

# College women often assaulted

by Simona Chiose

TORONTO (CUP)—University-age women are three times as likely to have been assaulted physically or sexually during the last year than other age groups, a Statistics Canada study has found.

The study, the most comprehensive of its kind to date, interviewed

12,300 women by telephone. Fifty-one per cent reported having been sexually or physically assaulted some time in their lives, with 10 per cent of all women reporting such assaults in the last 12 months.

But 27 per cent of women between the ages of 18 and 24 said they had experienced physical or sexual violence in the last year.

The study also indicates that 21 per cent of women with a degree or some post-secondary education were assaulted in the last 12 months, compared to only 17 per cent of women who had completed secondary or high school education.

Glenda Simms, president of the Canadian Advisory Council on the

Status of Women, said the survey results show that "violence against women cuts across class and education lines."

"Education does not protect women. What this means is that our universities themselves are not protective environments for young women," said Simms.

Another study released earlier this year, which focused on dating behavior among women and men in universities, found that 28 per cent of the 1,835 women polled had been sexually abused or assaulted and 22 per cent had been physically abused by men they were dating. The report also found that of the 1,307 men polled, 13 per cent said they had been physically abusive and 12 per cent admitted having been sexually abusive.

The recent Statistics Canada study confirms that most women who experience incidents of physical or sexual assault some time after the age of 16 have been assaulted by men known to them.

Only six per cent of the women

who reported having been assaulted said the abuse came from a stranger.

Simms cited a symposium organized by the council two years ago where 17-year-old women reported being beaten by the men they were dating. She said the StatsCan survey is further evidence that most women experience violence at the hands of men they know.

"There is an inter-generational pattern of men who are violent towards women," Simms said. "It not just their fathers' generation that is violent. Young men are being socialized to think that this is normal."

Although Simms criticized the current study for not surveying women who speak languages other than English and French, she said it is still a useful tool.

"It's useful in that it confirms on a large scale what we have been saying for a long time," said Simms.

# Election headaches

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 3

tion process. "Whoever gets appointed to the elections committee will just have to do a lot of work in those final few days" before nominations open, she said.

Kolompar said that all candidates for ERO will have access to the information they need to do the job before they actually get hired in January. She said she hopes this will ensure the ERO council finally chooses is as prepared as possible. In particular, the person must be familiar with the very specific rules on campaigning which the DSU has.

The spring elections will also be more complicated to organize than ever before. For the first time, all students will have the chance to vote on four student council positions, in addition to the contenders for president and executive vice-president.

At the student union's annual gen-

eral meeting on November 24, the handful of students present approved constitution changes which will open the positions of academic, community affairs, and external vice-presidents, along with the communications coordinator, to direct elections for the first time. In the past, people have applied for these positions to a student union committee, which recommended a winner to the council.

"The overriding principle is that it's more democratic" to elect student councillors by popular vote, said MacPhee. "I think it also generates more interest. I would be concerned that it would be a popularity contest, but the president and vice-president have always been a popularity contest."

A committee charged with revising the student union constitution recommended the changes after comparing the DSU with other student gov-

ernments. Many others have expanded their direct elections in recent years.

A November student council meeting approved the proposed changes, although not unanimously. Several councillors argued that popular votes do not always elect the most qualified people, and that the committee process had always helped to guard against this.

The DSU treasurer, who oversees the union's finances, will remain an appointed position.



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