

More facts on date rape needed, report says

by Tony Black

York's sexual harassment centre wants university officials to tell more people about date rape on campus and deal differently with student complaints.

Two of six recommendations in the centre's final report this year concern the university's treatment of date rape.

The centre's advisor Dale Hall said she could not say whether there are more date rape incidents on campus, but noted last month that as education increases, more women come forward to discuss recent or past experiences of this kind.

The centre has received a 60 per cent increase in reports for sexual harassment and other related incidents from May 1991 to April of this year.

"There needs to be a major initiative, on campus, around the issue of date rape," Hall said. "Women will rarely report these incidences to the police because they know that date rape is the least likely assault to go to court."

"We need to educate not only women but men who do not perceive date rape as an assault."

It is not helpful to lecture or blame men, Hall added, but they should discuss the fear and power at the root of rape and other kinds of assault on women.

The centre feels that some existing guidelines on sexual harassment complaints are inappropriate. Two years ago, Hall and others developed a new set of guidelines which they feel will deal more effectively with harassment cases.

One change in dealing with student to student complaints would be to include equal numbers of gay men or lesbians and heterosexuals on tribunals when the issue is homophobia.



Dale Hall, York's sexual harassment advisor wants more education about date rape on campus. • photo by Wayne Todd

Another proposed change would be to reduce pressure on a person filing a grievance by giving her or him the option of not confronting the accused.

The rights of the accused will not be infringed if she or he cannot meet face to face with the accuser, said Heather Dryden, York Federation of Students vice-president for Equality and Social Affairs.

Currently, in cases involving a university staff or faculty member

and a student, both parties must agree if they want to meet face to face. When both parties are students, they are forced to meet together with tribunal members hearing the case.

Dryden said that practice should change.

"The power and control dynamics that are at work in a case concerning

a professor and a student are at work just as strongly when a female student is harassed by a male student," said Dryden. Proposed changes for complaints involving university employees include allowing complainants up to nine months to file grievances rather than the present three months.

This allows students to complete courses and receive grades before filing complaints against professors and teaching assistants.

Vice-President Bill Farr hears and determines these cases while appeals go directly to York president Susan Mann. Hall said the centre would like to see all cases and appeals brought before tribunals instead.

Dryden agrees, arguing it is ridiculous to ask a woman to speak her case before a one-man judge and jury. Tribunals consisting mainly of women, or gays and lesbians in cases of homophobia, should hear all cases, she said.

"If the university is truly committed to fighting sexual harassment, then there should be one standard for all people," Dryden

said.

The centre's two-year-old draft plan has circulated to campus unions, and is waiting to go before a university-wide committee and then the York's senate.

Ontario Colleges and Universities Minister Richard Allen is pushing for a province-wide set of guidelines. This may delay the acceptance of the centre's proposal as university officials wait on the decision of the minister.

The proposal has also been held back because the staff at the centre does not have time to give it the full attention it deserves, Hall said.

Although two full-time harassment advisors puts York ahead of most universities, Hall said another advisor and a therapist is needed to help the centre respond to increasing campus needs.

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Swastikas found on campus

by Ed Prutschi

Racism is an unfortunate reality at York, as indicated by the appearance of Nazi swastikas on campus last month.

On Oct. 28, a security officer reported graffiti in the shape of two swastikas scratched into the walls of a Student Centre elevator.

Saar Rozen, President of the Jewish Student Federation, expressed "shock and utter dismay" at this incident.

"Anti-semitism is widespread on campus but it is usually pretty covert," he said.

Rozen maintains that this is "not an isolated incident," adding the federation is attempting to combat racism through educational speakers and programs but the prospect of catching people involved in this incident is rather slim.

"Unless someone actually sees [the crime] being done, it's very difficult to catch the culprit," said Don MaGee, manager of York's security force, who added the swastikas are "one of the first" such incidents he's seen.

Student Centre general manager Rob Castle said racist graffiti has appeared previously in washrooms and on reading room tables.

"We take racist and homophobic graffiti very seriously," said Castle but, "It's very difficult to track down a graffiti [incident]."

The corporation began removal of the swastikas last week but because the graffiti was carved into the walls, this process had not yet been completed.

On Oct. 29, a student reported swastika marks scratched into two of his car doors. Security is unsure if the incidents are related.

Number on defective condoms

by Susan O'Flinn

Sex is safe if you use a condom, right? Not if it's got the number 3391 on it.

Trojan Enz Spermicidal Lubricant condoms with that number have been recalled. The number is stamped on the edge of the blue wrapper.

The suspect condoms will show a nine digit number, starting with 3391 as the first four digits.

"It's just a precautionary measure because we discovered that some [of that lot number] were defective. It is better to err on the side of caution and recall the whole batch," said Peter Brickwood, community outreach worker with the North York Board of Public Health.

Brickwood passed along the recall notice to vice president Michèle Chai at the York Federation of Students. The federation and York's Women's Centre both distribute condoms free from their offices.

Students with the recalled condoms can exchange them for a new one, but if you can't bring them in, make sure you throw them out, Chai said.

According to Brickwood, the defective condoms are obvious, they may be dried up or cracked.

If you used one and didn't notice anything and the condom did not break, you should have no reason to worry, he said. However, if you are concerned, you should see a doctor for follow-up testing.

College intruder caught on campus

by Mike Adler

A man suspected in several assaults on female Vanier residents was arrested last month at a college party.

Manager Clayton Hillis detained the man on Oct. 29 after women at the Open End pub identified him during a Halloween party.

Residence security has tightened since Sept. 18, when a non-resident man slipped into the building, said Vanier Master Mary Sue McCarthy.

The man then allegedly moved through the residence and entered unlocked rooms, approaching women and touching some of them, she said. He reportedly left each room when ordered.

"There was no aspect of violence, but there was intrusion and shock," McCarthy said.

But assistant don Kate Dewhirst said residents saw the uninvited man and other intruders as a serious threat, even though not everyone

whose room he entered was physically touched.

"It's frightening alone that they're in the building," Dewhirst said, "But when they get into your room, it's even worse."

Police later charged a 31-year-old York student with one count of sexual assault, two counts of assault, and nine counts of unlawfully entering a dwelling house.

Residents were advised after the September incident to lock and remove names from their doors and make certain every non-resident was a registered guest, Dewhirst said.

"At that time nobody was sure who was a residence student and who wasn't," McCarthy explained.

In another incident on Oct. 30, a Stong resident reported she had found an intoxicated man sleeping in her room, a few hours after the Vanier arrest. Security identified him as a former student, gave him a notice of trespass and then escorted him off campus.

Centre closes study room after vandalism rises

by Yolán Bowen

Student Centre officials closed a reading room for student use last month to stop increasing vandalism involving the furniture.

Shernette Martin, a third year sociology student said she was "pissed off" when she went up to Room 409 to study and found the door locked.

"It's our building. For management to just close the room with no regard for the student body is downright irresponsible," said Martin.

Room 409 was the only study room available to students in the centre. Their only option now is to use one of its two student lounges.

But General Manager Rob Castle said he "wished [students] had treated [the room] better; the way they had treated the rest of the building."

Centre officials reported scribbling on the chairs, racist remarks and "novels" etched on the tables, and garbage, coffee and gum dumped on the carpet.

Laurie Montgomery, administrative assistant of the centre, argued students were allowed to use the room without any restraints and in a year's time they destroyed it.

Castle added he thought it was ironic that "self-policing" by the students in the public areas of the centre was not

shown in the more private reading room area.

But some students still said they believed the closing is unfair.

"Part of being a student is being able to air your concerns," Martin argued. "So what if people are etching things into the furniture, that's part of being a student. Let the students speak!"

"The student body should not be penalized for the improprieties of a few," added Eldene Dickenson, a second year Economics student.

When asked to comment about whether or not the students were made aware of the messy condition of the room, Castle stated that signs were posted asking for students' cooperation.

Directors of Student Centre Corporation, consisting of eleven students out of fourteen members, agreed with the decision to close Room 409.

"We debated heatedly about the decision to lock the room. We watched and observed so as to be fair to students, but the amount of vandalism seemed to happen with a vengeance in September," said Castle.

"We did not have a choice."

Castle also believes that locking the room will satisfy the great demand for its use by student clubs, which can still book the room.