

The Role of Campus-Based Advocacy & Prevention Professionals in Campus Culture Change

L. B. Klein
University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill

Andrew Rizzo
University of New Hampshire



Introduction

- Gender-based violence (GBV) has been an issue on college campuses for the past 30 years and more; estimates suggest 20-25% of women are raped during their college career.¹⁻²
- Recent national attention to Title IX compliance has increased the funding and prevention activities of many college campuses, creating an exciting moment for GBV prevention at institutions of higher education.
- However, no empirical studies to date have examined campus GBV programs efficacy, or presented information through the lens of campus prevention professionals.³⁻⁴
- In this study we sought to both describe what campus GBV programs currently look like across different institutions and elevate professionals' perspectives on the greatest perceived needs their programs are facing.

Method

- In a previous related study, the authors constructed a database of campus GBV programs and contact information, which was used to recruit participants to the current study.
- Survey invitations were sent to 256 campus programs using institution-specific links to ensure that each campus only completed the survey once.
- 87 full responses were received for a response rate of 34%.
- The survey contained 35 items, 10 items were open-ended, including items such as:
 - What do you believe are the three greatest training needs of campus advocates? Of campus prevention professionals?
 - What do you consider the three greatest barriers to your program achieving its mission within your institution?
 - What do you see as the greatest needs of campus advocacy and prevention programs?
- Responses were analyzed using an iterative qualitative content analysis process.⁵

Results

Sample Characteristics

- Institutions represented 34 states.
- 27% private 4-year institutions.
- 68% have 25,000+ students.
- 9% religiously affiliated.
- 9% Hispanic-serving institutions (HSI), 3% Historically Black Colleges and Universities (HBCU).

Campus GBV Program Characteristics

Program Staffing (FTE)	N	Mean	Mode	SD	Range	Skew
Prevention	74	1.72	1.00*	1.25	0 to 6	Positive
Advocacy	76	1.60	1.00**	1.21	0 to 6	Positive

*This answer was given by 41% of respondents (n = 30); **This answer was given by 37% of respondents (n = 28).

- 45% of programs indicated having a Director-Level Position.
- 42% of programs indicated their funding came from University Funds, 10% from Student Fees, 5% from OVW Campus Grants, 1% from Rape Prevention/DELTA Grants, 3% from Other Grants, and 38% indicated funding from more 2+ sources of funding from this list.

Campus GBV Program Needs: Categories & Themes

Category	Themes	n	%	
Financial	Lack of staff	21	15	
	Lack of budget	21	15	
	Lack of space	2	1	
	Lack of visibility	2	1	
	Professional		37	27
Buy-In	Lack of evidence-based practices	8	6	
	Lack of respect for professionals in the field	8	6	
	Lack of professionalization of the field	7	5	
	Lack of national support for the work	6	4	
	Burnout	3	2	
	Work not sustainable when national attention dissipates	3	2	
	Difficult to know if the work is effective	1	1	
	Lack of campus-specific training	1	1	
	Philosophical		17	12
	Policy & Procedure	Lack of understanding of GBV issues	6	4
Prevention is not prioritized		4	3	
Compliance focus		3	2	
Program is not inclusive of marginalized groups		3	2	
Lack of discussion of dating/domestic violence		1	1	
Total		139	100	

Main Areas of Need

Lack of Institutional Respect

- "Right now advocates are still see[n] as 'optional' or an added bonus rather than an essential component of any campus program, so it would be nice to see that to be as much of an expectation as having a Title IX Coordinator or offering a bystander intervention program."

Lack of Institutional Authority

- "[We need] access. Every university probably has subject matter experts on sexual assault prevention, but they are usually low level employees."

Lack of Professional Identity and Cohesion

- "[We] need reasonable guidelines for how many professionals are needed to adequately serve each campus."

Future Recommendations

- The creation of a comprehensive and nationally representative database of campus GBV Programs is needed, both to compare our current findings with and to enable campus GBV research to be done more efficiently.
- Comparisons between campuses with programs and without programs is needed to identify pre-cursors or enabling factors that might lead to strong GBV program creation.
- Cross-campus program assessment is needed to confirm our qualitative findings and inform solutions to identified needs such as of staffing and institutional authority.
- We urgently need many more critical and timely explorations to fully understand why professionals working to end GBV on campus are so frequently disrespected, relegated to ineffectual ranks, and left without a professional identity or identity in which to excel.

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