

# Protect yourself on college campuses

by Amber Fairbanks

**WARNING:** This column is about rape and sexual assault.

There have been a lot of reports in the news about sexual assault and rape on campuses all over the country recently. As a result, students have been kicked out of universities and have lost scholarships over it. It makes me wonder, how many cases go unreported and how can women protect themselves on campus? I know rape and sexual assault is not exclusive to women, but I couldn't find any men willing to talk on the subject.

I talked to women from Portland State University, Portland Community College Cascade, Clackamas Community College

and Marylhurst, asking them if they felt safe on their campus and if they felt the need to carry self-defense weapons. Even though a few of them said they felt safe on their campus, every single one of them carried some sort of self-defense weapon.

Auriana Cook, a Clackamas Print alumni, now attending Marylhurst, informed me that she felt safe at one campus, but not the other.

"At CCC, I never felt safe if it was at night, a weekend, or some other time when there were fewer people around," Cook said. "I always carried keys as weapons and took a self-defense class so I'd feel more comfortable. At Marylhurst though, most of my classes are at night and I've never felt unsafe walking to my car."

There were different opinions when I asked women who attended PSU their thoughts on the matter.

"The parking garages at PSU aren't safe at night in my opinion," Celia Throop said.

The National Sexual Violence Resource Center states that, "The percentage of completed or attempted rape victimization among women in higher educational institutions may be between 20 percent and 25 percent over the course of a college career."

My father always told me a parking garage is one of the most dangerous places for a woman and I'm thankful CCC doesn't have any.

"I always carry my pepper spray," said Kelsey Smoot, a student at PCC Cascade. "I had classes until 10, but never felt unsafe. There were always people around, it seemed and plus the emergency phone boxes with the lights on top all over campus. Not to mention how close I was to the Justice Center/Police Station."

When I asked Leila Maloney how she felt on her campus, PCC Cascade, she recounted a scary event. "I didn't feel very safe and at one point I had to chase a man out of the ladies room, he was

yelling at a girl. The cop who stood outside the restroom was only there every other day."

Alright. Prepare for an extremely angry Amber rant. A cop has to stand outside of a bathroom to protect women? That is absurd.

**"At CCC, I never felt safe if it was at night, a weekend, or some other time when there were fewer people around."**

*-Auriana Cook*

We teach women (again, I am aware that women can be assaulters as well) to carry pepper spray, wear date rape detecting nail polish, not to walk alone at night, have key chains to gouge someone, take self-defense classes or even to make three right turns if you think someone is following you because that makes a circle. Instead of this, how about we teach at a young age that rape isn't even an option.

I am so sick and tired of hearing that rape prevention is always the victim's job. We need to stop victim blaming, saying things like, "Oh look what she was wearing, she was asking for it," or "She shouldn't have drunk that much."

No. Women can wear whatever they want, still not asking for it. Women are allowed to drink, have fun and still not ask for it. If a girl says no to you in the beginning of the night, it does not mean "Try and convince me as the night goes on."

No means no.



Sabre Security Equipment Corporation is the leading manufacturer for pepper spray, according to its website. The company sells a pepper spray and drink test kit for \$14.99 online at their website.

**ON THE COVER:** The cupcake wars have come to Oregon City. Cover design by Brandon Chorum.



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