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Group combats sexual assault

The Sexual Violence Awareness Group will hold its first meeting on Jan. 12 in the EMU

By Michael Hines
Student Activities Reporter

Sexual assault is being recognized as a problem that both men and women must face.

The ASUO acknowledged this early in the year by placing signs in urinals that read: "You hold the power to stop rape in your hand." And, in the face of two official and 17 unofficial reports of sexual assault filed by University students during the 1996-97 academic year, the Office of Student Life has created a student group with the goal of combatting sexual assault.

The Sexual Violence Awareness Group is an organization that students want, said Linda Hoover, assistant dean of Student Life.

"We wanted to be the tie for the other groups with broader mission statements," she said.

Student Life and the ASUO Women's Center recognized the demand for this tie early fall term. No group specifically addresses sexual violence, Hoover said.

The awareness group, which may change its name, will have its first public meeting on Jan. 12 at 5 p.m. in the EMU Maple Room.

Greg Danielson, the Unwanted

Sexual Behavior Task Force student assistant, is helping to establish the new group.

He said everyone is welcome regardless of gender.

"This issue needs to be dealt with by both sexes," Danielson said. "This will be a great way to get students aware."

Danielson, along with Hoover and Women's Center office coordinator Rebecca Peatow, rewrote the unofficial sexual-assault report form.

The new form, which can be found at several locations on campus, is purple and has an envelope attached. Victims can simply complete the confidential form and place it in campus mail.

The report form addresses issues such as rape, gang rape, stranger rape, stalking, sexual harassment and public indecency.

The new report form and the group's expected activism may increase the number of reported sexual assaults, Peatow said.

"I hope that [the group] will offer a dialogue to talk about sexual violence," she said.

Peatow and Hoover stressed that the group will be student-run.

"It's important for peer education to happen around any important issue, especially sexual violence," Peatow said.

The awareness group will be working with the Unwanted Sex-

ual Behavior Task Force, Greeks Against Rape and ASUO Safety Advocates. Hoover said she wants the awareness group to include representatives from diverse student groups.

"It's a people's issue," she said. "I hope the group will form campaigns on campus, do rallies, anything."

For now, the group is not recognized as an official student organization because it hasn't held the three public meetings needed for recognition.

Student Life is temporarily funding the group, and it paid for advertisements in 25 Lane Transit District buses that publicize the changes in the student conduct code.


This new group is not a direct result of recently publicized sexual assaults at the University, Hoover said.

"Whether that gets more students in attendance, I don't know that," Hoover said.

The group will discuss recent cases, media representations, the social environment and similar issues.

The stereotype that "men can't say 'no'" is not true for everyone, Peatow said, but most sexual assaults are committed by men.

"I think that men are in a great place to end sexual violence," she said.



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26	Mon	5:00-9:00pm	Adult
29	Thurs	6:00-10:00pm	Child/Infant

FEBRUARY


2	Mon	5:00-9:00pm	Adult
3	Tues	5:00-9:00pm	1st Aid
4	Wed	6:00-10:00pm	Child/Infant
9	Mon	5:00-9:00pm	Adult
10	Tues	5:00-9:00pm	Adult
16	Mon	5:00-9:00pm	1st Aid
18	Wed	5:00-9:00pm	Adult
24	Tue	6:00-10:00pm	Child/Infant
26	Thurs	5:00-9:00pm	Adult

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Senate funds environmental group

The money will fund transportation costs, housing and fees for three keynote speakers at a conference

By Kristina Rudinskas
Student Activities Reporter

The Student Senate approved \$5,800 to help fund the fourth annual Environmental Justice Conference, organized by the Coalition Against Environmental Racism, scheduled for Jan. 16 and 17 at the University Law Center.

Erin Emmons, 22, an environmental studies major, spoke at the meeting about the effect of last year's conference on her career plans.

"The conference was one of the key things that brought me into this," she said. "The people who spoke were compelling, and they came from the heart through real-life experiences."

The coalition stressed the need to link environmentalism and civil rights through this conference.

"It is a cause that extends beyond the borders of this campus," said Robert Collins, associate professor of environmental studies. The University has experienced growing interest in environmental studies, he added.

"It is important because more and more students are taking up this major," said Senator Kent Black.

The money will go to help fund transportation costs, housing and fees for the three keynote speakers. Carl Anthony, an architect from the Earth Island Institute in the Bay Area, will discuss new models of sustainable communities; Pamela Chiang, a member of the Asian-American Environmental Network, will focus on issues surrounding race, class and the environment; and Tom Goldtooth, an active environmentalist for 20 years, will speak on indigenous environmental networks.

"Environmental issues are civil rights issues," said Carla Villena and Melissa Rock, the coalition's co-coordinators. "Environmental justice is all inclusive of economic justice, race and political issues."

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