

BEHIND CLOSED DOORS

“I went through a phase
of blaming myself...”

SEE PAGE 10

CW / Layton Dudley

COLLEGE YEARS FADE. HOUNDSTOOTH IS FOREVER.
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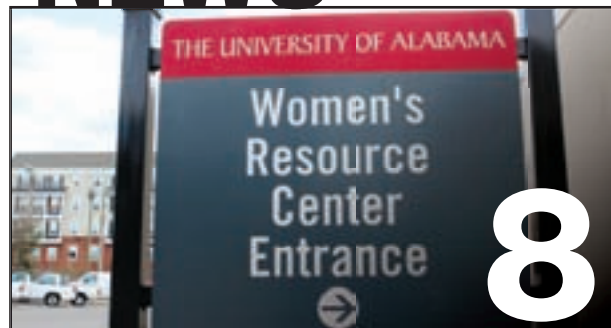
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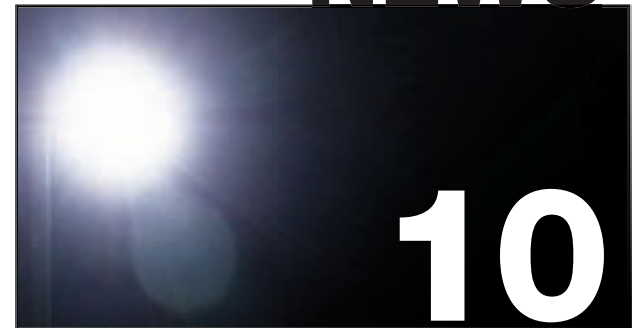
Behind closed doors

A University student recalled her experience with sexual assault and how The University of Alabama Police Department, as well as her friends, handled her situation.

Greek myths

Coordinators from the Title IX office and the Women and Gender Resource Center unveil the truths behind the myths of sexual assault and its involvement within the greek community.

NEWS



CULTURE



Rape in the media

With the rates of sexual assault on college campuses increasing, news outlets, universities and law enforcement are urged to approach the accounts with seriousness during a time where victim-blaming is at an all-time high.

Title IX provides resources

The University of Alabama's Title IX office aims to provide services to victims of sexual assault, sexual harassment and gender discrimination. The office handles student reports and assures a safe space to share experiences and seek help.

CULTURE



ON TWITTER

Christopher Chase @ccedmunds
The new student section is next to the visitor bullpen for maximum rowdiness.
@TheCrimsonWhite
@BamaRightField
10:01am 27 Jan 2016

Terrin Waack @terrinvictoria
Just wanted to give a shoutout to @TheCrimsonWhite editor-in-chief @LandrySean because it's his birthday. Happy birthday, bossman!
7:01pm 28 Jan 2016

Antonio Teste Netto @CapitaoPVC
When you wait for a ride and one shows up, grab 1 person and leaves while you don't even have a driver #feelsbadman @TheCrimsonWhite
5:16pm 31 Jan 2016

It's On Us perpetuates rape culture on campus

By Lindsay Macher, Cameron Ridgeway, Jessica Morgan, Jilisa Milton, Rachel Ledbetter, Danielle Draper, and Isabelle Beauregard | Guest Columnists

Sexual assault is often a difficult topic to speak about, especially for those of us who are survivors. We do not choose to share a personal story in this article, as it would most likely be exploited and undermined for faux campus initiatives.

The It's On Us initiative on our campus has done nothing to eliminate rape culture and has only perpetuated it. It is impossible to end sexual assault without first addressing the social mechanisms on which

It is impossible to end sexual assault without first addressing the social mechanisms on which it thrives.

it thrives. One doesn't have to be a scholar in feminist theory to realize that the toxic representations of women in the media and general attitudes towards women and members of the LGBTQ+ community on campus create a culture where victims feel responsible for their attacks, and perpetrators feel justified.

The first meeting of It's On Us that a representative of UA Feminist Caucus attended featured a speaker from the Women and Gender Resource Center explaining the extent of rape culture as it relates to our campus, with suggested measures of bystander intervention. Her lesson was extremely helpful in dismantling rape culture and preventing sexual assault through the use of societal pressure, and some of the suggestions from the group were encouraging. However, as women who have a 1 in 5 chance of facing sexual assault (notwithstanding other factors such as race and gender identity) during our college experiences, the initiative has only left us concerned.

When it has been proven that membership in a social fraternity significantly contributes to the likelihood of perpetrating sexual assault, it is difficult not to be wary of an initiative spearheaded by greek students. Initially, we gave it the benefit of

the doubt, thinking, "Who better to solve this problem than those who are prominent within it?" However, Jordan Forrest's article about her project stated "We do not let our friends walk alone late at night or ignore their requests for a designated driver. We hold our friends and ourselves accountable, and we never blame the victim." While we admire the intentions of those who came together to write these articles and lead this initiative, it must be noted that the very sentence that warns us not to blame the victim is preceded by victim-blaming through false notions of "accountability." The goal of this initiative was to create a culture of accountability, but this accountability seems to be only for those more likely to be targeted rather than those who may perpetrate it.

This is one of the main problems of It's On Us. At the first meeting, some members of the task force suggested solutions to a hypothesized situation including a man displaying potentially aggressive behavior towards a woman at a bar. Their solutions included interrupting him or trying to distract him while simultaneously taking care not to offend him. Without sternly expressing that this behavior is threatening and unacceptable, we challenge nothing and change nothing, hardly providing the safety that the initiative claims to create.

Another "solution" of the campaign that assisted in victim-blaming was the campus walk. Members of the task force walked around campus after dark and pointed out places that could be more well-lit. This is problematic because women (as the campaign frequently assumes all victims are cis women) should not have to walk in large groups or in well-lit places to avoid being assaulted. We should not be responsible for preventing violence against ourselves. The only suitable way to prevent sexual assault is to teach people not to sexually assault others. Providing better lighting is treating a symptom of a larger epidemic, and an ironic approach considering the University's late-night shuttle service hardly works.

Secondly, this idea of "stranger danger," in which women are only attacked at night by "bad guys" is a false notion. Eighty-two percent of assaults are perpetrated by someone the victim knows, including their intimate partners or spouses, according to the Bureau of Justice. Many sexual assaults on this campus occur not on darkly-lit streets, but in social situations such as busy parties. The walk, as well as the whole campaign, did little but give a group of people two hours of self-righteousness while doing nothing but furthering myths about sexual assault.

It goes without saying that no one was inspired to come forth and tell their story at any of the events for It's On Us. To foster true change, our campus needs to listen to victims,

rather than blame and criticize them, and remind them that they are more than their assault or merely a story to use as our own resume-builder. We need to have a solid pushback on men who refer to women as sexual objects. We need to focus less on what White House initiative we can complacently adopt, but rather on our own specific needs, catered to our own environment.

This starts with recognizing where we are failing. We need more campaigns that publicly promote consistent training about consent, frequently muddled at this university, along with fully-inclusive sex education, which is much harder than signing a wall on the Quad and then returning to a life of perpetuating violence. We need to analyze the deepest parts of rape culture, not just scrape the surface. Ending the stigma about women's sexuality and the social construct of virginity are good starting points. From there, we can expand into heteronormative expectations of men and women within the gender binary and then further into queer and trans erasure. By following this progression, eventually we can manage to achieve what seems to be the impossible: the destruction of a culture that justifies and covers up

The only suitable way to prevent sexual assault is to teach people not to sexually assault others.

sexual assault.

While the idea behind It's On Us is well-intentioned, our campus's handling of it has been nothing more than a moment of self-glorification. Fixing this complex issue requires difficult self-reflection on the part of every individual on this campus.

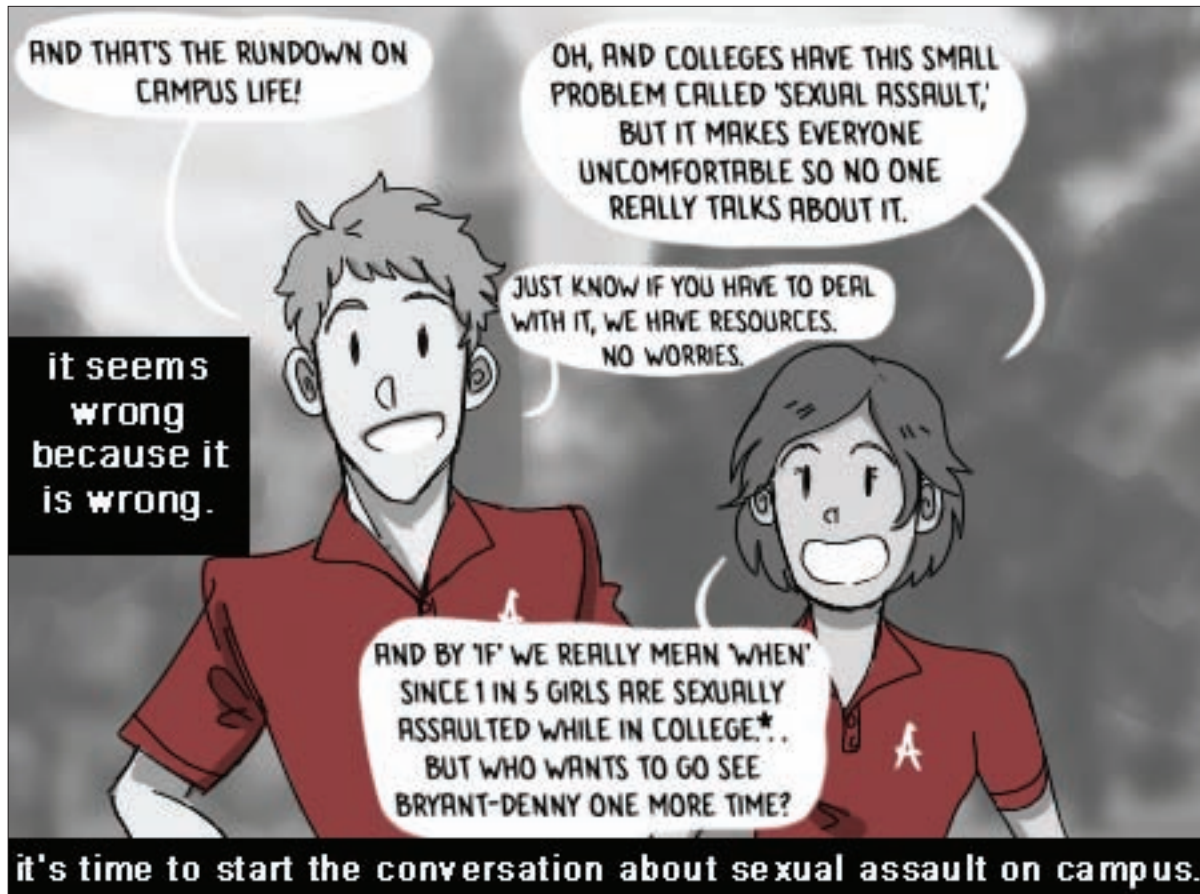
Lindsay Macher, Cameron Ridgeway, Jessica Morgan, Jilisa Milton, Rachel Ledbetter, Danielle Draper, and Isabelle Beauregard comprise the UA Feminist Caucus Executive Committee. This editorial represents the views of all writers.

ABOUT IT'S ON US

- It's On Us is an awareness campaign launched by the White House to help put an end to sexual assault on college campuses
- The It's On Us pledge is to recognize that sex without consent is sexual assault, identify situations in which sexual assault might occur, intervene in situations where consent hasn't or can't be given, and create an environment where sexual assault is unacceptable and victims are supported

Tips from the campaign include:

1. Consent is voluntary and mutual and can be withdrawn at any time
2. Past consent does not mean current or future consent
3. There is no consent when there is force, intimidation or coercion
4. You cannot always consent if under the influence of alcohol or drugs
5. Talk to your friends honestly and openly about sexual assault
6. Intervene if you see something happening
7. If something looks like a bad situation it probably is
8. Ask someone who looks like they need help if they're OK
9. Get help if you see something
10. Keep an eye on someone who has had a lot to drink
11. Get someone's friends to help them leave safely
12. Recognize that someone who talks about hurting someone at a party could be dangerous
13. Look out for someone deliberately trying to isolate, intoxicate or corner someone else
14. Get in the way by distracting them or getting in the way
15. Understand that if someone cannot or does not consent to sex it's rape
16. Never blame the victim



Information from www.whitehouse.gov CW / Marguerite Powers

COLUMN | **WOMEN**

The public scrutiny towards women's bodies



By Samantha Rudelich
Staff Columnist

I am a woman. I am a person. The latter always seems to be overshadowed by the former. It's always that I am a woman, so I should do this or I should be that rather than something else. I am a person, so I should do or be whatever I choose.

My body does not belong to me. It is publicly assessed and consumed. Women's bodies are constantly criticized for being too thin or too skinny or too unideal, to the point where I believe that the ideal does not exist. Sometimes I forget, just for a second. In the midst of attempting to be a good student and friend and sister and daughter, I forget that my body is not my own. I forget about the one in five women who are assaulted on college campuses. I decide to walk home alone at night and then once I settle into my walk, I finally remember. I spot a group of boys stumbling carelessly through the street and my breath hitches. I think of my family and how angry they would be if they knew I was alone. The boys' thoughtless meandering reminds me that my body

is not my own and that, if they so choose, they can reclaim what is theirs.

My mind goes to the 90 percent of sexual assaults that are committed by someone who the survivor knew beforehand. While that comforts me momentarily, I worry if anyone I know would be capable of committing that violence against me. I question if I can trust those around me and cut anyone out of my life who shows signs of putting me in harm's way. This seems a largely ceremonial way for me to reign over my body and my life, but it provides some comfort.

I realize that taking these precautions and attempting to protect myself is futile. I can cover my body to shield it from the public. I can stay in my room after dark and avoid being outside. I can fail to meet the typical beauty standards shoved down our throats. All for the sake of avoiding the gaze of the public. But no matter what I do, I will be at risk if I am in the presence of an attacker. Of someone who sees me not as a person to be respected, but as a woman to be had.

The solution starts with education. It begins when we start teaching a comprehensive sexual education that includes what consent is. A sexual education that brings the entire class together to discuss sex

and consent in an open and honest way. When we start educating everyone about sex and consent, we stop victim-blaming. We start holding the perpetrator of an attack accountable, instead of criticizing what a survivor has done to contribute to their attack. At the end of the day, the question should be "Did you say yes?" If the answer is "no," that should be the end of the interrogation. No one is ever "asking for it" if they are not specifically consenting.

Though I am a woman and that, statistically, means that I am more likely to be sexually assaulted, I am still a person. I take risks and make mistakes because I can't sit in my room and hide. I choose to come out of hiding and demand more. I fight back because, otherwise, I don't want to sign away my body for the public to twist for their own pleasure. More than just hoping for change to come, we must demand it. By supporting our Women & Gender Resource Center, by pledging support to "It's On Us," by doing more than just changing our profile pictures, we advance once we collectively decide to stop being bystanders to the public consumption of women and their bodies.

Samantha Rudelich is a junior majoring in business management. Her column runs biweekly.

COLUMN | **LGBTQ+**

Sexual assault knows no bounds



By A.J. James
Staff Columnist

With the rise of conversations about sexual violence, particularly on college campuses, I'd like to posit this column as a reminder that sexual assault affects every demographic of communities, to include those who are lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, queer or hold other similar identities. It is even more important to note that the CDC puts the rates of sexual assault within the LGBTQ+ community as comparable to or higher than what has been statistically recorded for heterosexuals.

Not surprisingly, a 2015 study released by the American Association of Universities (AAU) confirmed these results among more than 150,000 students at both private and public universities around the U.S. For instance, the survey found that across gender and orientation, LGBTQ+ respondents experienced the highest rates of sexual assault on their campuses. (Even within the community, these rates are highest for those who identify as bisexual and/or transgender or gender-nonconforming.)

With the movement to start conversations, change the narrative and make a change regarding sexual assault on The University of Alabama campus, we cannot leave out the experiences of our LGBTQ+ students – experiences that are often already invisible or dismissed in the larger population.

Additionally, in order to change the narrative, we cannot forget that people who identify as men do not possess a magical shield preventing sexual assault and unwanted sexual attention 100 percent of the time. Particularly for queer and trans men, the shield seems to be barely there. Men on campus who have been sexually assaulted have just as much need to share stories and build community as anyone else, and that step in the right direction starts with a good bit of courage and a strong support group. Though the mechanisms and nature of sexual assault may look different for men, it is no less important in terms of the devastation that it produces at the individual level.

Lastly, it is imperative that we all shake the notion of what a victim of sexual assault looks like and begin to realize that it is a problem that must be tackled across ability, race, orientation, gender and class. Those who perpetrate these sexual assaults can be found across all identities, which means that their victims can too.

Before my sexual assault experience, I had been tricked by our society into believing that it was not something that I would ever have to worry about. I didn't fit the mold of the promiscuous college woman that the media would have you believe is responsible for her own sexual assault; I was just me. Yet, it still happened, and I was left by myself when the dust settled to handle it seemingly on my own.

Recently, I have been able to build a stronger support system of folks are supportive, who don't judge me and who are willing to sit with me while I hash through my remaining issues from that experience. And now, I fight to be seen as a whole person and not just another number that is added to a newly released statistic that confirms what we all already know: at one point or (another, we all have the potential to be a victim.)

A.J. James is a senior majoring in microbiology. His column runs biweekly.

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Last Week's Poll: Should Alabama raise the minimum wage?

Yes: 61%
No: 39%

This Week's Poll: Have you or anyone you know been sexually assaulted?
cw.ua.edu/poll

Our View: UA must address sexual assault

By CW Editorial Board

Ten months ago, The Crimson White decided to dedicate an entire edition of our paper to the issues surrounding on-campus sexual assault. Our staff has worked from that moment to this one to put forth this comprehensive look at a category of crimes that affect all of us and demand immediate attention. Sexual assault is a pervasive and tragic problem that affects university campuses nationwide, and it is well past time for The University of Alabama to address it.

Despite the commendable steps taken to address the issue this year, there is still more work to be done. Unlike the narrative usually favored concerning any change at this campus, this work starts at the top of our university, not by putting this responsibility solely on students. As the well-intentioned but low-impact It's On Us campaign has shown us, even the work of our best and brightest student leaders is not enough without serious accompanying policy changes that are only able to be made by the Administration.

The first of these changes should be an expansion of the University's Haven training program to include issues such as sexual harassment, assault of men and LGBTQ persons, as well as

an intense focus on the definition of consent and how to give and recognize it. The University should also invest in non-online education: public guest lectures, yearly Title IX and consent trainings required of every organization with an on-campus residence and Title IX and Clery Act reporting training mandatory for an officer of every SOURCE-registered organization.

We call on The University of Alabama

The Crimson White Editorial Board believes strongly that this campus has the potential to change.

Police Department to immediately evaluate its own policies for how it responds to sexual assault. Victims who choose to report to police should have the option to choose the gender of the person they report to. As this edition reports, local police officers have engaged in victim-blaming rhetoric such as blaming alcohol and questioning the ability to give consent.

This University must also address

the dramatic funding and staffing shortages faced by the Women and Gender Resource Center and the Title IX Coordinator's Office. Nine WGRC staff members and three Title IX office employees are not enough to meet the emotional, legal and physical needs of our 37,000 students. These compassionate employees are frequently forced to choose between staying late to help students in need and going home to their own families in time for dinner. This is unacceptable.

As executives of the UA Feminist Caucus cogently point out in today's edition, the It's On Us campaign is not nearly enough to effect positive change on this campus and is certainly not a substitute for comprehensive sexual assault education. As a news organization, The Crimson White has been alarmed since the launch of this campaign by the lack of visible administrative involvement – particularly at the Vice Presidential and above level – thus far. Apparently, "it's" not on our administrators.

The Crimson White Editorial Board believes strongly that this campus has the potential to change, with dedicated, compassionate and immediate action from every member of this University community. More importantly, we believe that it must. The safety of all of

our classmates depend on it.

Our View represents the consensus of The Crimson White Editorial Board.

WHAT TO DO AS A BYSTANDER

- **Notice the situation:** Be aware of your surroundings.
- **Interpret it as a problem:** Do I recognize that someone needs help?
- **Feel responsible to act:** See yourself as being part of the solution to help.
- **Know what to do:** Educate yourself on what to do.
- **Intervene safely:** Take action but be sure to keep yourself safe.

Information from unh.edu. CW / Mary Kate Holladay



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Clery Act aids in reporting university crimes

By Arielle Lipan | Assistant News Editor

In 1986, 19-year-old Jeanne Clery was raped and murdered in her dorm room at Lehigh University in Bethlehem, Pennsylvania, and the crime left people across the U.S. in outrage, permanently changing how all public universities handle crimes.

Josoph M. Henry, a 20-year-old student at Lehigh, was convicted as the murderer and rapist, but Clery's parents didn't see that as the end. They sued the school, claiming if they had known the extent of the campus' criminal activity, they never would have let their daughter attend.

After the successful lawsuit, the Clerys went to Washington D.C. to lobby for a uniform law requiring the disclosure of criminal activities on and around university campuses. Their actions brought forth the Jeanne Clery Disclosure of Campus Security Policy and Campus Crime Statistics Act, called the Clery Act (for short.)

The University of Alabama, in compliance with the Clery Act, releases two different reports each year: one for the UA Gadsden Center, which focuses on lifelong learning, and one for the main Tuscaloosa campus.

These reports aren't limited to reporting crimes of a sexual nature,

but that is what the focus centers on because those are the least reported crimes. According to the Clery report in 2014, victims or witnesses reported 14 counts of rape, three counts of fondling, nine counts of dating violence, three counts of domestic violence and two counts of stalking on campus. Victims or witnesses also reported two counts of rape, one count of fondling, two counts of dating violence and one count of domestic violence off-campus. All in all, there were 34 total counts of sexual crimes last year.

"Off-campus" actually accounts for two separate categories on the report: non-campus and public property.

Non-campus properties are UA owned off-campus places (or UA organization owned, like fraternities, three of which at the University are off-campus) or places the University has a written agreement for use of the premises. Non-campus also applies to any place that the University takes students for extended periods of time. A full list of the non-campus locations is in the report. Public property applies to properties immediately adjacent to the school.

Locations are considered on-campus only within the geographical bounds of campus, which limits the scope of those reports.

The numbers on the reports come from multiple sources, not just from police reports. In the years 1993-2013, this is necessary because 80 percent of student rapes and sexual assaults went unreported to police for reasons usually along the lines of not wanting to incriminate their attacker, according to the Bureau of (Justice Statistics.)

Anyone can file a Clery report, but there are a number of groups on campus that are required to file reports monthly with their superiors, even if there were no incidents that month. According to the report, these Campus Security Authorities (CSAs) include people employed by the University. This means residential staff, coaches, advisors and on-campus security. The only people not required to file reports are pastoral counselors or professional mental health counselors like at the Counseling Center, due to respective religious assignments and confidentiality agreements. If someone still feels uncomfortable filing a report with their name on it to non-police, there is also a confidential reporting option in order to keep accurate statistics. Regardless if the reporter wants to press charges or not, the CSA is required to file a report, but it doesn't require explicitly stating the name of the person reporting it.

All of these reports end up with Sgt. John Hooks at UAPD, and reports can also be delivered to him directly.

UAPD keeps a running record of crimes in their lobby, which is different from universities like The University of Georgia who keep the logs accessible online. Along with this running record, the University is required to send out timely warnings to the public and students when a crime is committed within the Clery boundaries and still poses a risk to others (the UAPD alert emails).

When schools don't comply with the Clery Act, they are fined \$35,000 per violation with the risk of losing all federal funding to the school.

New amendments have recently been added to the Clery Act leaving a lot of "N/A" spaces on the report, meaning that category was previously nonexistent or is currently out of use. For example, the forcible rape category has now been split into rape and fondling. The report also includes the various methods of reporting anyone with information, student or otherwise, can take and a chart to demonstrate the flow of information once a report is received.

The last day to submit reports to be included in the 2016 annual report is Feb. 1.

The most recent report can be found at <http://ope.ed.gov/security/>

Criminal Offenses — by year —	On Campus			Residence Halls			Non Campus			Public Property		
	2012	2013	2014	2012	2013	2014	2012	2013	2014	2012	2013	2014
Forcible Sex Offences	7	9	NA	6	6	NA	0	1	NA	0	0	NA
Rape	NA	NA	14	NA	NA	13	NA	NA	2	NA	NA	0
Fondling	NA	NA	3	NA	NA	2	NA	NA	1	NA	NA	0
Dating Violence	NA	10	9	NA	5	5	NA	0	2	NA	1	0

WGRC provides care to sexual assault victims

By Bailey Shoenberger | Contributing Writer

“Did this really happen to me?”

“Why me?”

“Did I ask for it?”

These have been some of the thoughts that university students who unwillingly became victims of sexual assault struggle to overcome.

The University of Alabama’s Women and Gender Resource Center (WGRC) is one of the University’s prominent resources that provides counseling services, advocacy programs and support groups for victims in healing from sexual assault. Whether the assault happened yesterday or years ago, students, faculty and staff at The University of Alabama are provided with free and confidential services. But even by the end of 2015, advocacy work by universities, government programs and research facilities have made little impact on decreasing the number of assaults, especially on college campuses.

“The world has changed so much, you would think people would be more compassionate in sexual assault situations, but a while back this semester, there was a girl on this campus who drank a drink that was laced with Xanax, and she was taken advantage of,” said Andrea Green, a senior majoring in human development and family studies and an intern at the WGRC.

The WGRC encourages victims like the one Green talks about to consider making an appointment for professional, therapeutic help after traumatic situations, especially since the WGRC offers its services for free. Awareness programs are launched year-round in an effort to shatter some of the silence and stigma surrounding sexual assault on campus.

All students can access the WGRC regardless of what insurance they have, which is unlike counseling services or treatment at the Student Health Center. The purposefully safe and private atmosphere at the WGRC gives victims the opportunity to work with a kind, trained professional without having to divulge any of their experience to any other school official or officer, if that’s what they decide is the best way to heal. The WGRC also offers services to significant partners or friends of victims with traumatic sexual assault experiences.

“I just remember even some of my friends making the comment that she shouldn’t have been where she was, and she knowingly drank the drink, but at the end of the day, I found it so sad that people haven’t tuned into the fact that men need to be responsible,” Green said. “Even if she did make a bad choice and passed out, she doesn’t deserve to be taken advantage of.”



The Women and Gender Resource Center in Suite 2000 of the South Lawn Office Building at 1101 Jackson Ave.

The WGRC aims to communicate with students to understand that there is a support team willing to help and to educate students on the short-term and long-term effects victims of rape experience, including cases of severe Post Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD). Like any other victim of PTSD, they experience flashbacks, shock, depression and anxiety. Some victims live in constant fear that the assault could happen again.

“Girls are taught that rape is the worst thing that could ever happen to them,” said Dr. Kathy Echols, staff therapist for the WGRC.

Unlike some other traumatic events, public stigma surrounding sexual abuse or assault are often daunting to talk about because of the personally invasive nature of the crime.

“So I’ve heard a lot of people say ‘Now I’m destroyed, I’m damaged, nobody will love me, I hate myself,’ and all these negative things because if that’s the worst thing that can happen, what’s the point? Where is there to go?” Echols said.

Even though efforts have been made to raise awareness about the issue of sexual assault on campuses, research done by the Centers for Disease and Prevention noted that brief introductory awareness campaigns that focus on topics such as attitude change and consent definitions have little long-term effect on reducing sexual assault. In reality, perpetrators of sexual violence aren’t going to be deterred when they know there won’t be consequences for their actions.

“It’s the same whether the victim is a man or woman, they can’t get it in their head that it was an intentional act, they intended to damage and hurt the victim in this way, and most of the time, it’s someone who they thought was their friend,” Echols said.

She said the key to helping victims of sexual assault is to be compassionate and to realize there is no specific timeline to healing. Many victims struggle with the senselessness of rape, that nothing they did caused the assault other than being in the wrong place at the wrong time. Recovering from rape is different for every person, and has a lot to do with recovering the power taken during the assault. Victims of sexual assault on campus may fear running into their perpetrator in class, in the library or even just walking around town.

“You would be surprised how many people are affected, a lot of people assume that this is a problem mostly for people of low socioeconomic status, but I’ve seen a lot of my peers who have either been affected by this issue or know someone who has been affected,” said Robin Stewart, a senior majoring in human development and family studies and an intern for the WGRC.

Echols has seen countless victims of sexual assault, most of them current UA students, and was recognized for her accomplishments in 2015 with the Capstone Hero Award.

She said a crucial step to recovering from sexual assault is having a safe place where the victim can tell their story and not be judged or pushed into doing anything they don’t want to do on their path to recovery. In this way, the WGRC acts as a safe haven for victims of sexual assault on campus.

“Mental health is the one thing that people don’t take care of, and they don’t take seriously,” Green said. “If you break your arm, there will be a million people who want to come sign your cast, but if you scream for help or show any signs of emotional problems, people just don’t pay attention.”

Despite the stigma surrounding sexual assault, the staff at the Women and Gender Resource Center focuses on being supportive, confidential and, ultimately, available, especially when students feel like they have nowhere else to go without the possibility of judgment.

Call the WGRC at 205-348-5040 during business hours to set up an appointment or get more information on available resources. After hours, contact the University Police at 205-348-5454 to reach an On Call Advocate. The On Call Advocates are available the 24/7, even on holidays.

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Uncovering the greek-related

By Peyton Shepard | Print Managing Editor

Out of female college seniors, 27.2 percent have reported experiencing some form of unwanted sexual contact since their freshman year, according to a 2015 survey by the Association of American Universities, which included the findings from 27 participating universities. That's a little over one in four.

According to the National Institute of Justice, that one in four was a member of a sorority nearly 25 percent of the time.

The prominence of greek life at The University of Alabama is no secret. The UA Office of Fraternity and Sorority Life website states greek students account for over 33 percent of the student body in 2015 and pledge classes grow each year. Its size alone gives the greek community an ability to influence its members, and one of the most important areas of influence is how the community elects to address sexual assault.

The greek system has taken a very forward stance this academic year in regard to sexual assault, a fact demonstrated in its collective and outspoken support for the SGA's It's On Us campaign, in addition to a joint editorial by sorority representatives published in *The Crimson White* to denounce the Safe Campus Act, which limits sexual assault reporting routes by requiring the involvement of police officers.

Despite this, there are some pervasive ideas and rumors that are expressed specifically within the greek community that could serve to damage its overall efforts to combat sexual assault.

Beth Howard, The University of Alabama Title IX coordinator, and Zoe Winston, the peer education programs coordinator at the Women and Gender Resource Center, sat down with *The Crimson White* to address and dispel some of these myths.

Myth 1:

There is a fine to file charges.

"That is simply false," Howard said.

Howard said she believes there are a variety of facets in the reporting process from which this myth could have originated, mostly entailing legal fees, and reiterated there is no charge to file a police report.

"The only fine that I can think of, though it's not even a fine, is if you want to file a restraining order," Howard said. "However, in an instance of interpersonal violence, you would file what is called a protection from abuse order and there is no filing fee for that. But that's not a police report; that's asking for a court order."

Hospital fees, specifically for forensic exams following a rape, should also not be a financial concern, Winston said.

"That is something that is supposed to be covered by the Victims of Crime Act, victims are never supposed to pay for that," she said. "Sometimes, there can be filing mishaps at the hospitals and

someone's insurance gets charged, or if they don't have insurance, they will be billed. If that happens, they need to come to the Women and Gender Resource Center, and we will take care of it."

Howard also pointed out that the initial fees incurred to retain an attorney could also be misconstrued as being a fine to file charges, but that attorneys are purely optional for victims seeking criminal charges.

"If a victim wants an attorney, they can have one, but they don't have to have one to proceed with the police report," she said. "If it proceeds to a trial, the prosecutor becomes their attorney."

Winston added that the Domestic Violence Law Clinic at The University of Alabama School of Law will help with any legal questions a victim may have, and everything is free and confidential.

Myth 2:

A sorority member reporting a sexual assault against a fraternity hurts the sorority's social standing.

Winston said it was easy when she was a sorority member at Alabama to recognize the hierarchy that perpetuated the mentality sororities would fall out of favor with fraternities by reporting sexual misconduct.

"I had even heard that myth as an undergraduate," she said. "That whole thing that if someone comes forward, that they'll 'be signing the death warrant of that sorority,' especially in regard to social standing ... Women in a sorority would feel afraid to come forward against a perpetrator in a specific fraternity because they were afraid if it got out, they would face social repercussions for doing that."

While it's hard to gauge the rise and fall

of sorority social standings, Howard said she sees progress in the ways that fraternities continually make an effort to take sexual assault more seriously.

"[Fraternities] don't want this to happen," she said. "They are taking more proactive measures."

"[Fraternities] don't want [sexual assault] to happen. They are taking more proactive measures."

— Beth Howard

They're doing things to ensure it doesn't happen in their group. They don't accept it."

Howard said one such method is by offering non-alcoholic options at parties, like water, and more substantial food options to keep attendees from getting too drunk too quickly. More importantly, Howard added that fraternities are working harder to educate themselves on sexual assault.

"Most of my Wednesdays are full with people who want me to come talk to them at their chapter meetings," she said.

Fraternity leadership, Winston said, is working to better convey the image they wish to have associated with their house through their actions and education, education that the Title IX Office and WGRS provide regularly.

"When we ask [fraternity men], 'How do you want your fraternity to be viewed? What are the words you want people to describe your organization with?' They say honorable, trustworthy, gentlemanly," she said. "Of course, there will always be some outliers, but from what I've seen, the greek community is working to eliminate that from their chapters."

When there are outliers, Howard said the best option, regardless of its impact on social standing, is always to report.

"I would say that if there is some thought that if you report something against a particular fraternity, and you don't swap with them anymore, then good," Howard said. "Don't swap with them anymore. If no one swaps with them, then maybe that will change the mindset."

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myths about sexual assault

Myth 3:

Greek members shouldn't report the things they see for fear of consequences.

Many greek alumni, including Winston, can recall when the University forbade sororities and fraternities from engaging in a swap activity known as bumping. Bumping began as an innocent icebreaker, where men and women would be paired up back to back, unaware of who their partner was, and they would turn around to face their partner and get to know them. In the modern era, the game has repeatedly turned into a more explicit exhibition, where sorority members are lined up and subject to forced sexual contact with fraternity men, ranging from kissing to fondling.

"I was actually fortunate to be in a sorority that eliminated bumping and made that decision while bumping was still something that wasn't explicitly banned," Winston said. "We made a rule that if you're going to swap with us, we won't have bumping."

Not all sororities were like Winston's, though. The phenomenon went unreported for years before the University condemned it, and Howard said she doesn't doubt that these things still occur and go unreported, despite the University's interference. Winston attributed the lack of reports to fear of retaliation.

"If someone feels like they're facing repercussions from their organization because they reported a sexual assault or sexual misconduct, I believe that's something we should address," Winston said. "I think sometimes students feel

afraid because they think that they don't have any choices or if they do this, they will be retaliated against. That's something we want to make sure doesn't happen."

Retaliation, Howard said, is any repercussion enacted on a reporter by their organization in response to the report, which is illegal. The University offers protection against retaliation for reporters through its retaliation policy.

"What our retaliation policy says is someone should feel free to make good faith reports of sexual misconduct, or any of the protective categories, without having organizational repercussion," Howard said.

Howard added that this protective measure

should encourage more people to come forward, and that the only way for the University to institute change is for people to speak up when they see something wrong.

"It shouldn't happen," she said. "And if it does happen, we want people to let us know. These are things we have actually been working hard to try to stop, but it's hard to when we don't know about it."

"Whether it's coming to [Howard], coming to the WGRC ... say, 'Hey, this is something that happened, and I don't feel comfortable with it,'" Winston said. "Sorority judicial boards should not hold that against a chapter member for reporting."

Fraternity men should also speak out against these things, Howard said, as some loosely-termed hazing activities in fraternities can also be considered sexual misconduct.

"It can be both," Howard said. "First of all, hazing is bad. And potentially a Class C Misdemeanor ... If [a student] also believes that it is sexual misconduct, it's not one or the other. You can get charged with both."

Just because a fraternity member reports the act, however, it doesn't mean that they are exempt from consequences.

"[Hazing] is not an excuse," Howard said. "If you make the choice to violate someone else, there will be repercussions for that. There might be extenuating circumstances as to the reason you made that choice, and we will deal with those extenuating circumstances - but you still made that choice. That doesn't make that person who was violated feel any better. It still happened to them."

Winston said despite repercussions, fraternity men have to understand there is an importance to them speaking out, realizing these things can happen to them as well and hazing can also be sexual assault.

"There is that stigma of being a man and saying, 'Well, I can't be sexually assaulted, I'm a man,'" Winston said. "It definitely can be both."

Both Howard and Winston agreed that no student, greek or independent, should ever fear retaliation or consequences when it comes to an issue like sexual assault and that every student should feel comfortable raising concerns because they know they'll be protected.

"If there's ever something that is widespread that's going on, and someone wants to come to my office and say, 'This is anonymous, I don't want you using my name,' that helps," Howard said. "At least then, we know, and we might be able to take some steps without ever identifying that person. But those are things we need to know about so we can make these things stop."

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*BEHIND
CLOSED
DOORS*

By Elizabeth Elkin | News Editor

Editor's note: This is an account of a sexual assault on the UA campus. The contents and language of this story may be troubling for some readers, but The Crimson White feels it is a vital narrative to publish. This is only one rape victim's story. We at The Crimson White by no means discourage reporting of sexual assaults, and encourage victims to pursue justice and every resource available to them. By publishing this story, we hope to encourage a dialogue of the very real problem of sexual assault on campus. Any questions, comments or concerns can be directed to editor@cw.ua.edu. The victim's name has been changed for her safety and privacy.

It was the first day of class, her first year at college. Laura woke up and put on the perfect outfit, the one she had carefully laid out the night before. She was excited and nervous for the adventure she expected to come. She methodically checked to see she had all the right books and supplies, ate breakfast and went to class, just like any other freshman.

When Laura woke up on Aug. 20, 2014, her 18th birthday, she had no idea something was about to happen that would set her apart from the other freshmen beginning their collegiate experience. She had no idea this would alter the fabric of her world. She had no idea she would replay this day over and over again in her mind for the rest of her life. She had wanted so badly to leave the home she was now hundreds of miles from, but after this day, she would describe desperately wanting to shrink back to the safe, familiar place she had grown up in.

On this day, Laura was raped.

"I went through a phase of blaming myself," she said. "And now it has completely changed the way I interact with guys. I automatically am suspicious ... I know that's going to stay with me. And I see their faces everywhere. I'm never going to forget. I'm never going to forget what they looked like, and I'm never going to forget because sometimes I remember little seconds and little clips of what happened, and it'll come to me. And I will never forget."

After this day and the days that would follow, Laura would be victim-blamed by her friends and insinuated by authorities to be at fault for her own rape. She would eventually reach the decision to drop her case, a decision that might be questioned by some, but this was her decision and her nightmare. She would go through counseling at the Women and Gender Resource Center and sexually transmitted disease testing at Druid City Hospital. And she would still, months later, apologize when talking about it.

"Sorry, it's very hard to listen to, but I'm very callous about it," Laura said.

That night, after class, she, her three roommates and two male friends went to fraternity row.

"I was super careful," she said. "I always got all my own drinks, opened them myself and then poured them."

Then one of Laura's girlfriends got her a beer. She took a sip from the can. She trusted her friend, after all. This wasn't a fraternity member or a even a guy – this was a girl who she thought was just as safety conscious as she was.

Her friend later revealed to her she

had found the drink on the floor of the bathroom. Laura didn't realize what this could mean. It didn't register in her brain that this moment could change her life. It was the first warning sign of the night.

"About 30 minutes later, I realized I was really drunk," Laura said.

One of the guys who came with them left. Laura felt nervous. She didn't trust the girls she was with anymore. Looking back, she realized she was far more intoxicated than she should've been at that point. She hadn't had that much to drink. She texted one of her male friends, saying she didn't want to be there anymore.

Laura decided to meet this friend at another house. She met him in the backyard. She didn't know anyone else, so she sat down alone. A stranger sat next to her soon after.

"This guy bummed me a cigarette and started talking to me," she said.

They talked about music. She said she liked the Grateful Dead – he said he did as well. He asked if she wanted to go upstairs with him to see his Grateful Dead tapestry.

"It was the second warning sign of the night, and I was like no, no way, no. I'm not going upstairs," Laura said.

As they talked, he continually referenced his room and repeatedly asked if she wanted to go upstairs. Laura said she was extremely uncomfortable. She felt pressured to go upstairs. She asked two guys at the party who he was, and they called him creepy, but said she shouldn't worry about it.

She considered leaving. The owner of the Grateful Dead tapestry was still insisting she come upstairs with him. She turned again to the other fraternity members, saying he was making her uncomfortable. They said the only way to make him stop was to go upstairs with him. They all went together.

"They were like, 'Yes, we'll keep you safe,'" Laura said.

Laura thanked them profusely for protecting her. They saw the tapestry and came back downstairs.

"I asked for beer, and they were like, 'We're out, we have some upstairs ... you need to come with us, it's not safe here in the backyard for you,'" she said.

She agreed. She trusted them. They had protected her before. So they went upstairs.

"At this point, I remember feeling really dizzy and really thick and not being able to say anything," Laura said.

Laura isn't sure if they slipped a drug in her drink or if the can from the bathroom had been drugged, but she knew she hadn't had enough to drink to feel this way. She knew something was wrong, but what was happening to her didn't click in the moment.

Whatever was wrong with her, whether she was just really drunk or had been drugged, her judgment was impaired. Anything they told her to do, she'd do. Laura had no ability to consent to what was happening because she had no idea what was happening. They suggested she make out with all three of them. She did.

night. The friend she texted confirmed to The Crimson White that this happened in a fraternity house. According to the timestamp on the text, it was 1:20 a.m.

"And then I lost six hours," Laura said. "Six or seven hours ... I woke up in bed with one of them shoving themselves inside of me."

She still had no idea what was happening. In her state, she found herself apologizing because he couldn't get himself inside of her as he repeatedly called her sloppy. He pulled out and wiped himself on one of his shirts.

As she prepared to leave in the morning, according to what Laura told UAPD, there was an empty condom wrapper on a futon. The man she remembered raping her was not using a condom.

"[I] pointed it out, [and] he said we used it when we had sex 'before,' implying we'd had sex multiple times," the report, quoting Laura, reads. "I didn't remember and said so, and he kind of laughed, shook his head and said I was 'sloppy' again."

He handed her his t-shirt, covered in what she knew was her own blood. She was on her period the night she was assaulted. The shirt she wore to the party had been reduced to tatters.

"One of the sleeves was ripped in half-three of the buttons were ripped off," she said.

Laura left wearing his shirt covered in her blood. She looked in the mirror when she got home and quickly discovered that her shirt wasn't the only thing that had been damaged.

*I see their faces everywhere.
I'm never going to forget.*

"They were all seniors in that fraternity," she said.

Another male friend told her he wanted to go home with a girl. She asked him to wait for her to hook back up with her female friends at the other house. She texted them, but they had already left.

"They had just assumed that I was OK, and they had all gone home," Laura said.

Laura remembers thinking she wouldn't be comfortable walking home alone. It was one of her first weekends at college and the first day of classes. It was dark. She asked her male friend to let her walk with them. If she could walk accompanied even part of the way, she'd have felt much safer.

He said no. He wanted to go home with a girl, and walking Laura home could've jeopardized his chances. She insisted she was scared to walk home alone, but he left anyway. Another person she trusted to protect her was gone.

"They were laughing, and I was a little confused and upset," Laura said.

Five days after the assault, on Aug. 25, Laura went to UAPD to report what happened. According to the original UAPD police report, which Laura willingly gave to The Crimson White, there were four of them in the room. Two of the fraternity members made the owner of the tapestry leave.

"He said he was pissed and implied that I had been his," the UAPD report quotes Laura as saying.

He said he saw her first, the report read.

She texted one of her male friends who had left earlier in the night. Laura gave The Crimson White screenshots of this conversation.

"I am upstairs ... and I'm gonna run," the texts read.

He told her to be safe. That was the last communication she had with anyone that

"I had bruises everywhere," Laura said.

When her roommate saw the state she was in, she thought it was funny.

"My roommate said, 'It looks like someone beat the shit out of you,'" she said.

Laura laughed, still hazy, still not understanding the magnitude of what had happened to her.

"She said, 'Wow, you must be kinky,' and I thought, 'yeah, I must be,' still not knowing what the f - k was going on," Laura said.

Her hands and neck were black and blue. According to the incident report filled out by a UAPD officer on Aug. 25, five days after the assault, and sent to the Tuscaloosa County Violent Crimes Task Force, Laura told the officer there was a large hematoma on the left side of her neck and several hematomas near her breasts.

Lynx McClellan, an MIT Medical nurse in Cambridge, Massachusetts, not directly associated with this case, defined a hematoma as clotted blood in the tissue, often solid and swollen.

"[The] writer [of the police report] did observe one large area on the left side of her neck that was yellowish in color," the report reads.

Later, Laura did a self-exam after she began to experience pain and discovered bruises and cuts in and around her vagina. According to the original police report, she said she had a hematoma approximately three inches in diameter on her vagina.

Although 911rape.org states that many rape victims may not exhibit any physical injuries, McClellan said often when a woman's vagina is dry and she is raped, it causes small tears that look like rug burn. Sometimes, McClellan said, these tears can only be seen with special equipment.

"What we usually see when we examine them is micro tears ... You can see that vaginally, you can see it externally on the labia [and] you can see it on the cervix," McClellan said. "It's not as angry looking as a rug burn, but it can be depending on the time of the exposure."

The injuries confused Laura, but she continued to get ready, inserting a new tampon and heading to class the same day.

"Slowly throughout the course of the day, I started remembering things," she said.

Later, she took her tampon out and experienced severe pain. It was then that she realized her tampon from the night before remained inside her. It hadn't been removed before she was assaulted.

"I pulled it out from my cervix ... At that point I just started sobbing."

McClellan said tampons can become lodged in front of, behind or in the cervix if pushed with enough force.

Her roommate heard her crying and asked what was wrong. When she told her what had happened, she said she hoped Laura had learned her lesson. Other friends had similar reactions, she said, including another male friend who left, assuming she would be safe.

While Laura believes women should feel safe walking home alone at night, and while she doesn't think men have the responsibility of protecting women, she does believe that when you go to a party with someone, you have to make sure they're okay before leaving.

"He was part of that system, and he let me down," Laura said.

One friend, though, the male friend who she texted that was going to run that night, reacted with support, she said.

"I knew something was wrong because she was literally never like that even when she was really drunk," the friend said. "After the fact when I saw her the next day I knew she wasn't just hungover because she wasn't just irritable or anything normal, it was like she was loopy and disoriented and didn't really know what was going on, even when we went to class or got lunch the next day. After talking to her later about it, it was obvious what happened."

He urged her to go to the police.

"He was the first person that encouraged me to go to the UAPD, so I did,"

Laura said.

"They dehumanized me completely."

Laura said she walked into UAPD and was asked to tell her story in the lobby.

"I told my story verbally informally to a junior officer, then a senior officer came in and verbally berated him in front of me," she said.

They then asked her to tell it again. Then, they asked her to write it down. Laura provided The Crimson White with a copy of this written statement.

"Then they made me tell it again to some random dude who came in wearing jeans ... and the whole time they kept me waiting," Laura said.

Laura said the officers seemed

This is not how reporting a rape is supposed to work at UAPD.

When a person reports a sexual assault to The University of Alabama Police Department, there is a protocol officers are required to follow. Sgt. Vonda Collins of UAPD said they go down a checklist.

First, they try to identify where the assault occurred. If it occurred on-campus, they confirm the date and time of the assault. They send a dispatcher to meet with the victim wherever they may be. Once they confirm a crime has been committed, they notify a supervisor. If there is still evidence to be preserved, they send another officer to secure the crime scene for a follow-up investigation. They then notify the Women and Gender Resource Center.

"[The WGRC is] notified for every

victim's advocate with them when they tell their story to the police. Officer Ron Prewitt of the Community Services Division at UAPD said he prefers to interview the victim alone if they're comfortable with it.

"Sometimes, even though that person might make them feel a little more comfortable, there could be something they don't want to have to say in front of somebody else," Prewitt said.

Prewitt said all officers are authorized to respond to sexual assault cases. Victims are asked to repeat the story several times, Collins said, to officers from UAPD, the Tuscaloosa County Violent Crimes Task Force and hospital workers.

"I just recall always saying, 'I know you've said this several times before I've even made contact with you, do you mind just telling me what happened again?'" she said. "So you kind of start softening them up."

UAPD then tells the victim they have the right to file a Title IX case and has them sign a form stating whether or not they want to file said case. According to the U.S. Department of Justice website, Title IX is a federal law that prohibits discrimination based on sex in federally funded education programs or activities. The Office of Title IX Coordinator at the University, according to the UA website, works with the University to ensure the campus is free of illegal gender discrimination and sexual violence.

The chief and assistant chiefs of UAPD are then notified of the assault.

The Tuscaloosa County Violent Crimes Task Force deals with all sexual assault cases, Prewitt said. This, he said, is because they have someone who specializes in violent crimes on call at all times. In addition, they have the resources available to deal with sexual assault cases.

This is how reporting a sexual assault to UAPD is supposed to work, Collins and Prewitt said. Laura, on the other hand, had a very different experience.

"The University and UAPD take any allegation of improper treatment during the reporting of a crime seriously," said Chief of Police John Hooks in an emailed statement. "Students who feel they were treated improperly during interactions with a UAPD representative may send an email to ua.police@ua.edu or call 348-5454 with details about the incident, which will initiate an investigation into the allegations."

While UAPD did not comment on this specific case, an emailed statement from Chris Bryant, interim director of Media Relations, said The University of Alabama is committed to fully investigating instances of sexual misconduct and providing victims with resources to address victim's physical, emotional and mental health and with their different reporting options.

Despite this, Laura said she found no comfort in going to UAPD for assistance.

"I just realized I'm never going to get anywhere talking to people that will never have any idea how I felt ... It was the worst experience of my life," Laura said. "Sometimes I think my experience at the UAPD was worse than my experience at the fraternity house ... I was looking for them to protect me, and instead I was put in a room with four male police officers and basically told that it was my fault."

"Sometimes I think my experience at the UAPD was worse than my experience at the fraternity house ... I was looking for them to protect me, and instead I was put in a room with four male police officers and basically told that it was my fault."

distracted through the entire process, which she found extremely disrespectful. "One of them got up in the middle of talking to go get a soda," she said.

In keeping with protocol, they asked her to sign a form stating whether or not she'd like the Title IX office to be notified of her case. Laura provided The Crimson White with a copy of this document, which she signed yes to, but that's where adherence to protocol began and ended for Laura.

She felt horrible, betrayed by those who were supposed to bring her justice and peace. She found the officers sexist and unable to understand that she could not give consent in her state. The officer writing her statement said she hadn't said no and then stared at her, she said. Laura did not feel they'd provided her the support she needed as a rape victim.

sexual assault," Collins said. "They respond to meet with a victim whether it's [at UAPD] or if it's at DCH Hospital."

If the victim came to UAPD first and it was within 48 hours of the alleged assault, the officer would encourage him or her to go to the hospital and have a sexual assault forensic exam done. According to the Rape, Abuse and Incest National Network's website, a sexual assault forensic exam, commonly referred to as a rape kit, is an exam that collects evidence of a sexual assault. It can take several hours and is used in court cases.

UAPD then contacts the Tuscaloosa County Violent Crime Task Force, which meets the victim at the hospital.

A representative from the WGRC gives the victim information about their options, including the right to have a

“It shows me how far ingrained we are to think that it was what she was wearing or she asked for it or something. No. A girl never asks for it.”

“I had talked to a couple friends about it, and they had said that the fraternity involved could make my life a living hell basically.”

Laura decided against pursuing her case in court. She set up interviews with the Title IX office, but canceled them when she saw one of her assailants on campus and became scared.

In addition to her fear of retaliation, she said all this was too much for her freshman year of college. She wanted to go to class, do homework, be a normal 18-year-old girl. This case would not have been conducive to that, she said.

“The amount of meetings I set up just to talk about it with Title IX people alone was too much for me my freshman year,” Laura said.

“Because I really just wanted to get my homework done.”

Laura went to Druid City Hospital and was tested for sexually transmitted diseases. She provided The Crimson White with paperwork from the hospital confirming she tested negative.

She called the task force to drop her case. They told her she had to come in and sign a form to close the case. She didn’t go in, didn’t sign any paperwork, left her case untouched for more than a year after her rape. Finally, on Friday, Dec. 11, 2015, just after 3 p.m., she arrived at the Tuscaloosa Police Department to close her case.

“The detective at TPD I talked to was the coolest guy,” she said.

He asked Laura if she wanted to see any of her paperwork, then showed her he’d found one of her alleged rapists and brought him in for questioning, she said. It was an extremely healing experience for her.

The detective gave her a copy of the incident report, including a narrative of her assault. This has the first name of one of her attackers. Laura shared this paperwork with The Crimson White.

Laura said she only ever considered a court case so the same thing wouldn’t happen to another girl. For her, closing her case and letting go was much more healing. She said if she had heard about the same thing happening to another girl, she would’ve felt guilty, but this was the right thing for her.

“Even if I had been able to take this to court and won, there still would’ve been people sitting there looking at me like ‘that bitch probably wanted it’ ... When a guy says no, it’s treated as no,” she said. “When a girl says no, it’s oh, she’s just playing hard to get. She wants the dick. She wants it. And that’s just not true.”

This, Laura said, is a serious problem in society. Rape cases can often turn into an attack on the victim, not on the rapist.

“I think going into TPD was all I needed because it was my case, too,” Laura said. “I didn’t want the added stress my freshman year, and I don’t want my parents to find out.”

“Keep getting up every morning and at some point it starts getting easier. And then it gets easier and easier and then you’re living life.”

Laura thinks about her rape every day. There will never come a day when she doesn’t, she said.

“I don’t think you can overestimate the impact this has had on me,” she said.

Counseling was really helpful, she said. Laura suggests going to the WGRC.

She provided The Crimson White with documentation that she went and received counseling.

“I encourage all girls, even if they don’t think they will help, just check it out,” she said. “Just try.”

Kathy Echols, a staff therapist for the Women and Gender Resource Center, said they are a resource for people who have been assaulted and for their family and friends to help them cope with what happened.

The WGRC can help students with things ranging from counseling to providing victim advocates to advocating for them with their professors, Echols said. They’ll also work with financial aid if a student is losing their scholarship because they’re afraid to go to class.

Laura said when she told her friends what had happened to her, she expected more sympathy, particularly from her female friends.

“Instead, they were mean about it, and they also insinuated it was my fault, which makes me sad because it shows me how far ingrained we are to think that it was what she was wearing or she asked for it or something,” Laura said. “No. A girl never asks for it.”

Echols said victim blaming is a serious issue, and her philosophy is to ostracize the perpetrator.

“That’s something that’s so ingrained in our culture,” Echols said. “It’s so ingrained. Even in 2016, I’m still sitting here sometimes in shock about what people say.”

She said you shouldn’t continue to associate with anyone you think could assault someone. Echols said changing the tolerance level will help with the issue of victim blaming.

Laura agreed with this.

“If you think that the person that just walked by you is not more than the sum of her ass ... then you are a waste of space,” Laura said.

Despite all she’s been through, Laura is hopeful that sharing her story will help others who are struggling to come to terms with their own sexual assault story.

“I don’t want this to be about me,” Laura said. “I want this to be about people not getting raped in general.”

*“When a guy says no, it’s treated as no,” she said.
“When a girl says no, it’s oh, she’s just playing hard to get.”*

More education needed on bystander effect

By Sam West | Assistant Culture Editor

On a clear, sunny day in Panama City Beach last spring break, media reports across the United States erupted with footage of crowds of college students passing by as four men raped an unconscious woman. According to police, the victim drank from a stranger's water bottle and was likely drugged. The 19-year-old had no memory of the incident but later recognized herself on a video of the attack.

“At lot of times when people see suspicious behavior or illegal activity, they feel like they don’t have any power or authority to step in.”

But what the media was concerned about was the fact that not one person reacted to the situation. The footage reveals most of the passersby were college students on vacation.

“Everybody there should’ve known to step in,” Beth Howard, the University’s Title IX coordinator, said about the incident.

The incident was an example of the inaction that occurs in large groups of people, a toxic psychological behavior known as the bystander effect, where people are able but unwilling to help others in danger because of fear or social pressure. It’s one of the most pervasive and difficult issues surrounding sexual assault.

“You don’t know these people, so do you feel comfortable stepping in in that situation? I mean, what can you do when is it none of your business?” Howard said, explaining the uncertainty in bystander situations. “When do you feel comfortable, when is it safe?”

Research suggests a lack of education might be the cause. A national survey of adults conducted by the Opinion Research Corporation found that 65 percent said they suspected they knew a victim of domestic violence, but had no idea what to do to help them. A 2011 study by the Knowledge Networks showed that 58 percent of college students said they didn’t know how to help a victim.

These situations are where bystander prevention training can make a difference. As a part of the It’s On Us program implemented at the University last fall, the Student Government Association, Title IX office and the Women and Gender Resource Center teamed up to teach interested students how to recognize and prevent sexual assault. Several open trainings of “UActs with Courage” are held throughout the year.

Zoe Winston, the peer education program coordinator, described

three steps any student should take if they see sexual assault, harassment or suspicious behavior. First, they must recognize that what they’re seeing is a problem. Second, they should communicate with others to ensure that they aren’t the only ones who are uncomfortable with what’s going on. The final step is to act with courage.

“Find ways to intervene – whether that’s getting someone in a position of authority, calling the cops if need be, using group intervention,” Winston said. “But [find] low-risk intervention techniques to where they can safely defuse a potentially dangerous situation.”

Jordan Forrest, who headed the SGA effort to implement the It’s On Us program, advised that if a friend talks to you about assault or harassment that happened to them in the past, the first step should be consoling and talking with them, and from there, “discussing their options,” such as therapy or contacting authorities.

“You can come to SGA and me, or someone there will point you in the right direction,” Forrest said.

Psychologists also blame the bystander effect on a collective diffusion of responsibility – each person believes someone else will help, so they don’t take action themselves.

“A lot of times when people see suspicious behavior or illegal activity, they feel like they don’t have any power or authority to step in,” Winston said. “They have this mentality that someone else will take care of it.”

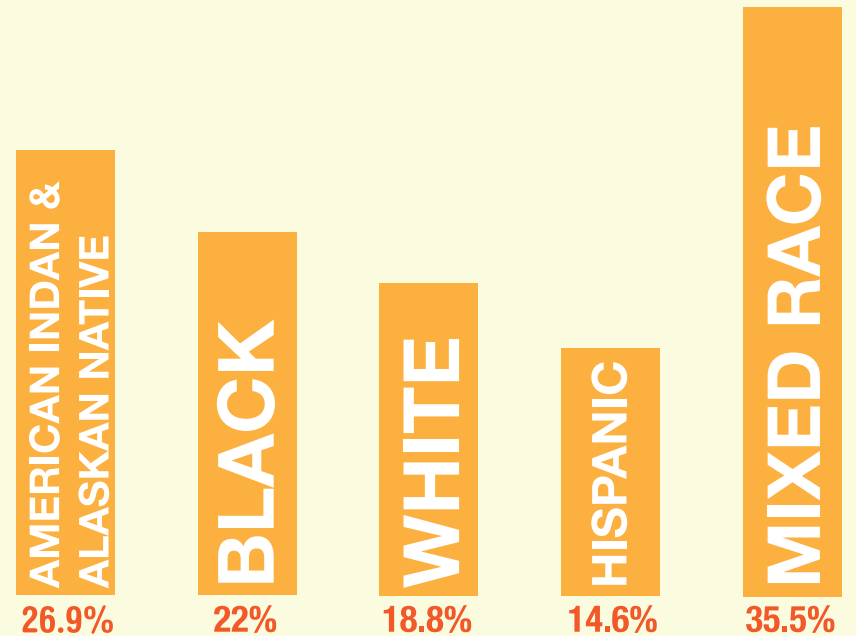
If everyone on college campuses knew what to do if they witness violence and took responsibility for helping others, sexual assault would be eradicated. Incidents like the one in Panama City would never happen. At the launch of his It’s On Us

“Find low-risk intervention techniques to where they can safely defuse a potentially dangerous situation.”

campaign, President Obama pressured young men in particular to take responsibility and stand up for victims.

“I want every young man in America to feel some strong peer pressure, in terms of how they’re supposed to behave and treat women,” Obama said in January 2014. “That starts before they get to college. Those of us who are fathers have an obligation to transmit that information. We can do more to make sure that every man out there – in junior high, high school, and college – understands what’s expected of them, and what it means to be a man, and to intervene if they see someone else acting inappropriately.”

RATE OF ATTEMPTED & COMPLETED RAPE BY RACE IN 2010 IN THE U.S.



Information Source: Center for Disease Control CW / Mary Kate Holladay



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A lengthy document, the Title IX amendment was written to protect students from gendered discrimination, sexual assault and sexual harassment. CW / Layton Dudley

Title IX office provides resources to UA students

By Becca Murdoch | Contributing Writer

Endless questions and repetition, hours of vulnerability and uncertainty – this is just a taste of what reporting a sexual assault is like for victims. Shelby Anderson, a sophomore majoring in telecommunication and film, was no exception when she reported a rape to the UAPD. The Title IX office is trying to help and support students like Anderson in painful circumstances, but they still have a ways to go.

The words “Title IX” have been floating in and out of the conversations about higher education since its inception in the Education Amendments of 1972. The amendment reads, “No person in the United States shall, on the basis of sex, be excluded from participation in, be denied the benefits of, or be subjected to discrimination under any education program or activity receiving Federal financial assistance.” Title IX was established to protect students from gendered discrimination, sexual assault and sexual harassment; the Title IX Office at UA was created to enforce this policy.

Beth Howard is the current UA Title IX coordinator. She is responsible for keeping the University’s sexual misconduct policy up to date and working with two investigators who work the cases reported through the Title IX office. Howard graduated from The University of Alabama in 2001 and wanted to come back to her alma mater to help the students here.

“This University means a lot to me,” Howard said. “So if there’s something that I can do in my life and in my job to make sure [UA] is a safer and better place to be, then that’s great.”

When Howard took the position following former coordinator Katie Nolan, the Title IX office kicked into high gear. Complaints once handled by the Office of Student Conduct or human resources transitioned into Title IX-specific responsibilities. The Title IX office now handles complaints of sexual harassment, gender discrimination and sexual assault.

“When I started, I was the only full-time Title IX coordinator in the state,” Howard said. “We were one of the first places to have a Title IX office in the [Southeastern] Conference that didn’t have any other duties at all.”

Along with the Title IX coordinator, the Title IX office at the University is supported by two investigators, Miranda Whitney and Lauren Alexander, who interview witnesses and compile evidence for cases submitted to Title IX.

As well as interviewing witnesses, Whitney and Alexander inform victims of resources and sometimes help escort them to the Women and Gender Resource Center. Serving in this role has proven rewarding for Alexander.

“Knowing that we get to help students, whether that be students who have a

case with us or students that just need resources or have questions, and just knowing that we’re impacting students has been the most rewarding for me,” said Alexander, who graduated from The University of Alabama with a masters in Criminal Justice.

With investigators and a coordinator who are all equally eager to help students, the Title IX office is ready and equipped to engage in the reporting process. More than anything else, Howard and the investigators want victims to tell someone.

“If someone wants a criminal investigation, we want them to report to the police first because that’s the most important,”

their offices.”

Anderson recounted her reporting experience at UAPD as a series of long, personal conversations and slips of paper to sign that released her contact information to groups including Title IX and the Tuscaloosa Police Department.

“Up until recently, I didn’t really know what Title IX was,” Anderson said. “I had heard about it but I guess just because of my ignorance to the subject of sexual assault, I really didn’t know what it meant. The police were my only option.”

Anderson said this lack of publicity for Title IX does not negate its principles.

“I think, at its core, Title IX is effective, but it can only be as effective as a college

“[Title IX] get[s] the word out and [tries] to let people know that there are resources here and we are here to help,” Howard said. “We want people to come talk to us, and I hope that has let students know that this is an issue we care about and we support them and want them to feel comfortable to tell us and know what their options are.”

As for the future of Title IX, Howard and her investigators are focusing their energy on prevention programming. They are currently further developing the UAct website, where students can find reporting channels for harassment and assaults and learn more about bystander intervention and consent at <https://www.ua.edu/campuslife/uact/>.

“It might take a little time,” Howard said about building UAct, “but we want to create something that’s a UA thing and that the students want to do and can relate to.”

With Title IX and UAct working toward establishing an easier and more effective way to report sexual misconduct, students have the opportunity to feel supported enough to speak up.

“The more we stay quiet, the more it’s just going to keep on going, so if I have to be a person to stand up and say, ‘This happened to me’ and face potential judgement and rejection from friends or even rejections from future relationships, then okay, and that’s just a sacrifice I have to make,” Anderson said. “If no one says anything, nothing’s going to change.”

Along with victims coming forward to talk about their experiences, Anderson believes Title IX is here to help and will make a difference, and she advises those who have suffered sexual assaults not to be afraid to speak up and reach out.

“Know that there are options and that Title IX exists,” Anderson said. “Students don’t know that it’s a thing and that it’s a powerful thing, and it’s something that at its core is designed to help you and protect your safety on campus.”

Sexual assault, misconduct and the culture surrounding crimes of that nature will not be solved overnight, but organizations like Title IX and people like Anderson are helping to keep the conversation alive.

“Once we as victims and even we as a culture stop creating this idea of blaming victims and shaming and guilted victims,” Anderson said, “it becomes so much easier to step up and report it and to step up and say that ‘Hey, you’re not alone.’”

If you or someone you know has experienced gender discrimination, sexual harassment or sexual assault, you can find reporting options and resources at <http://titleix.ua.edu/report-violations.html>. If reporting through the Title IX office, expect to be interviewed and witnesses to be contacted. Reporting an assault may be an intimidating experience, but the people at Title IX want to help.

Title IX Basics	
<p>Title IX is a landmark federal civil right that prohibits sex discrimination in education.</p> <p>Title IX is not just about sports; it is a prohibition against sex-based discrimination in education. It addresses discrimination against pregnant and parenting students and women in STEM (science, technology, engineering, and math) programs. It also addresses sexual harassment, gender-based discrimination and sexual violence. Sexual violence includes attempted or completed rape or sexual assault, as well as sexual harassment, stalking, voyeurism, exhibitionism, verbal or physical sexuality-based threats or abuse and intimate partner violence.</p>	Title IX does not apply to female students only.
	Your school must be proactive in ensuring that your campus is free of sex discrimination.
	Your school must have an established procedure for handling complaints of sex discrimination, sexual harassment or sexual violence.
	Your school must take immediate action to ensure a victim can continue their education free of ongoing sex discrimination, sexual harassment or sexual violence.
Your school may not retaliate against someone filing a complaint and must keep a victim safe from other retaliatory harassment or behavior.	
Your school can issue a no contact directive under Title IX to prevent the accused student from approaching or interacting with you	
In cases of sexual violence, your college is prohibited from encouraging or allowing mediation (rather than a formal hearing) of the complaint.	

Information courtesy of justice.gov, CW / Kaylee Porter

Howard said. “We encourage people to report quickly.”

The reporting process is not perfect, however. Legal matters are a slow burn, the Title IX office is required to resolve reported cases in 60 university business days and information can get muddled along the way.

“I was really confused as to how [Title IX] worked because when I signed the sheet, I thought they were going to contact me and they didn’t,” said Anderson, who reported her case through the University police. “From my understanding, I think something has been filed with Title IX, but I’ve never been to

makes it. A university’s responsibility is to implement Title IX,” Anderson said. “It comes down to them because Title IX is just a national, federal law. It’s not an individual school law, but an individual school has to enforce it, and the issue is that schools aren’t enforcing it.”

For schools to be fully compliant under Title IX regulations, they must have a Title IX coordinator, publish a notice of nondiscrimination, adopt a clear grievance procedure for handling claims and under the Clery Act, they are required to inform victims of their reporting options.

But Howard said she believes that Title IX is making an impact on this campus.

Reporting the Gap

Discrepancy in the media, the victim and the reports

By Alyx Chandler | Features Editor

Debate continues to flare up concerning statistics reported on college campuses.

But several national surveys agreed on one apparent fact about universities. Whether by news outlets from media, police informing communities or the victims of sexual assault themselves, reporting remains sparse, especially on The University of Alabama's campus.

In the fall semester of 2015, the Office of Internal Communications sent out only one forwarded University police advisory email about a sexual assault, in addition to an update to the original that was sent out via the 40,000+ server of The University of Alabama campus community.

The White House, on the other hand, continues to endorse research that points to drastically different and disturbing odds.

The Obama administration specially designed Task Force to Protect Students from Sexual Assault was created to tackle "the growing epidemic" occurring at universities all across the nation. Data showed that one in five women and one in 16 men are sexually assaulted while in college, according to the National Sexual Violence Resource Center (NSVRC), which is also the data that the White House endorses.

Another more recent report released in the spring of 2015 by the Association of American Universities (AAU) covered 27 universities and urged the media to consider the validity of the "one in five" females statistic. Still, the AAU reported "overall rates of reporting to campus officials and law enforcement or others were low, ranging from five to 28 percent."

As a student, consider the number of times someone has actually revealed that they've been sexually assaulted on campus, regardless of either statistic.

That talk probably hasn't been that often, either, according to statistics updated by the NSVRC in 2014 that states approximately 90 percent of sexual assault victims on campus don't report the crime.

With that in mind, The University of Alabama Police (UAPD) officially reported a total of 17 cases of sexual assault on the University's campus in 2014, with 14 reports of rape and three reports of fondling. Discrepancy exists, and as the introduction to Not Alone, the White House's first report of sexual assault, said, "it tears apart the fabric of our communities."

VICTIM-BLAMING

So, how many students didn't report?

Dr. Kathy Echols, a staff therapist for the University's Women and Gender Resource Center, said the final numbers of students that report sexual assaults each year will never be completely accurate with such a high percent of students too ashamed, anxious, shocked or sometimes unaware of how to report the crime. Echols' job sometimes includes counseling struggling student victims on whether they should report the crime against them to the University police.

It can be traumatic to recount the crime multiple times, Echols said, especially if they have a deep-rooted fear of blame.

"My job is therapy," she said. "It's the police's job to say that they [victims] need to talk."

The AAU also cited that most victims of sexual assault on campus that chose not to report did so because they thought it wasn't serious enough, in addition to a significant percentage of students that specified they were "... embarrassed, ashamed or that it would be too emotionally difficult."

Echols said that "victim-blaming language" can contribute to stigmas.

"... Trying to change the focus, change the language," Echols said, "it's important because we've normalized it."

STEREOTYPING THE VICTIM

Victim blaming is defined by times when the victim of a crime or wrongful act is held either partially or wholly responsible for the harm that befell on them because of the crime. Examples seen in the media include saying that women who were sexually assaulted shouldn't be walking alone in

ABOUT THE ASSAILANT

- **Approximately 4/5 of rapes** were committed by someone known to the victim.
- **82% of sexual assaults** were perpetrated by a non-stranger.
- **47% of rapists** are a friend or acquaintance.
- **25%** are an intimate.
- **5%** are a relative

Information from rainn.org. CW / Mary Kate Holladay

the streets at night or that the women were asking for it when they wore certain clothes.

Echols said the perpetrator needs to be held accountable instead of the victim.

Victim-blaming was perceived even in more indirect statements, as was voiced to Al.com reporter Carol Robinson last fall.

Robinson, a reporter for Al.com for 30 years, has been a lead reporter since 1996 and covered rape and sexual assault accounts various times over the years, including reports on UA students. She said that she learned to report and brief the accounts in the same manner of as the rest of the crimes and that she received no official training.

A key, she explained, is to "keep it short because of the sensitivity of crime."

"If you are a reporter, your job is to report the facts," Robinson said.

In contrast, 20 years ago, Echols said talking that to the press was a whole different game for her to learn. She said what most reporters took away from her interviews wasn't her main point, and although she's now learned how to deal with the media in a more efficient way, she'd still like to see changes, particularly in the language, that don't include any subtle, unnecessary victim-blaming.

When local broadcasters or newscast come to her now seeking a certain kind of comment, Echols keeps the victim in mind. As a media professional, Robinson expressed the importance in warnings to prevent crimes, regardless of whether it was for sexual assault.

"Police work every day to get rapists off the

"I would never use the term 'breeding ground' for sexual assault, but sometimes college students can fall into several higher risk categories, not just for sexual assault."

-Zoe Winston

"I would never use the term 'breeding ground' for sexual assault, but sometimes college students can fall into several higher risk categories, not just for sexual assault," said Zoe Winston, The University of Alabama Women and Gender Center peer education programs coordinator. "But those ages, the traditional college ages like 18-24, you're at higher risk for lots of things."

street, but police can't always prevent a criminal from a crime," Robinson said. "They can warn things that don't make them vulnerable as a victim."

She said that one particular warning caused "people to bash" her over an Oct. 12, 2015 article about three UA students charged as suspects for gang raping an unconscious 22-year-old woman from Shelton State Community College after she "knowingly," according to statements from Capt. Gary Hood, drank a "combination of fruit punch and Xanax" and then passed out. She was found still unconscious the next morning.

Robinson ended the article with a quote by Capt. Hood that read: "If you don't drink alcohol, you reduce your chances of becoming a (sexual assault) victim by 99.9 percent."

Elaborations on what Capt. Hood said or his source for that statistic doesn't appear in Robinson's article. She said her interview with Capt. Hood was brief.

"It's going to be a two second clip, and I don't know how people pull out what they pull out," Echols said. "That's why I've learned how to navigate what I say to the best of my ability."

More of less, Echols now tries to be "really careful," so that what she says in the brief interview won't be misconstrued.

"I think reporters have this burden to talk about this issue but to also make sure that they're doing services to survivors," Winston said. "And making sure that survivors don't have a harder time than they already do."

"I'm just quoting the person I interviewed," Robinson said. "I saw that as excellent teaching opportunity and even shared it with my college daughter because I found it educational."

Robinson insisted she was just doing her job.

She also said a lot of people, including some of her readership, "can be really sensitive" about the issue of possible victim-blaming. Heated comments and Facebook shares online for the Al.com article included mostly extreme opinions like "Victim blaming at its finest," and Hood was "using this crime victim as an example of why 'she deserved it'" to "Plenty of women have urged college women to drink responsibly," and "Hood is suggesting a common sense means of reducing your chances of becoming [a victim]."

Instead of assuming or using language that assumes women played some sort of active role in aggregating the crime, Echols explained that the language in the media needs to push past a stigma and past the blame game so that maybe they can uncover the not-so-pretty reality of why so many students don't report. Echols said around "60 to 80 percent of victims won't report," and some of them then become her clients.

"I think reporters have this burden to talk about this issue but to also make sure that they're doing services to survivors," Winston said. "And making

sure that survivors don't have a harder time than they already do."

Victim-blaming is the frequent term used by media consumers today.

Much to the dismay of Capt. Hood, the different posts and comments on Al.com, Facebook and Twitter accused him of igniting a crude blame game against a college student, not a warning. Robinson said the decision was made to purposefully take out the end quote for print version of the article because of the backlash.

She also said that, if offered the chance, "she wouldn't write it differently," and clarified that Capt. Hood was the source of the quote.

NORMALIZE THE RESPONSE

Warning potential victims with the 99.9 percent statistic took precedent in Robinson's article over warning the supposed 3 percent of male university students that research said accounts for the repeated offenders of sexual assault on campus, according to reports in 2014 sent by the Rape, Abuse and Incest National Network (RAINN).

"I think people who read it that way are reading way too much into it, plain and simple," Robinson said. "Why do I have to change the wording on one crime, when I don't on others?"

Both Robinson and Echols agree that sex is still taboo in our culture, which multiple articles and research theories point to as a contributing struggle in the reporting process of sexual assault. Beth Howard, the coordinator of the University's Title IX chapter, said that people tend to immediately think, "that didn't happen."

But even 17 reports in 2014 proved that it does.

"College campuses tend to have some higher rates [of sexual assault] maybe than the outside community," Winston said. "But also college students are uniquely positioned to not only get educated on this issue, but also to respond."

University-run or affiliated media and UAPD alerts are no exception to that unique response, especially with the ability to instantly contact a database of over 40,000 people.

Based on the archives of UAPD's website, no alert was sent to the University to forward out to the campus community about the gang rape that Robinson reported. The article restated the fact that three of the four men charged for rape were UA students.

When normalized sexual violence is rationalized by automatic blame or blatant disbelief of victims, a dangerous mindset creeps into the community – a mindset that many people or students don't question.

MEDIA IGNORING PERPETRATORS

Al.com published a follow-up article to Robinson's first one, also written by her, on Nov. 10, 2015, titled "Tuscaloosa gang rape illustrates 'epidemic' of Xanax use among young people, police say."

That concludes that the 'epidemic' is Xanax, not that four men, three being then-active UA students, felt comfortable enough to make the conscious decision to rape an unconscious girl.

"[Xanax] presents a clear and present danger to the community," Tuscaloosa police Chief Steve Anderson said in the article.

A comment to the online version was made that "Xanax doesn't cause gang rapes. And gang rapes don't illustrate a Xanax problem." Robinson said

ABOUT THE VICTIMS

- In a nationally representative survey of adults, 37.4% of female rape victims were first raped **between ages 18-24.**
- Among **female rape victims**, perpetrators were reported to be intimate partners (51.1%), family members (12.5%), acquaintances (40.8%) and strangers (13.8%).
- Among **male rape victims**, perpetrators were reported to be acquaintances (52.4%) and strangers (15.1%).
- Among sexual violence victims raped since their 18th birthday, 31.5% of women and 16.1% of men reported a physical injury as a result of a rape. 36.2% of injured female victims received medical treatment.
- Rape results in about **32,000 pregnancies** each year.
- Among female victims of partner violence who filed a protective order, 68% reported they were raped by their intimate partner and 20% reported a rape-related pregnancy.

everything they can to protect them [victims]" including never naming victims, even when they testify in open court unless they specify otherwise.

Echols and other staff members at the WGRC aren't the only ones to say that the media has become fixated on the victim based on the threads to other articles about sexual assault.

RAINN President Scott Berkowitz wrote in the 2014 letter addressed to the White House Task

The Centers for Disease Control Rape Prevention and Education Program concluded that "some significant first steps would be for universities to work to build trust between administrators and the student body" so that students felt like reporting was a serious option. Another major reason cited in the Association of American Universities survey about why student victims chose not to report to the campus police or administration is that they "... did not think anything would be done about it."

Force to Protect Students from Sexual Assault: "In the last few years, there has been an unfortunate trend towards blaming "rape culture" for the extensive problem of sexual violence on campuses."

"Rape culture," a term coined by 1970s by gender theorists and feminists representing the mindset that sexual violence in America, usually against women, was excused and even encouraged by popular culture and media outlets.

The letter continued: "While it is helpful to point out the systemic barriers to addressing the problem, it is important to not lose sight of a simple fact. Rape is caused not by cultural factors, but by the conscious decisions of a small percentage of the community to commit a violent crime."

"When I'm asked questions like 'what can we tell women?' I always back that one up with women aren't doing anything wrong," Echols said. "We need to get perpetrators off the streets."

With that being said, Echols said that she doesn't "know of any particular program that's being directed at perpetrators" and focuses strictly on prevention.

"We have the resources for after it happens," she said.

REPORTING A LACK OF SERIOUSNESS

With murders and "so much else happening every day," Robinson said that most rapes must take the backburner in the professional world of media.

The reporters are required to look at court and police records every day and choose what crimes should be stories to go into the limited space that's in the paper or as a brief online. There isn't enough time to cover all rapes, along with other crimes that happen repeatedly every day, unless it's a particularly newsworthy situation or a "bigger case."

"But rape is rape no matter how you look at it," Robinson said. "Certainly no one's saying it didn't happen and that it's not important."

The CDC's Rape Prevention and Education Program concluded that "some significant first steps would be for universities to work to build trust between administrators and the student body" so that students felt like reporting was a serious option.

Another major reason cited in the AAU survey about why student victims chose not to report to the campus police or administration is that they "... did not think anything would be done about it."

Howard works with University Administration, departments, students, faculty, staff and campus police to create a campus environment free of illegal gender discrimination and sexual violence. She also manages sexual assault reports and complaints and is "charged with identifying and addressing any patterns or systemic issues that arise in reviewing such complaints," according to the Title IX website.

"I mean, we would hope that people leave [UA] with a greater understanding, greater respect, a better person, a better community member than they were when they got here," Howard said.

No campus-wide survey has been given on whether a large or small percentage of the student body knows about the resources available at the University or whether they take them seriously.

Chris Bryant, the University's interim director of media relations, explained that The University of Alabama decision to notify students of a possible threat on campus or about a sexual assault or other crimes, "is driven, in large part, by UAPD's recommendation," along with the University's executive leadership.

Bryant said "the University has a variety of communication vehicles that it employs when students need to take action." Students can be alerted via text, phone, email, outdoor or indoor speaker systems and messaging on Crimson Ride buses, along with the dozens of digital screens inside campus buildings. Currently, the University only updates the students via crimson email when UAPD sends them a safety alert.

ON-CAMPUS REPORTING

In the fall semester of 2015, the University website only lists that one alert was sent out that involved a possible threat for sexual assault. The one email that was sent out in the fall semester was sent because of the possibility that more students were unsafe and vulnerable to assault. The email involved "an unknown male, in a white vehicle, who stated he was part of a church organization providing sober rides for people that were in need of one," and was at large after the victim "was able to exit the vehicle and flee the scene."

Unlike the majority of sexual assaults, this situation involved a complete stranger, one that acted as an obvious predator.

The reality is that perpetrators of sexual assault can be friends, roommates, neighbors, classmates, academic club or greek members, friends of friends and boyfriends or girlfriends, according to Echols.

Howard acknowledged that she thought general reporting was good on topics like bystander prevention. At very least, she said, it makes students talk about it.

"There's already this pervasive myth that survivors falsify or exaggerate their claims or make claims of sexual assault or dating violence to get back at someone," Winston said.

The surveys from AAU claimed that actually only 2 to 8 percent are thought to fabricate stories.

In both major reports listed, a significant per-

HOW TO SAFELY INTERVENE

- **Tell another person.** Being with others is a good idea when a situation looks dangerous.
- **Ask a victim if he/she is okay.** Provide options and a listening ear.
- **Ask the person if he/she wants to leave.** Make sure that he/she gets home safely.
- **Call the police (911) or someone else in authority or yell for help.**
- **Or call the National Sexual Assault Hotline at 1.800.656.HOPE.**

Information from unh.edu. CW / Mary Kate Holladay

cent of students listed one of their reasons to not report to the campus police or school authorities because others might think they "were partly at fault" or because of "fear they would be blamed."

The data points to a pattern of blame on college campuses.

Victim-blaming is a tactic people consider the media has to be no stranger to, regardless of intent, but that doesn't mean that it's acceptable.

Students are encouraged to call 1-800-656-HOPE for the National Sexual Assault Hotline if that is a reporting method that victims are more comfortable with.

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HOROSCOPES

Today's Birthday (02/01/16). Collaborate for change this year. Spring eclipses (3/8, 3/23) provide a lucrative surge and direction changes. A financial growth phase shifts toward two years of travels and studies (after 9/9). Autumn eclipses (9/1, 9/16) incite a windfall to your shared and personal accounts. Contributions return multiplied. To get the advantage, check the day's rating: 10 is the easiest day, 0 the most challenging.

Aries (March 21-April 19) -- Today is an 8 -- Stay focused to expand your territory. Imagine a project completed. Resist the urge to splurge. A hidden danger could arise. If it goes against your grain, turn it down. Lies are revealed. Notice your dreams.

Taurus (April 20-May 20) -- Today is a 9 -- Move quickly to grab an opportunity. You can make it happen together. Someone interesting has your attention. Hold on to your money. Good things are worth waiting for. Commit to an inspiring future. Make a bold declaration.

Gemini (May 21-June 20) -- Today is a 9 -- Put energy into work today, despite chaos. Provide excellent service. There's an opportunity to advance. The more you learn the better you look. Track sales closely. Verify the investment of time and money before compromising.

Cancer (June 21-July 22) -- Today is a 9 -- Tap hidden assets. Make the changes you've been contemplating. Don't run away from it, despite strong impulse. Don't get talked out of what you want. Say what you've been holding back. Take bold action.

Leo (July 23-Aug. 22) -- Today is a 7 -- Focus on family interactions. Find ways to support each other. Work interferes with play. Try and try again. Dig deeper for a solution. Find a hidden treasure. No splurging. Enjoy simple comfort foods together.

Virgo (Aug. 23-Sept. 22) -- Today is a 7 -- Clean up messes. Others want fast action, but you'd better slow down or risk an accident. Accept another's generosity graciously. Provide leadership. Take decisive action. Send someone else ahead. Following through pays well.

Libra (Sept. 23-Oct. 22) -- Today is an 8 -- If it's not broken, don't fix it. Work takes precedence. Increasing productivity gives you more time off afterwards. Avoid gossip or controversy. Don't gamble or rely upon fantasy. Pay bills. Explore streets you seldom visit.

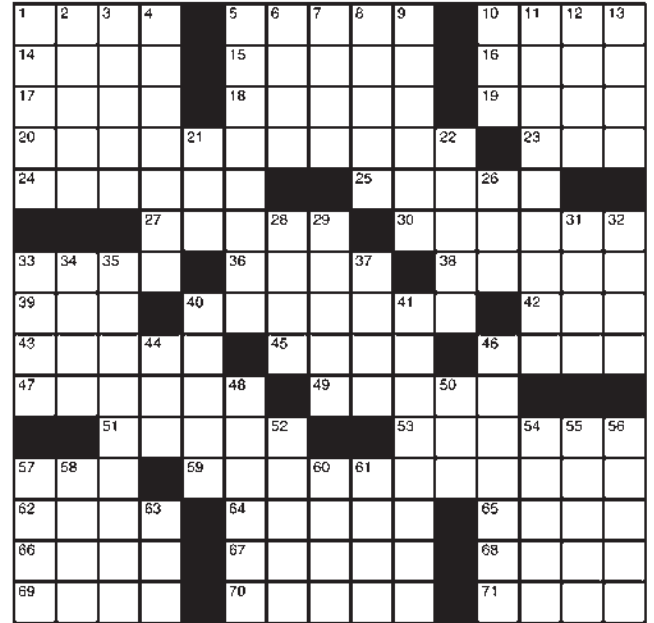
Scorpio (Oct. 23-Nov. 21) -- Today is a 9 -- Full speed ahead to meet a deadline. A rush job pre-empts scheduled programming. Work quickly, but carefully. Avoid provoking jealousies. The neighborhood provides what you need. Friends keep you headed in the right direction.

Sagittarius (Nov. 22-Dec. 21) -- Today is a 7 -- A roadblock or unexpected expense stalls the action. Stick to the truth. Don't jump to conclusions. Pay bills before buying treats. Take it slow and easy. Practice frugality. You won't have to defer gratification forever.

Capricorn (Dec. 22-Jan. 19) -- Today is an 8 -- Assume responsibility. Address an uncomfortable situation head on. Begin a fresh page. Emotions could run high. Stand in compassion, for yourself and others. Listen to another view. Judge not. Get much needed rest.

Aquarius (Jan. 20-Feb. 18) -- Today is a 7 -- Old assumptions are challenged. Strike out in a new direction. Make a creative plan. Get tools and supplies together. Do the jobs that pay best first. Peace and quiet soothes short tempers. Apply artistic touches.

Pisces (Feb. 19-March 20) -- Today is a 9 -- Teamwork leads to victory. Concentrate intently. Expand in the direction of least resistance. Toss out the superfluous. Consult with experts, friends and family. Children have a fresh perspective. Bring a dream image into your external environment.



By Janice Luttrell

2/1/16

- ACROSS**
- Get cheeky with ___ and whistles: enhancements
 - Vile Nile snakes
 - Harbinger
 - Chinese or Japanese
 - Great, in '90s slang
 - Salon request for prom night
 - "Abandon all hope, ye who enter here!" poet
 - When doubled, American Samoa's capital
 - *Football player using a tee
 - GOP member
 - Woman of la casa
 - Wipe clean
 - ___ Dakota
 - Moves furtively
 - Kitten-lifting spot
 - Not worth discussing
 - Director DeMille
 - Ventilate
 - Decorate, as with parsley
 - In the style of
 - French good-bye
 - It's prohibited
 - Rap fan
 - Hummingbird's diet
 - Get more mileage out of
 - House overhangs
 - Some car deals
 - T-shirt sizes, for short
 - Secondary business venue, as for auto accessories ... and, literally, where the starts of the answers to starred clues can go
 - Mini-exam
 - Ancient region of present-day Turkey
 - Racer Yarrowburgh
 - Speeder's payment
 - Lovers' meeting
 - Sch. near the Rio Grande
 - Fir or ash
 - Enjoy a cigar
 - Places to sleep
- DOWN**
- "___ on!": "Dinner!"
 - More than sufficient
 - Family car
 - Ice-cream truck treat
 - Consequence of selfish acts, some say
 - Actor Morales
 - "The Mod Squad" role
 - Hanukkah pancake
 - Scoamful looks
 - Smartphone download
 - *Split the taxi fare
 - Numbered book part
 - Call it a day
 - Suffix with 22-Down
 - Cowboy's home
 - Witness
 - Pulled in different directions
 - Hold in high respect
 - Narc's discovery
 - Do in, as a vampire
 - Tandoori flatbread

Saturday's Puzzle Solved

A	G	E	L	I	M	I	T	S	C	A	L	I	A	
P	A	N	O	R	A	M	A	W	A	D	E	R	S	
B	U	Z	Z	K	I	L	L	A	R	I	S	E	S	
S	L	O	E	L	A	K	E	P	O	E	T			
A	M	I	G	A	E	D	G	E	S	O	R	E		
C	A	D	E	T	S	O	A	T		Y	O	N		
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O	L	A		A	M	T		A	V	A	N	T	I	
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T	R	I	A	D		G	F	O	R	C	E			
			S	O	Y	L	A	T	T	E	R	A	N	K
C	A	T	T	L	E		U	T	A	H	A	G	E	N
P	A	I	S	A	N		R	E	L	A	T	E	T	O
A	S	C	E	N	D		N	A	S	T	I	E	S	T

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Information and resources about sexual assault

Beth Howard, Title IX Coordinator- 205-348-5496, <http://titleix.ua.edu/>

Women and Gender Resource Center- 205-348-5040, <http://wrc.ua.edu/>

Counseling Center- 205-348-3863, <http://counseling.ua.edu/>

UAPD- 205-348-5454, <http://police.ua.edu/>

TPD- 205-349-2121, <http://www.tuscaloosa.com/pd>

National Domestic Violence Hotline- 1-800-799-7233, <http://www.thehotline.org/>

Domestic Violence Law Clinic- 205-348-4960, <http://www.law.ua.edu/academics/law-clinics/domestic-violence-clinic/>

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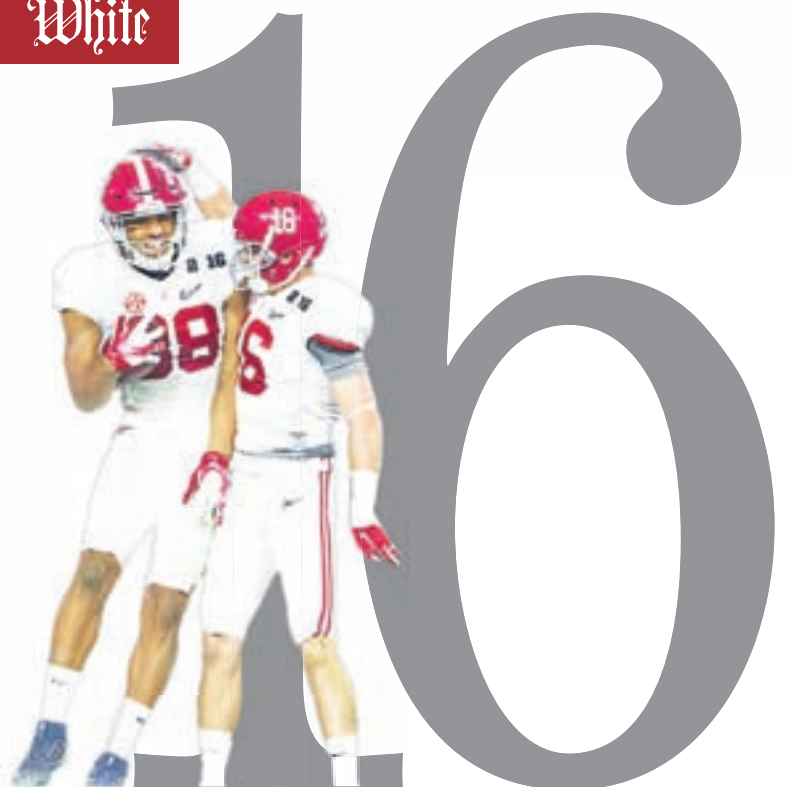
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