study, I cannot fully guarantee the validity and reliability of every response. However, these measures increase the likelihood of reliable and valid responses.

Data Analysis

After the interviews were conducted, I transcribed each one verbatim, in order to code the transcripts for data analysis. I used Thomas' (2003) inductive approach as a framework for my data analysis. I selected this method because it is a straightforward

and efficient method of data analysis. This approach serves three purposes: to summarize varying data, to establish clear links between research objectives and summary findings, and to develop a theory about the underlying structure of the experiences (Thomas, 2003).

In order to follow this approach to data analysis, I first ensured that all transcripts were formatted similarly and printed them out to refer easily to them. I read each interview multiple times, in order to develop a clear understanding of themes present. Then, I developed categories for the data where meanings were similar. Within each category, I looked for subtopics, including contradictory viewpoints. I highlighted appropriate quotes that best conveyed the theme of the categories. I used my interview questions as a guide for developing coding categories, and sought to ultimately have a total of three to eight categories (Thomas, 2003).

Discussion

I expected to find that people who were willing to discuss programming with me would be enthusiastic about their programming and are likely to go beyond federal mandates. I also expected to find a certain level of frustration with barriers to programming at their colleges and universities. Some potential limitations of my study include a small sample size and participant bias. The smaller size of my sample may help me fully understand the experiences of the people I speak to, but those experiences may not all be generalizable to every college and university. Additionally, people who are willing to speak to me, are more likely to be more enthusiastic and proud of their work than other programming directors who I do not speak to. Although my findings will not be able to be generalized to understand what is happening at every college and university,

they will help me gain a better scope of some of the practices currently taking place, and ways to improve. My hope is that these findings will help create a sense of best practices for prevention programming on college campuses.

CHAPTER IV

Findings

This chapter documents the findings from ten semi-structured interviews with people who are responsible for sexual assault prevention programming on college campuses. The most significant finding of this study was that almost all of the participants that I spoke with described themselves as being overextended and “wearing too many hats”. Two of the people I spoke with were part time employees with full time responsibilities. The full time employees with whom I spoke stated that prevention programming was only one aspect of their job. All of the participants whom I spoke with felt that their work had been positively impacted by the recent increase in national attention on sexual assault. However, there was a great deal of concern for what the future for this work will look like in the current political climate.

The interview consisted of three main parts. The first part focused on gathering information about the participant’s role on campus, educational background, and demographic information about the school. The second part of the interview consisted of questions about the type of programming currently implemented on campus and the perception of campus culture with regard to sexual assault. The third and final part of the interview looked at what impacts decisions made about programming, obstacles faced and future goals for programming on campus. The first section consisted of demographic data, which was mostly quantitative in nature. The second and third sections included more open-ended questions resulting in more qualitative data.

Interview Section 1: Demographic Data about Participants and Campuses

Each participant interviewed had a slightly different job title and description. Of the ten participants, four were program coordinators (40 percent), three were assistant directors (30 percent), and three were the directors (30 percent) of their respective offices. The amount of time in the position ranged from 18 months to 19 years, with a mean of 5.7 years and a median of 3 years. The educational backgrounds of the participants varied greatly, however. Eight participants had at least one Master's degree (80 percent) and the remaining two participants both had bachelor's degrees and were pursuing Master's degrees in Social Work. The most common undergraduate degree of participants was psychology (30 percent), other participants held bachelor's degrees in Women and Gender Studies (20 percent), nursing, education, social work, urban studies, and Hispanic studies. Two of the people I spoke with had Master's degrees in Counseling Psychology. The remaining participants held Master's degrees in Criminal Justice, Sports Management, Public Policy, Student Affairs, Nursing, Non-profit Management, and Sociology.

All of the people I interviewed were responsible for implementing prevention programming and education, as well as supporting survivors and taking on additional roles on their campuses. Eight of the participants were full time employees, two only held part-time positions. A common theme throughout all of the interviews was that prevention and education was only a small part of the job for all of my participants. This was repeatedly noted as a challenge in my interviews. One participant noted that "it's really tough; you can't be everything to everyone and still manage to meet the need effectively". Another noted, "it would be really great to have a person in the office who

was dedicated to providing support, and another whose job was to deal with programming. I can have a whole day of great programming planned, but then I walk into the office and a student is in crisis, so ultimately the programming suffers.” Only one of the campuses represented has a position solely dedicated to prevention programming and education.

I spoke with representatives from a variety of campuses. Three of the participants were located in the Mid-Atlantic region (30 percent), three were located in New England (30 percent), two were located in the Midwest (20 percent) , one was located in the Southeastern United States (10 percent), and one was located on the West Coast (10 percent). The schools represented included community colleges, large public and private universities, and small liberal arts colleges. One participant represented a women’s college, the rest of the schools represented (90 percent) were co-educational. Despite the variety in types of schools represented, many of the participants expressed similar concerns.

Interview Section 2: Campus Culture and Current Programming Implemented

After discussing demographic data with participants, I moved on to asking questions about the campus culture with regard to sexual assault, current programming on campus, and how their work has been influenced by the increased national attention on sexual assault and the current political climate. All of the participants whom I spoke with were generally positive about the campus culture and their programming, although some found more challenges than others.

Campus climate. In discussing campus culture surrounding sexual assault, a general consensus was that students are familiar with and comfortable speaking about the

issue of sexual assault on college campuses in general. However, three of the participants noted that students on their campuses were surprised by the statistics and believed “that doesn’t happen” at their schools. One participant noted that, “Students are really surprised by the statistics. They talk about it as a problem at other places, but tend to believe, ‘oh that doesn’t happen here’”. Another stated that, “When you ask students do they feel safe, they say yes. But then if you get more specific, they will tell you things like ‘oh but I wouldn’t go there at night, or I wouldn’t walk this way to class’”.

Student activism. Six of the participants felt that their schools had strong activist student cultures with regard to sexual assault. However, one of those participants noted that sexual assault related activism on her campus had waned over the years. “We had a large group of really passionate activist students when I first came here [2014], but that has seemed to ebb a little bit. In that 2014-2015 year, a lot of issues came up around race, and they’ve been sort of pitted against each other. They seem to think that we’re either going to get the administration’s attention about sexual assault or about race, but not possibly both at the same time. In terms of transparency, students are still interested in the information, but not as fired up as they used to be”. On the campuses without noted activist student cultures, participants still felt that students were generally knowledgeable about rape culture and its problems, but that they were not the ones making themselves heard on campus. For example, “We have a healthy majority that do not think that sexual assault is okay and believe bystander intervention is important, and are on board with our efforts. That majority is pretty quiet though. There is an unhealthy minority of students that we hear a lot about, who unfortunately hold prominent roles on campus”.

Prevention programs. The level of current prevention program on campuses varied widely. Of the campuses involved in this study, six (60 percent) required online programming for students, seven (70 percent) included programming focused on sexual assault prevention during new student orientation, six (60 percent) described additional workshop type programming provided outside of orientation, five (50 percent) utilized peer educators on campus, and all campuses involved utilized passive programming such as flyers and tabling. One participant noted that, “it’s tough to even get people to know we exist on campus”. Poor attendance was repeatedly noted as a barrier to programming. One participant stated that, “if you don’t require it, they’re not going to come”. Another participant stated that their campus had stopped bringing in speakers and having events because no one was coming and it “actually ended up backfiring onto the survivors who would volunteer to speak and then would be speaking to an almost empty crowd. That had negative psychological impacts for them.”

Bystander interventions. Eight of the participants included bystander intervention programming on their campuses, of these six had an explicit focus on bystander intervention, while two stated that it was only mentioned as part of other programming. Only two campuses utilized prepackaged bystander intervention curriculum, in both cases that was the Bringing in the Bystander prevention program created by the University of New Hampshire. Several participants stated that they utilized elements from the Green Dot bystander intervention framework, but none fully followed the program. One of the concerns about the Green Dot program was that it was not diverse and representative of the students they were serving. Another concern raised

with this program was that it was a very strict program and participants preferred to adapt a program to the needs of their campus.

Impact of national attention. All of the participants interviewed spoke about the positive impact of recent national attention on sexual assault. Three of the participants were in positions created as a direct result of the Dear Colleague Letter, another two participants stated that the Dear Colleague Letter and increased national attention resulted in increased staffing on their campuses. All of the participants also spoke about the increased levels of student awareness that has resulted from the national attention, making it easier to create a dialogue on their campuses. One participant stated that although student awareness had increased, they did not see the Dear Colleague Letter impacting the administration who approached it as “just another unfunded mandate that won’t be enforced anyway”.

Current political climate. Despite the positive effects of the increased national attention, there was a great deal of concern expressed about the current political climate with the recent election of Donald Trump and a Republican-controlled legislature. At the time of the interviews, any thoughts about what impact the election will have are limited to speculation, however all the participants expressed some level of concern. Five of the participants (50 percent) were concerned about funding cuts and changes in enforcement directly affecting prevention work on their campuses. The other five (50 percent) felt confident that their institutions would continue supporting their work regardless of political climate, but several expressed concern for the impact on local non-profit organizations in their communities.

Interview Section 3: Obstacles, Pet Projects and Future Goals

During the final section of the interviews, I further explored obstacles that participants faced in implementing programming. Additionally, I asked about pet projects that participants were proud of, goals for the future, and whether they felt that what their campus was currently doing was sufficient.

Obstacles. The obstacles most frequently mentioned by participants were student engagement (70 percent) and inadequate money and/or staffing (70 percent). Reasons given for difficulty with student engagement and attendance included students being overcommitted both on and off campus, the stigma of women's centers and sexual assault work, and student turnover. The amount of resources allocated to sexual assault work varied widely by campus. One participant, whose position was only part-time, was still responsible for all of the programming, as well as being on-call 24-7 for five different campuses. Another participant expressed frustration with a \$500 programming budget, and having to give up their office phone line in order to get the funding for needed computer software. Another participant stated that "programming is only a quarter of my job, but it could easily be an entire office's job".

Additionally, three participants (30 percent) discussed a lack of administrative support. One person expressed that; "there are a lot of politics and a strict hierarchy of power. Unfortunately, my office is at the bottom of the totem pole. I have a lot of responsibility, but not a lot of power". Another felt that, "[prevention programming] is just another checkbox for the administration to check off". One participant felt that she had difficulty "balancing institutional goals and the perception of our institution with the reality that yes, this is something happening on our campus".

When asked whether they felt that the work their campus was doing was sufficient, all felt that their schools had room to grow. However, four (40 percent) felt that major changes were needed at their schools, while 6 (60 percent) were generally satisfied with the work that their schools were doing.

Pet projects. Despite the obstacles faced in implementing programming, each interviewee also had pet projects that they were focusing on developing on their campus. Six participants (60 percent) described working with peer educators or developing a peer educator program on campus as one of their primary pet projects. Two participants were specifically focused on increasing male engagement and bringing in male peer educators to work with the men at their schools. Four participants stated that they were striving to increase the intersectional identity of programming and reach more vulnerable communities on their campuses, who were less likely to seek support. Two participants described the creation of an advocacy helpline as one of their main goals on campus. When asked about their biggest wants for their campuses, five strongly desired more staff and full-time positions, four wanted a larger amount of mandated programming, two wished for more comprehensive education before students arrive on campus, and two also wished for greater administrative support.

This study found that there is an overwhelming need for greater staffing and funding in sexual assault prevention work. Each of the participants that I spoke with represented campuses that were approaching this work in different ways. While some participants felt that their campuses were more supportive than others, all felt that recent national attention of sexual assault had played a positive role on campus.

The following chapter will further explore interpretations of these findings and compare and contrast them with other major findings in the literature. Additionally, strengths and limitations of the study will be discussed, as well as implications for social work practice and suggestions for further research.

CHAPTER V

Discussion

The objective of this qualitative study was to explore the prevention and education programming currently being utilized on college campuses with regard to sexual assault. Additionally, this study sought to better understand the thinking behind each school's approach and obstacles that are faced in implementing programming. There was not much significant research on this topic prior to conducting my study. Although my findings seemed to support the general findings of the current literature, the interview process allowed me to develop a much deeper understanding of what approaches are being utilized by college campuses and the reasoning behind those approaches. Additionally, I found that program evaluations in the literature, such as those of the Green Dot program, are not as informative, because most of the participants surveyed do not find the program useful on their campus, despite the positive evaluations in the literature.

In the process of conducting interviews, it became clear that each college campus has a slightly different culture and need, however there were many similarities across the interviews as well. This chapter discusses the findings in the following order: 1) key findings in relation to the previous literature, 2) implications for social work practice and understanding how this knowledge can be used to better support prevention work on campuses, 3) strengths, limitations and biases of the study, 4) recommendations for future research.

Key Findings: Comparison with the Previous Literature

Previous studies found that colleges and universities were not meeting full compliance with federal policy with regard to sexual assault. Streng and Kamimura (2015) found that none of the schools they surveyed were in full compliance and that prevention programming was the component most frequently missing. The current study did not look specifically at federal compliance; however, the findings of this study confirmed that prevention programming was the least resourced aspect of sexual assault work on college campuses. Several of the participants were only part time employees and yet were expected to perform full time work. Even among those who had full time positions, the struggle to obtain funding and resources was a common theme. Additionally, several of the participants struggled with a lack of administrative support for prevention programming. Participants reported dealing with \$500 programming budgets and being treated like “just a checkbox” by the administration. However, other schools seemed to go above and beyond federal mandates.

The study conducted by the Association of American Universities revealed that there was a clear need for increased prevention programming (Cantor, et al 2015). That study found that most students did not intervene in potential sexual assault situations and that many students were not aware of the resources available on their campuses. The participants in my study were all passionate about their work and increasing awareness as well as bystander intervention training. One participant noted that most students at their school were not even aware that they existed as a resource, however most others felt that the resources available were very visible to students. All of the participants spoke of the

importance of bystander intervention training, although only eight included such training in their work, and only two utilized prepared bystander intervention curriculums.

Although prepared programming such as the Green Dot bystander intervention program have shown positive results in the literature (Coker et al, 2011), participants who I spoke with felt that the Green Dot program did not work well for their campus. Some of the concerns given about the Green Dot program were that it was too strict to be easily adapted for their campus needs, and that it was not representative of the students that they served. The Bringing in the Bystander Program from the University of New Hampshire was spoken of more positively and was being utilized by two participating institutions. The remaining campuses attempted to approach bystander intervention exclusively through their own programs. This strategy allows them to adapt their programming to more readily meet their campus needs, however it also interferes with generalizability and makes it more difficult to assess the effectiveness of the programming on a larger scale.

Implications for Social Work Practice

The results of this study demonstrate the importance of resources for sexual assault service providers on college campuses, and the need for increased levels of funding and staffing. Additionally, the findings that the increased national attention on sexual assault have led to many positive changes across all the campuses involved, show that in addition to federal mandates, consciousness raising across the country can positively impact this work. Increasing everyone's awareness leads to more engaged students and improved campus climates.

Strengths, Limitations and Biases

The greatest strengths of this study were the diversity of respondents and the ability to gain a more in-depth understanding through intensive interviewing. Participants worked in a wide variety of campus settings, and were located around the country. This helps prevent developing a regional bias, and allows us to see the similarities and differences in this work across different educational settings. The structure of the interviews allowed participants to delve deeper and share their perspectives and experiences in greater detail.

The major limitation of this study was the small sample size. Although a wide variety of types of schools were sampled, not much can be generalized from 10 participants. Additionally, participants were recruited through a network of sexual assault responders around the country. However, professionals who belong to this network and were willing and able to take the time to participate in this study are more likely to be enthusiastic about their work and willing to put in more work than is federally mandated than those who did not participate. This small sample size and participant bias were the two biggest limitations of this study.

Recommendations for Future Research

This study served as an exploratory study to help begin to better understand what colleges and universities are currently doing for sexual assault prevention and education programming. Although limited by a small sample size, as an exploratory study, it helps to build a better understanding of what further research is needed in this area.

The findings of this study introduced many potential avenues for future research. Two such ideas are to look at the impact of staffing level related to sexual assault, and to

look at the impact that demographics have on the programming and effectiveness at different schools. In this study, I found that staffing levels varied greatly across participant schools, but that feeling under-resourced was a common theme across schools. One idea for a future study would be to look at whether there is a correlation between higher levels of staffing and improved effectiveness of prevention programming, as well as whether increasing staffing has a positive impact on the campus climate with regard to sexual assault.

An additional study idea would be to look at how demographics influence sexual assault programming. The representative from the women's college that I surveyed reported a much different experience than the co-educational institutions. Specifically, the campus climate was markedly different, and there was a much greater amount of programming and student engagement. I would have liked to survey more women's colleges to discover whether this was generalizable to women's colleges. Furthermore, a study looking at what is different about women's colleges and how they do things could potentially contain insights for all schools. Another area to study further would be the challenges faced by community colleges and schools serving more nontraditional student populations.

Conclusion

This study provided an in-depth look at the work happening on college campuses across the country. Time and resources were the major challenges being faced across all of the schools being studied. However, the recent national attention and the federal mandates under the Obama administration have led to many positive changes through the years. It is hopeful that by building a better understanding of the challenges involved in

this work, we can continue to improve sexual assault resources and prevention programming for students.

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Appendix A

Informed Consent Form

2016-2017

**Consent to Participate in a Research Study
Smith College School for Social Work • Northampton, MA**

.....
**Title of Study: Exploring Sexual Assault Prevention and Education Programs on
College Campuses**

Investigator(s): Anastacia Webb, MSW Student, (603)717-2680
.....

Introduction

- You are being asked to be in a research study of sexual assault prevention and education measures on college campuses.
- You were selected as a possible participant because your work at a college or university involves sexual assault prevention and/or education.
- I ask that you read this form and ask any questions that you may have before agreeing to be in the study.

Purpose of Study

- The purpose of the study is to explore and better understand the proactive approaches to sexual assault taken by different colleges and universities.
- This study is being conducted as a research requirement for my Master's in Social Work degree.
- Ultimately, this research may be published or presented at professional conferences.

Description of the Study Procedures

- If you agree to be in this study, you will be asked to do the following: participate in a semi-structured interview regarding sexual assault education and prevention measures at your college or university. This interview will take place in person, or over phone or Skype, and should last approximately 30 minutes.
- The interview questions will focus on current campus culture with regard to sexual assault, any sexual assault programming currently being implemented, and any plans for future programming. Additionally, demographic information will be collected, although participation in the study will be confidential and no colleges or universities will be named.
- The interview will be recorded with permission of the participant.

Risks/Discomforts of Being in this Study

- There are no reasonable or foreseeable (or expected) risks.

Benefits of Being in the Study

- The benefits of participation are that you will contribute to a better understanding of proactive approaches to sexual assault. The findings of this study may help to build a greater area of knowledge in your field. Additionally, it is an opportunity to share programing and practices that you have developed with a larger audience.
- The benefits to social work/society are: an increased understanding of proactive measures

being taken by colleges and universities and to identify strengths and potential areas of growth in this field.

Confidentiality

- Your participation will be kept confidential. *In addition*, the materials of this study will be kept strictly confidential. Informed consents will be kept separately from the audio tapes and transcripts. A numeric code will be assignment to each participant. Audio recordings of the interview will be stored in a safe location, accessible only to the researcher. The recordings will only be used for the purpose of transcribing and coding responses; they will not be shared. Only the researcher will know about your participation in the study. The university that you work for will be used only for gathering demographic information and will not be published. Your responses will not be connected to your name or the name of your university.
- All research materials including recordings, transcriptions, analyses and consent/assent documents will be stored in a secure location for three years according to federal regulations. In the event that materials are needed beyond this period, they will be kept secured until no longer needed, and then destroyed. All electronically stored data will be password protected during the storage period. I will not include any information in any report we may publish that would make it possible to identify you.

Payments/gift

- You will not receive any financial payment for your participation.

Right to Refuse or Withdraw

- The decision to participate in this study is entirely up to you. You may refuse to take part in the study *at any time* (up to the date noted below) without affecting your relationship with the researchers of this study or Smith College. Your decision to refuse will not result in any loss of benefits (including access to services) to which you are otherwise entitled. You have the right not to answer any single question, as well as to withdraw completely up to the point noted below. If you choose to withdraw, I will not use any of your information collected for this study. You must notify me of your decision to withdraw by email or phone by March 15, 2016. After that date, your information will be part of the thesis, dissertation or final report.

Right to Ask Questions and Report Concerns

- You have the right to ask questions about this research study and to have those questions answered by me before, during or after the research. If you have any further questions about the study, at any time feel free to contact me, Anastacia Webb at swebb@smith.edu or by telephone at (603)717-2680. If you would like a summary of the study results, one will be sent to you once the study is completed. If you have any other concerns about your rights as a research participant, or if you have any problems as a result of your participation, you may contact the Chair of the Smith College School for Social Work Human Subjects Committee at (413) 585-7974.

Consent

- Your signature below indicates that you have decided to volunteer as a research participant for this study, and that you have read and understood the information provided above. You will be given a signed and dated copy of this form to keep.

.....
Name of Participant (print): _____

Signature of Participant: _____ Date: _____

Signature of Researcher(s): _____ Date: _____

.....

[if using audio or video recording, use next section for signatures:]

1. I agree to be audio taped for this interview:

Name of Participant (print): _____

Signature of Participant: _____ Date: _____

Signature of Researcher(s): _____ Date: _____

2. I agree to be interviewed, but I do not want the interview to be taped:

Name of Participant (print): _____

Signature of Participant: _____ Date: _____

Signature of Researcher(s): _____ Date: _____

This study protocol has been reviewed and approved by the **Smith College School for Social Work Human Subjects Review Committee (HSRC)**

Appendix B

Interview Guide (or Instrument)

- I. Demographics
 - a. What is your educational background?
 - b. Please describe your position and responsibilities at your university.
 - c. How many years have you been in this position?
 - d. What training do you have related to your position?
 - e. What are the demographics of the students at your school?
- II. Campus Culture and Current Programming
 - a. What is the campus culture currently like with regard to sexual assault?
 - b. Do you feel that there is an open dialogue about sexual assault on campus?
If not, why? If yes, please describe.
 - c. How has the recent national attention on sexual assault influenced your school's efforts related to sexual assault?
 - d. Do you think that the current political climate will impact your work? If yes, how so?
 - e. What proactive approaches to sexual assault are currently implemented on campus?
 - i. Follow up questions if not specifically mentioned
 - 1. What types of education about resources available on campus are provided?
 - 2. Does the school offer any programming to educate students about consent or bystander intervention? Why or why not?

III. Obstacles, Pet Projects, and Future Goals

- a. What are your professional goals on campus?
- b. Do you feel that what your school is currently doing is sufficient? Why or why not?
- c. Is there any specific programming that you are particularly proud of on campus? If yes, please describe.
- d. What obstacles do you face in implementing programming?
- e. What next steps would you like to take with regard to sexual assault on campus?

Appendix C

HSR Approval Letter



School for Social Work
Smith College
Northampton, Massachusetts 01063
T (413) 585-7950 F (413) 585-7994

January 27, 2016

Anastacia Webb

Dear Staci,

You did a very nice job on your revisions. Your project is now approved by the Human Subjects Review Committee.

Please note the following requirements:

Consent Forms: All subjects should be given a copy of the consent form.

Maintaining Data: You must retain all data and other documents for at least three (3) years past completion of the research activity.

In addition, these requirements may also be applicable:

Amendments: If you wish to change any aspect of the study (such as design, procedures, consent forms or subject population), please submit these changes to the Committee.

Renewal: You are required to apply for renewal of approval every year for as long as the study is active.

Completion: You are required to notify the Chair of the Human Subjects Review Committee when your study is completed (data collection finished).

Congratulations and our best wishes on your interesting study.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Elaine Kersten'.

Elaine Kersten, Ed.D.
Co-Chair, Human Subjects Review Committee

Appendix D

HSR Protocol Change Approval Letter



School for Social Work
Smith College
Northampton, Massachusetts 01063
T (413) 585-7950 F (413) 585-7994

January 19, 2017

Anastacia Webb

Dear Staci,

I have reviewed your amendment and it looks fine. The amendment to your study is therefore approved. Thank you and best of luck with your project.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Elaine Kersten'.

Elaine Kersten, Ed.D.
Co-Chair, Human Subjects Review Committee