

# WOMEN'S RESOURCE CENTER

BENCHMARKING PROJECT  
SPRING 2008



Interpersonal Violence Advocates  
in Women's Centers and Other  
Student Affairs Offices

# General Overview of Purpose

- Advocacy defined as providing victim services separate from judicial proceedings, law enforcement, and counseling services
- Since women are disproportionately affected by interpersonal violence, campuses with Women's Centers frequently house victim advocates within those centers
- Most women's centers provide some sort of referral or advocacy services to victims, but for purposes of this benchmarking project, we included only those who have dedicated victim advocate positions

# Institutions Surveyed

Name of Institution	Population	Public/Private
University of Illinois	40,000	Public
University of Kansas	29,000	Public
California State – Long Beach	28,000	Public
University of Nevada – Las Vegas	28,000	Public
Iowa State	26,000	Public
Oregon State	20,000	Public
St. Cloud State University	16,000	Private
University of Missouri – Kansas City	14,000	Public
Brown University	6,000	Private
St. Mary's College of California	2,500	Private

# To Whom Does the Advocate Report?

- Vice President
- Dean of Student Services
- Women's Center Director
- Director of Public Safety
- Vice Provost

# What Does Advocacy Encompass?

- Judicial advocacy – serving as a representative for the victim during adjudication proceedings
- Academic advising – working with professors on providing accommodations, rescheduling classes as needed
- Housing advocacy – moving students to new residence halls or rooms on campus
- Referrals – to counselors, health services professionals, legal and law enforcement

\*Services provided to victims of dating violence, domestic violence, stalking, sexual assault and sexual harassment

# How is the Victim Advocate Funded?

- Student services fees
- University funds
- Women's Resource Center budget
- Student Affairs
- Department of Justice, Office on Violence Against Women Grant

# Advocacy Budget

- Only one campus provides a separate budget to accompany their victim advocate position – all others share budget with the Women's Center
- Of those funded by Department of Justice Grants, no separate budget is allocated



Name of Institution	Number of Students Served
University of Illinois	Approximately 150 per year
University of Kansas	Approximately 40 per year
California State – Long Beach	Approximately 30 per year
University of Nevada – Las Vegas	Approximately 40 per year
Iowa State	**
Oregon State	**
St. Cloud State University	Approximately 60 per year
University of Missouri – Kansas City	Approximately 20 per year
Brown University	**
St. Mary's College of California	Approximately 50 per year

## Number of Victims Served

\*\* Schools do not keep track of numbers of students served.

Are there other locations on campus where advocacy services are provided?

- Health Services
- Counseling Center
- Student Life Office
- Academic Advising Office
- Center Against Rape and Domestic Violence  
(on campus department)
- Police Services

Question	Answer
Are there volunteer advocates that report to the full-time advocate?	Yes – 2 No – 8
Are after-hours services provided?	Yes – 3 No – 7
Does the advocate collect data/feedback on services provided?	Yes – 6 No – 4

## Other Information Gathered

# Peer Institutions Surveyed

## MAC Schools

Institution	Campus Advocate
University of Akron	No
Buffalo	No
University of Central Florida	No
Kent State	No
Marshall	Yes
Miami	Yes
Ohio	No
Ball State	Yes
Bowling Green	Yes
Central Michigan	No
Eastern Michigan	No
Toledo	Yes (counselor)
Western Michigan	No

# Peer Institutions Surveyed

## Big 10 Schools

Institution	Campus Advocate
University of Wisconsin-Madison	**
University of Illinois – Urbana Champagne	Yes
Indiana University	Yes
University of Iowa	Yes
University of Michigan	Yes
Michigan State University	No
University of Minnesota	No
Northwestern University	No
Ohio State University	**
Pennsylvania State University	**
Purdue University	**

\*\* Unknown/No Response

- Campus victim advocates serve as a hub for services for students who have been affected by interpersonal violence
- Reporting appears to increase, as does the rate at which victims access services, when they have one centralized location to report instances of interpersonal violence on campus
- Many campuses fund initially fund victim advocate positions through grants provided by the Department of Justice, Office on Violence Against women

## Results/Findings

*Many, many thanks go to my fantastic graduate assistant, Monica Szymczak, who compiled the data for this project.*

# Implications

- Victims are best served when they have a centralized location to seek services on campus and an advocate who can help coordinate those services.
- Based on our findings, the best place to house a victim advocate is a Women's Resource Center, due to the fact that women are disproportionately affected by interpersonal violence.
- Using data from the benchmarking project, the Women's Resource Center and Health Enhancement submitted a grant to DOJ in April in the amount of \$300,000 – if funded, the grant would provide a full-time victim advocate on campus (we anticipate a response to the proposal in the fall).