

# Campus Sexual Violence: Complexities, Culture & Collective Action



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# Sexual Assault on Campus: Case Example

## NOT ALONE

The First Report of the White House Task Force to Protect Students From Sexual Assault



A4 JANUARY 16, 2015 | THE CHRONICLE OF HIGHER EDUCATION

### Behind Campus Rape Statistics, Research Questions Persist

By MARC PARRY

WHEN JOURNALISTS and politicians talk about campus rape—as they have frequently over the past several months—they tend to pluck numbers out of context. Studies done on one or two campuses are said to represent the country. Estimates become facts.

The reality is that measuring sexual violence remains a challenge. Survey participants are asked to

disclose to researchers information they may not want to admit to themselves. Perpetrators may balk at acknowledging behavior they know to be criminal.

What's more, scholars in different fields clash over how to study the subject. Some fret about the emphasis on measuring crime, whereas colleges must face a broader spectrum of

How do we know where do assaults occur? Here's a partial list of assertions about sexual assault



A4 FEBRUARY 20, 2015 | THE CHRONICLE OF HIGHER EDUCATION

### Colleges Call in Legal Pros to Handle Sexual-Assault Cases

By ROBIN WILSON

IT'S A STORY like those many colleges are hearing. A young man and woman were hanging out in her room, talking, doing shots. She drank so much, she says, that she passed out—and woke up to discover she was bleeding. The man, she says, had sexually assaulted her. But he says she had just a few drinks and consented to sex.

How does the college determine who is more credible? In this

SEXUAL ASSAULT

case, administrators hired Allison Kurker, a lawyer who investigates reports of campus sexual assault by conducting extensive interviews and reviewing cellphone and swipe-card records, photos, and videos. Interviews with students led her to two other women who described similar but as yet unreported experiences with the same man.

The college found him responsible in all three cases and expelled him. Legally obligated to respond to reports of sexual assault, colleges often find that students rely on them rather than law-enforcement agencies, which are seen as intimidating and unlikely to pursue charges. To meet the demand, colleges are turning to experts, setting up a kind of shadow justice system. It is now possible for an institution that receives a report of an assault to hire a former prosecutor to investigate the case and a former judge to help decide it.

The University of Pennsylvania just brought on end of a sexual-assault investigator from the Philadelphia district attorney's office. Ohio University and Southern Missouri State University recently advertised investigator jobs. At Harvard University, where a panel of faculty members and students used to hear sexual-assault cases, that is now the duty of a specially trained team. A retired Pennsylvania Supreme Court justice has presided over hearings at Swarthmore College.

Such moves reflect the high stakes. Colleges that get cases wrong can face lawsuits from either side. The U.S. Department of Education is investigating 36 colleges for possible violations of the gender-equality law known as Title IX. Copying can be costly in terms both reputational and financial. United Educators, an insurance and risk-management firm, determined that in a recent three-year period, the company and about 100 of its member institutions spent more than \$17-million defending against and resolving claims involving sexual assault.

"The complexity of investigating and adjudicating these cases is so great that it is consuming student-affairs divisions, equal-opportunity offices, and Title IX professionals," says Gina Maisto Smith, a lawyer and former state attorney general who works with colleges. "Schools are trying to manage this, but they don't have the tool kit. The time, the resources, or in some cases the skill set to do it."

To minimize risk as well as to better serve students, many col-



Diana Perkins, a trial lawyer, opened a law firm in Massachusetts in 2012 to guide colleges through sexual-assault cases. She has worked on 35 such investigations with about a dozen colleges, she says.

# Five Spheres for Social Work





# #1 Knowledge Development

113TH CONGRESS  
2D SESSION

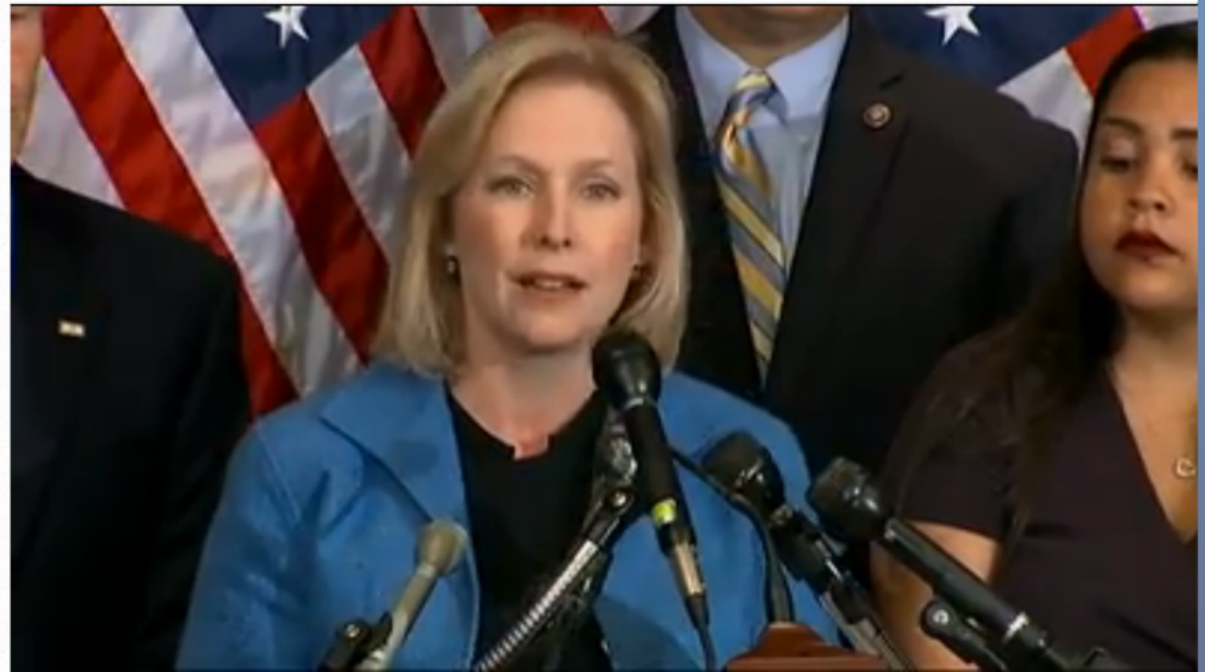
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To amend the Higher Education Act of 1965 and the Jeanne Clery Disclosure of Campus Security Policy and Campus Crime Statistics Act to combat campus sexual violence, and for other purposes.

IN THE SENATE OF THE UNITED STATES

Mrs. McCASKILL (for herself, Mr. HELLI  
LEY, Mrs. GILLIBRAND, Ms. AYOTTE  
troduced the following bill; which was  
mittee on \_\_\_\_\_

## Bill aims to crack down on campus sexual assault



A bipartisan group of senators announced the introduction of the Campus Safety and Accountability Act, designed to curb sexual assaults on college campuses and

**A BI**

To amend the Higher Education  
Clery Disclosure of Campus  
Crime Statistics Act to com  
and for other purposes.

1 *Be it enacted by the Sen*

2 *tives of the United States of A*

3 **SECTION 1. SHORT TITLE.**

4 This Act may be cited as

5 and Safety Act”.

## #2 Direct Practice & Advocacy: Ethics & Reach



# #2 Direct Practice & Advocacy *on Ethics*

WEDNESDAY, MAR 25, 2015 01:54 PM CST

## Fraternities plan to lobby Congress to prevent campus rape investigations

The lobby group FratPAC has a plan to make it even harder for schools to investigate sexual assault

JENNY KUTNER [Follow](#)



## UVA Suspends Fraternities Following Rolling Stone Campus Rape Investigation

"The wrongs described in Rolling Stone are appalling and have caused all of us to reexamine our responsibility to this community," UVA President writes in letter suspending fraternities

BY ROLLING STONE | November 22, 2014

Rolling Stone MUSIC POLITICS TV MOVIES CULTURE REVIEWS LISTS

## How 'Carry That Weight' Is Changing on Campus Sexual Assault

Columbia student Emma Sulkowicz's protest inspires nationwide actions

BY REBECCA NATHANSON | December 1, 2014

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## A Note to Our Readers

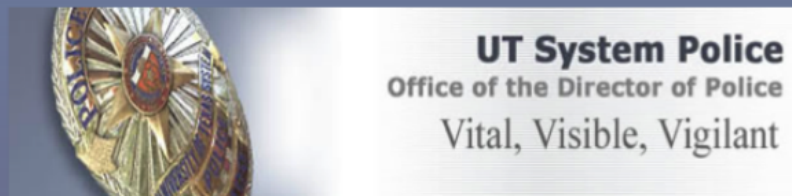
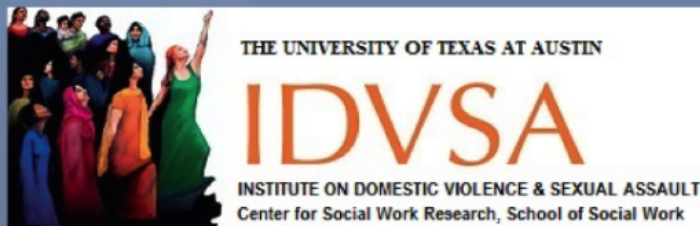
BY ROLLING STONE | December 5, 2014

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## #2 Direct Practice & Advocacy: On Reach *The Blueprint for Campus Law Enforcement*

- evidence- and trauma informed
- beginning at 14 campuses UT System
- 350,000 faculty, staff and students
- possibility as a national model





# #3 Defining the Narrative

through Voice, Connections, and Agenda Setting







# #3 Defining the Narrative

## Making Connections



secondary  
*National  
Blueprint*



tertiary  
Op Ed  
untested SAKs



# #3 Defining Narrative Agenda Setting

## NOT ALONE

The First Report of the White House Task Force to  
Protect Students From Sexual Assault

April 2014



Many schools have research institutes that can measurably improve our thinking about sexual assault. Schools are uniquely suited to identify gaps in the research and develop methods to address them. To lead by example, three universities have committed to developing research projects that will better inform their response to the problem and contribute to the national body of work on campus sexual assault:

The Johns Hopkins University School of Nursing will study sexual assault among student intimate partners, including LGBTQ relationships.

The University of Texas at Austin School of Social Work will develop and evaluate training for campus law enforcement and examine the effectiveness of Sexual Assault Response Teams.

The University of New Hampshire Prevention Innovations Center will design and evaluate a training program for incoming students on sexual assault policies and expectations for student conduct.

We invite others to join this collaborative – and to add their own research brains and resources toward finding solutions.



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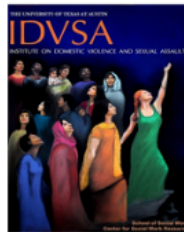
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# #4 Influencing Policy

**Campus Sexual Assault: Complexities, Culture & Collective Action**  
**Presentation to Faculty Council**  
**The University of Texas at Austin**  
**January 2015**

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School of Social Work, The University of Texas at Austin  
Professor and Associate Dean for Research  
Director, Institute on Domestic Violence & Sexual Assault (IDVSA)



## Statement of the Problem

Sexual assault is a complex crime particularly in a campus settings with dual reporting systems and where university actors may be undertrained in the evolving discussions about safety and compliance. The rate of sexual violence on campuses is a great concern, and yet we know that most college students will never need to use their institutional victim services and/or need to report an incident. Nevertheless, campus administrators have an obligation to create a safe learning environment for all students. Victims/survivors who experience sexual assault on college campuses face many of the same issues and obstacles facing other victims of sexual assault. Though, college-aged victims have a unique set of concerns that should to be considered to provide a response that is effective and helpful.

*Caveat: This outline's brevity is not meant to cut short a thorough conversation about sexual assault on college campuses; exemplary services and responses are built on a framework that encourages an axiom of trust building, dialog, evidence, competence, and thoughtful action.*

## Guiding Queries

What is the extent of the problem? What does it cost?  
What are the contributing factors to low reporting? Why are convictions low?  
What are the problems facing sexual assault survivors on college campuses and universities addressing this issue?  
What are our possible next steps?



([mccaskill.senate.gov](http://mccaskill.senate.gov))

**(presidents, administrators, faculty, students)**



- 1/3 presidents agree sexual assault is prevalent
- 6% presidents agree problem on their campus
- 3/4 presidents agree good job responding to it



# Strategies to Raise Social Work's Visibility on Campus

anticipate

## risk & return on investment

deans & directors negotiate

quid pro quo--social work valued resource



### #3 Defining the Narrative

