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Rape Talk: Student Awareness and Perceptions of Campus Sexual Assault and Resources

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Rape Talk

Student Awareness and Perceptions of Campus Sexual Assault and Resources

Rachel Harmon, Undergraduate Researcher

RESEARCH QUESTION

How do students understand and perceive campus sexual assault and related resources?

INTRODUCTION

After seeing Marquette University mentioned in the documentary *The Hunting Ground*, I had to ask "What exactly are the university administration and programs providing to help victims of sexual violence? How is this issue discussed and managed on Marquette's campus, and what do students think of this all? What do students have to say?"

Marquette University has programs in place to aid student victims of sexual assault like the Medical Clinic, Marquette University Police Department, and Counseling Center. However, these resources are not well understood or well known by the very students they're provided for. I delved into the exact procedures, services, and success of these programs and more importantly the student perceptions of these resources, a.k.a. their resources.



The Hunting Ground movie poster, <http://cnnpressroom.blogs.cnn.com/2015/11/03/the-hunting-ground-premieres-on-cnn-in-november/>

METHODS

Research Design:

1. Autoethnography of Campus Rape Culture
2. Observations of Marquette's Online Resources
3. Two In-Depth Student Interviews
4. Online Student Survey

Coding and Analysis Themes:

1. Way of Discussion and Education
2. General Perceptions of Campus Sexual Assault
3. Relation between Students and Staff
4. Desire for Change

As research continued, the methods became more focused on student perceptions, dedicated to giving students a voice.

FINDINGS

1. Way of Education and Discussion

- Students hear more from peers and friends rather than staff, administration, etc.
- Some students do not feel well-educated or confident to stop sexual assault.

2. General Perceptions of Campus Sexual Assault

- Marquette students are not all synonymously aware of sexual assault resources and do not share the same opinions.
 - As seen in the survey, there is a wide array of student perceptions of the prevalence of sexual assault on campus.

3. Relation between Students and Staff

- Students are encouraged to be more responsible than staff concerning awareness of resources, bringing about change, etc.

4. Desire for Change

As seen in quotes shared below, not all students want to see the same change:

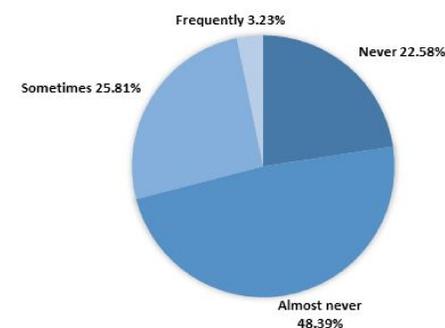
- No change needed
- Better sexual health first
- Harsher punishments for offenders
- Make MUPD more welcoming and sensitive to sexual assault reports
- More transparency

Generally, students want more from staff, MUPD, etc. Students want transparent and engaging guidance.

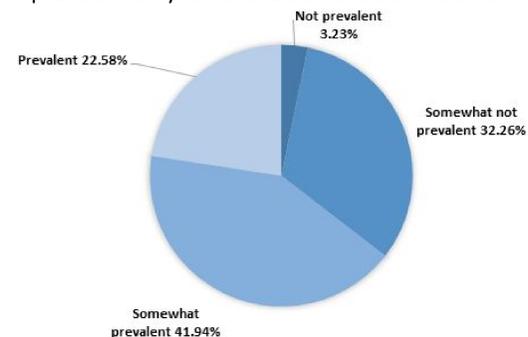
"I have heard of MUPD not being sensitive to students who report sexual assaults...the fear of reporting will continue to affect justice on our campus."

-Marquette Student, survey

How often do you hear of sexual assault on campus?



How prevalent do you believe sexual assault is on campus?



Survey responses, <https://www.surveymonkey.com/analyze/>

"Because if we can't even talk about sex, consensual sex, how are we going to talk about rape?"

-Marquette student, interview

"No need for change...There has been a lot of time and money funneled into this, doing any more has limited upside."

-Marquette student, survey

PROPOSALS FOR CHANGE

- To bring students and staff together and to empower students, **start collaborative, student-led and staff-supported discussions.**
 - Potential topics of discussion:
 - Catholic influence on campus rape culture
 - Relationship between students and staff
 - Sexual health and sexual assault
 - Look at successful initiatives of Indiana University and University of Pennsylvania.



Indiana University's Culture for Care, <http://care.indiana.edu/>

- To bring attention to nationwide prevalence, **partner with UW-Milwaukee.**
 - Perhaps expand into state-wide campaign, branching out to other University of Wisconsin campuses.
- To encourage more confidence and more positive student perceptions, **develop more active form of education and training.**
 - Change lecture-based and assessment-based training. Make it exciting and interactive.

Students should be empowered and guided by staff, administration, MUPD, etc. Uniting as one community should be our focus.

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Rape Talk:

Student Awareness and Perceptions of Campus Sexual Assault and Resources

Introduction

When asked anonymously online what change they would like to see on their own campus concerning sexual assault prevention, one Marquette University student replied:

No need for change, plenty of movements have already been put into place. It is well known for the most part how to be a bystander, what to do in different situations, and what constitutes as sexual assault. There has been a lot of time and money funneled into this, doing any more has limited upside.

This response is worrisome, considering the prevalence of campus sexual assault and the complexity of rape culture. Sexual violence and the encompassing rape culture is horribly complex and has been for decades, as many researchers have devoted much time and effort to analyzing countless aspects of this persistent culture (Armstrong et al.; Day; Franiuk; Marcus; Wilkerson). Simply defined, rape culture consists of "...an environment in which rape is prevalent and in which sexual violence...is normalized and excused in the media and popular culture" ("Rape Culture"). Rape culture is endlessly complex and includes the topics and themes of masculinity, femininity, power dynamics, language, relationships, media, and much more. One aspect of rape culture considers the culture of campus sexual assault which is continuously

pervasive (Bazelon; Fantz; “Campus Sexual Violence Statistics...”). As campus sexual assault persists, some still think there is no need for change, no need to fix a broken culture that they may think can never be fixed.

From my personal experience, rape and its encompassing and complex culture is not discussed widely on Marquette University's campus. However, Marquette is not a sexual-assault-free campus and institution (*Annual Security and Fire Safety Report* 16). Rape is present, and students are being made into victims. But how is this issue discussed and managed on Marquette's campus, and how do students understand and perceive campus sexual assault and related resources?

Therefore, I decided to research the student awareness and perceptions of campus sexual assault and related resources. I wanted to discover students' honest perceptions. For the past four months, I researched Marquette University's campus rape culture, sexual assault resources, and student perceptions. In what follows, I first explain my motivations for research and include excerpts of my autoethnography that served as the starting point for my research and data collection. Second, I detail my research methods of this mixed-method, qualitative research approach including the just mentioned autoethnography, observations of Marquette's online sexual assault resources, student interviews, and student survey. I specifically organize this section relative to my research design, data collection, and way of data analysis. Third, I present my findings of the data collected, analyzing it relative to four themes (way of discussion and education, perceived traits of Marquette campus sexual assault and culture, relations between students and staff, and desire for change). Next, I explain my proposals for change, focused largely on developing a more open culture of transparent discussion, revising education, and encouraging a more connected community of students, staff, administration, faculty,

alumni/alumnae, other universities, and more. Lastly, I present my concluding thoughts concerning the potential of this research and the future of sexual assault prevention.

Motivations for Research

When first approached with the assignment to research some aspect of university culture, I was originally clueless. However, I was inspired after watching the CNN documentary *The Hunting Ground* and hearing Marquette University – my school – mentioned in the film, sharing a news report of sexual assault on Marquette’s campus (*The Hunting Ground*). The film discusses and analyzes the prevalence of campus sexual assault among U.S. universities and colleges, paying close attention to institutional crises and administrative responses to students and cases of sexual assault. When I saw Marquette included negatively in the documentary, I had to question my university and why I had never heard of this news beforehand. When considering other potential research topics, I kept returning to ponder this same question asking why Marquette seems sensitive and quiet discussing sexual assault on campus and the surrounding culture. Why do I not feel more involved and educated as a student? Shouldn’t I feel more educated?

This research is personally motivated as I pulled from my own experiences as an undergraduate Marquette student. My experiences as a student drove the focus of this project. While researching, I remembered other experiences commenting on Marquette’s rape culture and motivating me even further to conduct this research.

Autoethnography

This autoethnography served as the starting point of my research, featuring five personal stories of what I have observed of Marquette’s rape culture. I started with the auto-ethnography to better understand my own, preliminary awareness and perceptions of campus sexual assault

and Marquette's resources. Recollecting my experiences was a good starting point for me because then I realized the importance of education and discussion for students from my perspective. Below are two of the five stories.

Story 1: The Worst Joke Ever Told

As I walked through the halls of my first-year dormitory in search of my drunken friend who insisted on playing a midnight game of hide-and-seek despite my unwillingness to participate, I was rather frustrated. After starting on the eighteenth floor, then traveling down to the seventeenth, then to the fifteenth, and then back up to the seventeenth, I was not in a good mood. And that was when I found a group of my peers including one particular peer who I considered an acquaintance purely out of a social obligation. They were chatting in the lobby of the seventeenth floor, and my one peer then struck up a conversation with me when he saw me walk past the group.

“Hey, Rachel. What are you up to?” he asked politely.

“I'm just in search of my drunk friend right now. What are you guys up to?”

I continued talking with the group of them because I desperately wanted a break from chasing my intoxicated yet surprisingly agile friend through the hallways of our dorm. After a few minutes of conversing with a few of my classmates who were closest to me, the unfortunate acquaintance of mine – who was known by myself and many of my friends to be opinionated, disrespectful, and rude – decided to make a rape joke of sorts.

Across the whole room – as if sexual assault was a typical conversation topic for late nights – he casually interjected, “Well, date rape isn't the worst kind of rape.”

“Excuse me?” I automatically questioned him, baffled by his audacity. “What did you just say?” I asked, just wanting to make sure I heard him correctly.

“Date rape isn’t the worst kind of rape,” he repeated with a disgustingly smug smirk.

Everyone else and I wore expressions of complete disbelief as we exchanged looks with each other and our unfortunate acquaintance, utterly shocked by what we just heard.

“Are you kidding me?” I asked the sexist of the evening.

“No, date rape isn’t that bad,” he replied while lightly chuckling by himself.

“Come on, man,” my friend chimed in.

“Really, dude?” another added.

“You really must be kidding me,” I added as I grew incredibly frustrated. As I was the only woman in the room, I felt purposely and intentionally singled out by this evening’s jokester. I also felt a strong desire to punch my unfortunate acquaintance square in the face, but I thought better not to. Instead, I continued with what some call “yet another feminist rant:” “Who are you to rank different kinds of rape? That’s just disgusting! It’s inhumane and inconsiderate. Goddamnit! How can you so easily joke about rape with me? Do you actually think it’s funny?”

“Well, have you been raped?” he bluntly asked me in an attempt at a retort.

“Excuse me?!” I exploded.

“Dude, really?” my more respectful friends tried to defend and protect me.

“You really need to calm down,” another friend told my interrogator. “You’re not being funny at all. You’re just being an asshole.”

“I’m sorry. I have to go,” I interjected as I couldn’t stand being in the same room as my sexist peer any longer and needed to leave. “Good night,” I added before storming out and returning to my game of hide-and-seek.

Story 2: What Demonstrations Don't Intend to Demonstrate

During the end of my spring semester of my first year at Marquette, I was walking to class as I saw a Pro-Life demonstration displayed in the Central Mall. Hundreds of small, wooden, purple crosses stood in the grass – representing hundreds of fetuses aborted in the USA.

The thing that struck me about this was the comfort and ease for Pro-Life and Anti-Abortion beliefs to be shared on Marquette's campus while the discussion of sexual assault, women's reproductive health, and other related issues hasn't evolved much. I understand that Pro-Life ideals coincide well with Marquette's Catholic foundation. However, I find myself debating whether a Pro-Choice demonstration would be that well-received and respected.

As I walked past the hundreds of crosses, I felt incredibly sorry for the promising lives lost to abortion. However, I wouldn't deny the small rage inside me – this demonstration guilted women and potential victims of sexual assault against having abortions. I am Pro-Choice as I respect a woman's choice and privacy before the birthright of an unborn fetus. However, I strongly support more extensive education for pregnant women not wanting to keep their children – discussing adoption more often, making more resources readily available for needy mothers, etc. However, if a woman is impregnated because of being sexually assaulted, I cannot deny her her choice to abort that fetus.

I am aware of the sensitivity of this issue, but Marquette must make it easier for our student body to present all opinions and beliefs without being afraid of dishonoring their school's foundation and faith. There may have been more Marquette students who saw that demonstration and who felt the same as me. However – given Marquette's values and religious standing – a fair

and equal discussion of sexual assault prevention, implications, women's reproductive health, and more may be sacrificed as certain students like myself fear speaking up.

Methods

Research Design

In addition to my personal experiences which motivated this project and because of the basis of an autoethnography, I followed a mixed-method, qualitative research approach that focused on gathering data of Marquette student perceptions, awareness, and knowledge of the campus's rape culture, campus sexual assault, and related resources. To give Marquette students a voice on the issue of campus sexual violence, my research includes:

1. Observations of Marquette's online presentation of sexual assault resources. These observations allowed me to gather a preliminary understanding of campus sexual assault resources, the administration's presentation of these sources, and communication with students using these websites.
2. Student interviews. I conducted these in-depth interviews to discover what was most important to Marquette students, concerning campus rape culture. Before I conducted the survey, these interviews made me realize what some students thought was most important for our university and climate.
3. Student survey. This survey quickly provided many student answers to questions concerning Marquette's rape culture, allowing me to efficiently gather many student perceptions of campus sexual assault and Marquette's resources.

Data Collection

Concerning the observations of Marquette's online presentation of sexual assault resources, I observed three websites: "Sexual Misconduct" (<http://www.marquette.edu/sexual->

[misconduct/](http://www.marquette.edu/sexual-misconduct/)), “I’ve Been Assaulted: What Do I Do?” (<http://www.marquette.edu/sexual-misconduct/assaulted.shtml>), and “Sexual Assault Prevention” (<http://www.marquette.edu/sexual-misconduct/sexual-assault-prevention.shtml>). I spent nearly one hour observing these webpages.

For the student interviews, I recruited subjects through convenience sampling of my relational framework. The two interviews conducted with undergraduate students of Marquette lasted 30 minutes each. These participants were found through word-of-mouth and convenience sampling. The interviews were conducted privately in-person. Refer to Appendix A to review the interview script, questions, and loose framework for these interviews. See Appendix B for the consent form and Appendix C for the resources flier presented to the two interviewees. The resources flier shared available resources for Marquette students on and off campus.

Concerning the student survey, subjects were recruited through the Marquette University Honors Program through word-of-mouth recruitment. This recruitment was held via social media engagement with the Marquette Honors Program Facebook group. Refer to Appendix D to see the language used for this social media engagement. The recruitment of the survey relied on convenience sampling. The survey was conducted online via Survey Monkey. See Appendix E for survey questions. Thirty-one responses were collected. See Appendix F for the consent form presented to survey respondents. The resources flier mentioned earlier was also shared with survey respondents (Appendix C).

Data Analysis

I analyzed my data relative to four themes which are detailed in the chart below which outlines the coding schema used to analyze data.

Code	Definition	Example
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Way of Discussion and Education	How students discuss and receive education concerning sexual assault, violence, resources, and rape culture	Survey Response: Student answers that they “frequently” hear sexual assault discussed on campus.
Perceived Traits of Campus Sexual Assault and Culture	What characteristics student perceive of Marquette’s culture concerning sexual violence	Interviewee’s discussion of Marquette’s Catholic affiliation influencing availability of sexual health resources
Relation between Students and Staff	How students relate to and work with non-student people (staff, administration, MUPD, etc.), how student perceive these other groups, how non-student people perceive students	Staff member identifying students as the ones responsible for change concerning sexual assault prevention
Desire for Change	How students want the campus rape culture to change, what ideas they have for change	Survey Response: Student wants “harsher punishments for offenders.”

Findings

My data analysis and findings are organized relative to my coding schema’s four codes: way of discussion and education, perceived traits of campus sexual assault and culture, relation between students and staff, and desire for change.

Way of Discussion and Education

Before I jump directly into analyzing student perceptions, I would like to briefly explain the sexual violence resources offered by Marquette on campus. Through my observations of Marquette’s websites pertaining to sexual assault prevention and resources and my autoethnography, I noticed Marquette’s main resources consist of the Medical Clinic, Marquette University Police Department, Campus Ministry, and the Counseling Center. Refer to Appendix C for more specific resources.

These resources are not presented well online for students and the Marquette community. On the “Sexual Misconduct” page, Marquette directly provides the following resources: the phone numbers of Marquette University Police Department and the Milwaukee County Police Department (911), Title IX incident reporting form, and Stay Away Directives. These phone numbers can be found in Image 1.

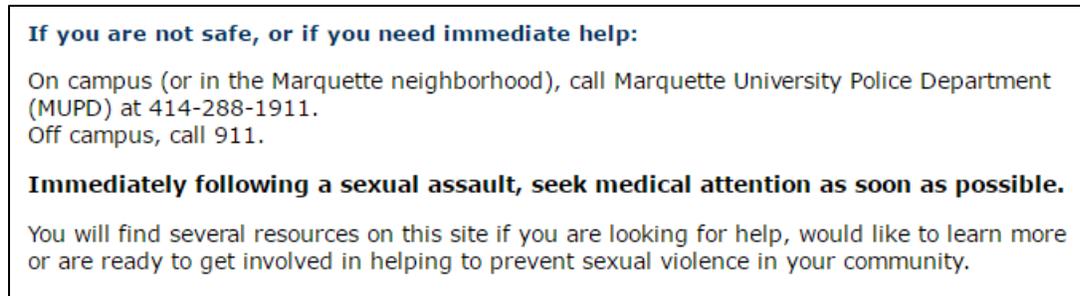


Image 1: “Sexual Misconduct” Webpage text, <http://www.marquette.edu/sexual-misconduct/>

All other resources are found by clicking on a different link to go to a different web page. This further distances students from the resources they are looking for and invites the opportunity for students to give up on searching for those distanced resources. This creates the opportunity for greater miscommunication and misunderstanding. Students become more and more discouraged to use Marquette resources the more difficult it is for them to find those resources. Student become less educated and less engaged the more difficult it becomes to find resources. Despite having more to share, I will not share more of my preliminary understanding of Marquette’s presentation of online resources for the sake of space and time.

Now that I have briefly established Marquette’s resources, I focus on the analysis of student perceptions of discussion and education. Concerning the way in which student are educated on and discuss campus sexual, the most important finding is that students hear more

from peers and friends rather than staff and administration. Also, some students do not feel well-educated or confident to prevent sexual assault despite all students receiving the same education.

It should first be established that students quite differently perceive the volume of campus discussion revolving around sexual assault. When asked through the online survey how often they hear of sexual assault on campus, students answered accordingly:

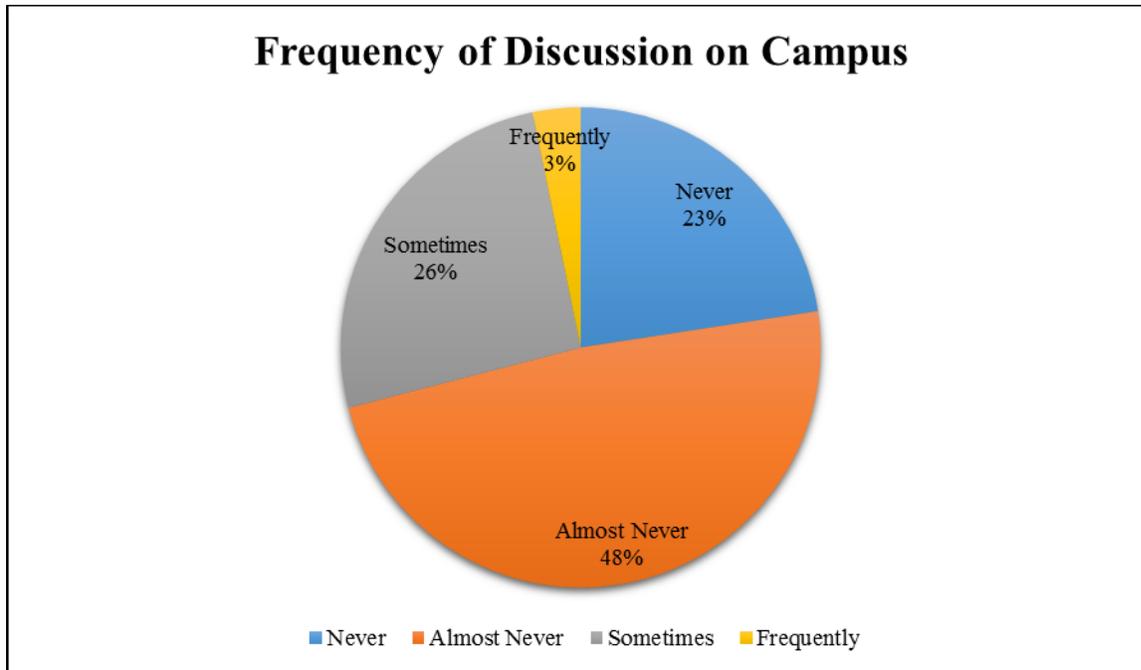


Image 2: Pie Chart of Online Survey Responses Regarding Frequency of Sexual Assault Discussion on Campus

Although a near majority of students almost never hear of sexual assault on campus, there are students who never hear of this or frequently hear of this. It is important to recognize that students experience a wide array of discussion on campus despite all being required to attend Bystander Intervention Training and other training sessions and lectures as residents of residence halls. Students are not experiencing the same rape culture on campus. This difference invites different perspectives and perceptions but also different levels of education and comfort concerning the discussion of campus sexual violence.

When asked how much they know about sexual assault resources made available to them on campus, most students (64.52%) know some of these resources. However, 3.23% of students know “nothing.” This is concerning as some students feel completely clueless on the issue. This shows that the training the Marquette administration has in place is not reaching all students. It is not effective. When asked if they felt informed about how to prevent or intervene into sexual assault, most students (58.06%) feel comfortable and informed to prevent or intervene. However, 9.68% of students feel that they are not well enough informed. Marquette’s Bystander Intervention Training – a program made mandatory for all students living in residence halls – is evidently not completely effective as nearly 10% of students feel as if they are not informed or confident enough to be that bystander that intervenes. From my own perspective, Marquette takes pride in this program and training. However, it is not as effective as they make it out to be. One student I interviewed shared that she did not feel the training to be very real or applicable: “I feel like it’s not like the real situation...You’re not going to stop and be like, ‘Hm. What did I learn in that PowerPoint?’ You’re either going to act or not.” Students do not believe in the effectiveness of the educational programs they are offered. Given these student perceptions, Marquette’s administration and staff should reevaluate this program and its lasting influence on students.

Concerning these programs and other resources, both interviewed students expressed an unawareness of Marquette’s sexual violence resources and a desire for the Marquette community to be more comfortable discussing the issue. Both interviewed students discussed the need for a more public, wide, and inclusive discussion of rape culture on campus. As I listened to these two students share their various stories of what they heard from a friend of a friend or what they heard of sexual assault from other students and not from MUPD or the administration, I noticed

that there are two ways in which students receive information on this issue: from more professional resources like the university administration, faculty, and staff or from more personal resources like classmates, friends, peers, etc. The second student interviewed stated:

And if we don't have a good basis for sexual health and sexual education, how can we address rape? Because if we can't even talk about sex, consensual sex, how are we going to talk about rape? Um...And rape happens. But no one seems to know about it because we don't seem to have an open discourse concerning rape. It's very hush-hush.

Students are aware of the lack of discussion of rape on campus. However, the situation doesn't seem to be improving from the perspectives of students. Students notice that change is needed but don't know if that change is coming.

This lack of discussion of sexual violence on campus is identified by other students through the online survey. When asked about what change they wanted to see on campus regarding sexual assault, roughly 75% of students expressed a need to change the discussion and/or education of sexual violence on campus. Students are looking for a more transparent education and discussion concerning campus sexual assault and rape culture. This seemingly insufficient education and discussion seem to be characteristic of Marquette's rape culture.

Perceived Traits of Campus Sexual Assault and Culture

As established before, students do not share the same perceptions of rape culture and sexual assault. They have had different experiences with education and discussion. This difference in perceptions influences their perceived traits of Marquette's rape culture. Some students are more aware of certain aspects than other students. Various perceived traits of Marquette's campus sexual assault and culture include the prevalence of sexual assault on campus, poor treatment of victims, ineffective punishments for perpetrators, negative Catholic

influence on sexual health and violence, general unawareness or disdain to discuss sexual assault, disbelief in a supportive administration, MUPD's unknown effectiveness, worrisome public places on campus, unknown power of administration, overarching uncertainty, unhealthy Greek Life, potentially unsafe culture of athletic teams, and more.

Concerning the general prevalence of sexual assault on campus, students perceive this prevalence accordingly:

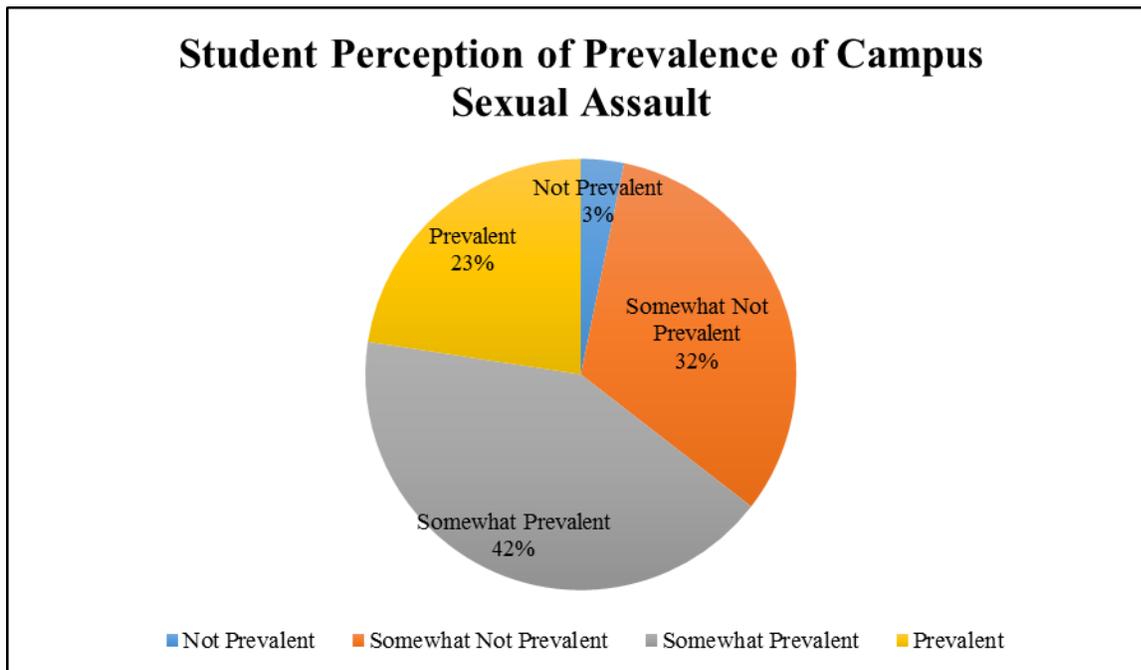


Image 3: Pie Chart of Online Student Survey Responses Regarding Perception of Prevalence of Campus Sexual Assault

Students' understanding of the prevalence of campus sexual assault obviously differs, and this is concerning as students and the whole community should be aware of the real and exact prevalence of sexual assault on campus. This difference in prevalence suggests different levels of awareness and sensitivity to the issue, and this difference cannot be the foundation of a community fairly and well educated on sexual assault and its prevention.

When asked through the online survey what they would like to change on campus, students identified problematic traits of Marquette's culture concerning sexual assault that they would change. One student argued that MUPD is not sensitive enough to students reporting sexual assault and that punishments for sexual assault perpetrators living in residence halls are ineffective and outdated. Both of these perceptions are affirmed by other students that responded to the survey. Another student respondent of the survey shared his perception that initiatives for sexual assault education and prevention are too heavily invested in. This student is unique, being the only respondent to have shared this thought. Marquette students differ greatly in their perceptions of this issue. Many students think not enough is being invested into sexual assault education, whereas others think too much has already been invested. It is important to honor this difference that only encourages me more to create a more open discourse in which students can share their different perceptions.

Many perceived traits of Marquette's rape culture were discussed in more detail in the two student interviews I conducted. These two students helped me identify an overarching uncertainty of Marquette's rape culture. Students are unsure and do not know or understand many things of this culture. The interviewed students discussed many examples. One student expressed a possible disbelief in the administration's support for students. This student believed that the administration would not allow a potentially controversial demonstration supporting sexual assault awareness and prevention. She was afraid that the administration would protect its brand before its students.

This perception could also be linked to the negative influence Marquette's Catholic affiliation has on sexual health and violence, which the second student interviewed discussed deeply. She talks of Marquette's Catholic affiliation preventing the community from having a

more open discourse concerning sexual health and violence, not providing contraceptives for students, increasing disdain to have discussion, pushing a more conservative agenda, and directly influencing student programs and organizations. To elaborate on this last point, the student explains that Marquette's Campus Ministry must approve of all signs and displays made by student organizations: "If they're considered too risqué, they can't be put up around campus." She continued, "If the university doesn't seem to be wholly on board with a club they sponsor because it talks about taboo topics, how can we breach the bigger picture?" Related to this student's concerns and perceptions, I have noticed before Marquette comfortably sponsoring Pro-Life and Anti-Abortion demonstrations which do not support victims and survivors of sexual assault, valuing a potential life and fetus before a woman's privacy and right to her own body. I shared this before in the excerpt of my autoethnography. I understand that Marquette University is a Catholic Jesuit institution and takes pride in its Catholicism. However – considering the interviewed student's concerns and my own experiences and perceptions – I can't help but to question whether Campus Ministry's administrative power and the influence of Marquette's Catholicism prevent the Marquette community from developing a healthier rape culture on campus. This administrative detail hinders the community from providing a more open discussion and more transparency, things that are valued by many students and shouldn't be ignored. I did not wish to blame our rape culture and situation of campus sexual campus solely on Marquette's Catholic values. That would be wrong. It is far more complicated. However, this religious influence cannot be ignored.

Relation Between Students and Staff

While analyzing data, I realized there is an odd discussion of who is responsible for awareness and change. What specific group or party of the Marquette community is responsible

for bringing about change for sexual assault prevention? In asking this question and analyzing data, I realized a distance between students and staff, administration, MUPD, and other non-student people in the discussion and education of sexual assault, rape culture, etc.

I noticed a lack of interaction between students and staff first in my personal experiences. Drawing from my autoethnography, I realized that I only discussed rape, sexual assault, and sexual health with other students, classmates, and friends. Even the Bystander Intervention Training required of all first and second-year Marquette students was led by students. I have had to defend myself against a peer's rape joke that he made only in front of other students. One student shared her story of surviving sexual assault with me and other students, no staff present. I discovered Marquette's somewhat recent history of sexual assault online through outside media outlets and then turned around to share it with my friends and not staff (DeLong et al.; Durhams; Maslin et al.). From personal experiences, I've observed that students and the administration do not discuss this topic together much, and this is a problem as the distance between students and people of administrative power extends. This welcomes distrust and miscommunication.

This divide is exemplified through my observations of Marquette's online presentation of sexual assault resources and preventative measures. The third Marquette webpage I observed was the "Sexual Assault Prevention" page which contributed to the dissonance of how sexual assault and sexual violence are perceived and discussed on campus. First, the web page made a clear distinction between sexual assault prevention and risk reduction:

- ▶ *Prevention* is stopping the behavior.
- ▶ *Risk reduction* is actively taking steps to reduce the likelihood a behavior will happen.

Image 5: "Sexual Assault Prevention" Webpage, "Prevention" and "Risk Reduction" definitions, <http://www.marquette.edu/sexual-misconduct/sexual-assault-prevention.shtml>

The webpage's title includes the word "prevention" but fails to remain consistent for this mission. By distinguishing between these two terms and by not remaining confident in the prevention of sexual assault, Marquette has admitted defeat and has discouraged the community to prevent sexual assault. This Marquette webpage admits defeat by adding "While we would all like to prevent sexual violence, it is helpful to understand the difference between prevention and risk reduction." Although we all want to prevent sexual assault – and the Marquette administration was the one to state this – Marquette still settles for just reducing the risk. This greatly discourages the community to ever believe that Marquette can be truly preventative when it comes to preventing sexual assault. This lack of tenacity only creates a poor discussion of rape culture and perpetuates sexual assault as no long-lasting, preventative change develops. By discouraging the community, the relationship between students and staff is weakened. The language used on this Marquette website is not reassuring for students and their safety. It is not confident nor determined to prevent sexual assault and, thus, welcomes an underdeveloped discussion of the issue campus-wide – or more accurately a lack of discussion.

The divide between staff and students is also shown specifically in the moment of one student interview when the interviewee plainly expresses her intention to completely bypass the Marquette University Police Department and go directly to the Milwaukee Police if she ever had to report a sexual assault, explaining that she doesn't know or understand the legal standing and power of MUPD. This distrust of MUPD is rooted in miscommunication, not knowing what MUPD can and cannot do. When asked through the online survey how much students trust MUPD with cases of sexual assault, nearly 20% of students expressed almost no trust. This is a problem as a large factor of students do not trust the policing force that is meant to protect them and help them reporting cases of sexual assault. This only confirms students' distrust of MUPD.

However, this distrust is not overwhelming and not shared by the majority, but if some students don't feel safe reporting to MUPD then Marquette will only be continuing an unhealthy culture if that 20% of students is ignored.

Despite this distrust for MUPD, students seem to be much more comfortable discussing this issue and learning about rape culture and sexual assault prevention from other students rather than the administration, staff, MUPD, etc. Through the online survey, one student spoke directly to this debate of wanting to learn from students or non-students: "The school is trying to prevent sexual assault by making us take that online course and go to that play, but it really has to come from our peers, so more student run events would help." Students find comfort in each other and refrain from staff-led guidance. As staff could provide expertise and greater resources due to their professional standing, students still look to each other for support, discussion, education, etc. Students almost seem to want to claim responsibility for discussing rape culture, bettering education on campus, and more.

Interestingly, some Marquette staff feels the same way. From a news story published by the Marquette Wire during April of 2016, a panel of Marquette staff members were gathered to discuss campus rape culture and sexual violence. It was reported that "All speakers on the panel agreed that it is each student's responsibility to change the culture around campus sexual assault" (Cite website). As a student myself, this made me uneasy. I do feel responsible for changing our campus' rape culture, as I am a part of this culture. However, the staff that agreed upon this are the ones with the resources available and administrative influence to make larger change happen for our culture and campus.

Both interviewed students expressed a distance between staff and students. When asked how she thought the Marquette community would react to a public demonstration bringing

attention to the issue of sexual assault, one student replied, “But I think a lot of people on campus would be for it. I like to think everyone would be. Because why wouldn’t you? But the administration. I see where that would be different. Because they would have to deal with the image of the school. But then again, I think it would be a chance to prove that they are here for the students.” Noted by this student, the administration must manage Marquette’s image while managing and preventing sexual assault. However – because sexual assault is an “ugly” issue and commonly perceived as something to tarnish a reputation – the Marquette administration may sacrifice student safety and a healthier discussion of rape culture for the sake of the institution's image. This involves the massively complex world of college recruitment of new students, marketing, etc. That is too large of an issue to examine now. However, it should be noticed that the administration and students do not share the same goals and interests.

When discussing the potential for change, the other interviewed students said, “I don’t know how willing people are to change. And when I say people, I mean the people with authority. Because I think students would want this. And I’m sure if there was push on behalf of students it would slowly change, but it seems like its systemic.” As made clear by this student, the Marquette student body does not hold much trust in the non-student people of Marquette (staff, faculty, administration, etc.). There is a great divide between these two groups. Students don’t think that the staff cares for them, or cares enough. For students, Marquette staff and administration seem apathetic and disingenuous. This relationship is strained, and the bridge between students and staff should be bridged to make true change come about.

Desire for Change

All students but one surveyed and interviewed for this research shared a desire for change. They identified and described many different aspects of Marquette's rape culture to consider that I have mentioned earlier in my findings.

Before I discuss the specific ideas for change, I would like to share how one student replied when asked what he thinks should be done regarding sexual assault on campus: "No need for change. Plenty of movements have already been put into place. It is well known for the most part how to be a bystander, what to do in different situations, and what constitutes as sexual assault. There has been a lot of time and money funneled into this, doing any more has limited upside." It is important to recognize this perception, as this only motivates me more to bring about real change and to make the pressing reality of sexual violence more aware to people of the Marquette community who think like this. As rape and sexual assault persists, change is still needed.

Many students argue that change is needed, and they largely focus on the need for more transparency and a more open discourse. Students put forth other ideas like training MUPD to be more sympathetic toward students reporting sexual assault, harsher punishments for offenders, more respectful and humane treatment of victims and survivors, creating more student-led initiatives, providing more tangible resources, and addressing sexual health first.

Despite these ideas, the most important and most valued desire for change was creating more transparency and more open discussion. Encouraging more awareness is central to many of the students' desires for change. Students wish to discuss sexual health, men as victims and survivors of sexual assault, avoiding victimization, role of alcohol, relationship dynamics and dating, importance of consent, communication, and Marquette's current policies. Students even want to talk about why people don't want to talk about rape, sexual violence, etc. A healthier and

more accepted on-campus discussion of rape culture is a change that many students would like to see. This could be the first crucial step in developing pivotal, long-lasting change.

Proposals for Change

I present three proposals for change: student-led and staff-supported discussions, a revised and more active form of education, and a partnership with University of Wisconsin-Milwaukee.

To better the relationship between staff and students and to empower students, I propose an initiative of student-led and staff-supported discussions. These would also encourage transparency surrounding the discussion of campus sexual assault and rape culture. I believe this proposal is the most crucial for the Marquette community because it was the most shared idea for change amongst students involved in this project. Give students the platform they desire to develop education and discussion. Potential topics of discussion include the Catholic influence on Marquette's sexual health and rape culture, the relationship between students and staff, and sexual health before sexual assault. Marquette should create a well-known and open space for students and staff to gather to carry out healthy and constructive discussions concerning sexual violence and culture. Building relationships within the Marquette community is crucial was vital change.

Once student concerns are made more aware to staff and administration and once staff concerns are made more aware to students, the Marquette administration should develop a more active and engaging form of sexual assault education that is truly preventive and not merely risk-reducing. This revision of education is an extension of the first proposal of change, aimed at bettering transparency and discussion. The Marquette administration, staff, faculty, and students

can look to examples of successful collegiate initiatives dedicated to bettering the rape culture on their campuses. Indiana University-Bloomington is successfully cultivating awareness of sexual violence on campus through a student-led and staff-supported initiative focused on bettering their culture (“Culture of Care”). Marquette should revise its lecture-based training and look to this initiative for new ways to encourage student involvement and a greater community bond.

Once the Marquette community is more unified on this issue, Marquette University and University of Wisconsin-Milwaukee should partner because this is a nationwide and worldwide issue affecting every American university and college campus. This partnership would be beneficial for both schools as they learn of the failures and successes of the other concerning sexual assault education and resources. This partnership would bring awareness to the whole city of Milwaukee of the persistence of an unhealthy rape culture and could perhaps expand into a statewide campaign by branching out to the other University of Wisconsin campuses.

Concluding Thoughts and Next Directions

I have only dedicated four months to researching one single aspect of one small campus’ rape culture. As this study has been approved by the Institutional Review Board, I plan to continue this research with two preliminary goals in mind: gather more in-depth student perceptions of campus sexual assault, resources, and rape culture and collect in-depth staff perceptions of campus sexual assault, resources, and rape culture. These goals can be met by conducting student focus groups, more student interviews, and staff interviews with various staff members, including but not limited to members of MUPD, administrative staff involved in student affairs, Title IX, sexual assault education and resources, and more. Refer to Appendices G, H, I, J, K, and L for the consent forms and interview scripts approved for future research. I

hope this project will serve as the starting point for bettering Marquette University's rape culture and climate encompassing sexual violence. I hope to inspire long-lasting and positive change.

Appendix

Appendix A

Student Interview Script

These interviews with students are semi-structured. The questions below serve as starting points and inspiration for the interview.

- Do you feel safe on campus? Off campus?
- What makes you feel unsafe on or off campus?
- What do you think of MU's rape culture?
- How well do think Marquette is invested in bettering the rape culture on campus?
- What resources do you know of that Marquette provides for victims of sexual assault?
- What is Marquette University doing to prevent sexual assault?
- How passionate do you think MU is about preventing sexual assault?
- Would you like to share anything else – any final opinions, suggestions, concerns, questions for me?

Appendix B

Student Interview Consent Form

MARQUETTE UNIVERSITY RESEARCH INFORMATION SHEET
Student Awareness and Education of Campus Sexual Assault and Resources
Rachel Harmon
English Department

You have participated in a research study. The purpose of this study is to understand student awareness and knowledge of campus sexual assault and resources made available by Marquette University for students. You have completed an interview of approximately 30 minutes. You were asked to answer questions about sexual violence, Marquette's related resources, and your own knowledge and education on these topics.

I ask for your permission to use the transcribed interview data in my current research project. Your name will be replaced by a pseudonym in the transcription of the interview and report of research. The audio of the interviews was recorded. The risks associated with this project are minimal, and there are no direct benefits to you. All data will be deidentified and kept

indefinitely. Data will be used in a class research report and in research presentations and publications beyond that class.

Your participation is completely voluntary, and you may withdraw from the study at any time. Your decision to participate will not impact your relationship with Marquette University. If you have any questions about this study, you can contact Rachel Harmon at 847-910-5115 or rachel.harmon@marquette.edu. If you have questions or concerns about your rights as a research participant, you can contact Marquette University's Office of Research Compliance at (414) 288-7570.

Thank you for your participation.

Appendix C

Resources Flier

Thank you for your participation.

Below are some on-campus and off-campus resources available for guidance, help, and support.

Confidential Resources On and Off Campus:

- Counseling Center, 414-288-7172
- Sexual Assault Treatment Center (SATC), Aurora Sinai Medical Center, 414-219-5555.
- Marquette University Medical Clinic, 414-288-7184.
- Healing Center, 414-671-HEAL (414-671-4325)
- Sojourner Family Peace Center, 414-276-1911.
- Milwaukee LGBT Community Center, 414-271-2656.

Other Campus Resources (non-confidential):

- Victim advocate, 414-288-5244
- Campus Ministry, 414-288-6873
- Marquette University Police Department, 414-288-6800
- Gender and Sexuality Resource Center, 414-288-4975

Other Resources:

- Not Alone (An official website of the United States Government)
- Office for Civil Rights

Visit <http://www.marquette.edu/sexual-misconduct/get-support.shtml> for more information.

Appendix D

Social Media Language

The following language will accompany my post online via Facebook, sharing the online survey, to recruit student survey respondents.

“Hello, all! Below is a link to a short, 10-question survey for my research project of Marquette’s sexual assault resources. It will only take 10 minutes to complete, maybe less. Please help me with this. This research is very important and can have a positive impact on our community. Thank you!”

Appendix E

Student Survey Questions

1. How often do you hear of sexual assault on campus – whether it be an MUPD report, eavesdropping on a discussion, in class, etc.?
 - a. Never
 - b. Almost never
 - c. Sometimes
 - d. Frequently

2. How prevalent do you believe sexual assault is on campus?
 - a. Not prevalent
 - b. Somewhat not prevalent
 - c. Somewhat prevalent
 - d. Prevalent

3. How much do you know of sexual assault resources made available by the Marquette University administration?
 - a. Nothing
 - b. Almost nothing
 - c. Some
 - d. Almost everything

4. On a scale from 0 to 3, how much do you trust the Marquette University Police Department (MUPD) with cases of sexual assault?
 - a. 0 – no trust
 - b. 1 – almost no trust
 - c. 2 – some trust
 - d. 3 – plenty of trust

5. Do you feel informed about how to prevent or intervene into sexual assault?
 - a. Yes
 - b. No
 - c. Somewhat
 - d. Not enough

6. Have you found yourself in the position to actively prevent sexual assault?
 - a. Yes
 - b. No
 - c. Not sure

7. What is your gender?
 - a. Man
 - b. Woman
 - c. Other
 - d. Do not wish to disclose

8. You are a student of what college?
 - a. Klingler Arts & Sciences
 - b. College of Business Administration
 - c. Diederich College of Communication
 - d. School of Dentistry
 - e. College of Education
 - f. College of Nursing
 - g. Opus College of Engineering
 - h. College of Health Sciences
 - i. Graduate School
 - j. Graduate School of Management
 - k. Law School

9. How old are you?
 - a. 18 years old
 - b. 19 years old
 - c. 20 years old
 - d. 21 years old
 - e. 22 years old
 - f. 23 years old
 - g. 24 years old
 - h. Other:

10. What do you think should be done regarding sexual assault on campus? Do you have any ideas for change?
Open-ended Answer:

Appendix F

Student Survey Consent Form

MARQUETTE UNIVERSITY RESEARCH INFORMATION SHEET
Student Awareness and Education of Campus Sexual Assault and Resources
Rachel Harmon
English Department

You have been asked to participate in a research study. You must be age 18 or older to participate. The purpose of this study is to understand student awareness and knowledge of campus sexual assault and resources made available by Marquette University for students. The

study involves an online survey and will take about 10 minutes to complete. You will be asked to answer questions about sexual violence, Marquette's related resources, and your own knowledge and education on these topics. Your name and other identifying information, including IP address, will not be collected. Your responses will be anonymous. The risks associated with this project are minimal and there are no direct benefits to you. Although you will not be asked about your personal experiences with rape, there is a small chance that you may become upset. Resources for help and support will be provided at the end of the survey. All data will be deidentified and kept indefinitely. Data will be used in a class research report and in research presentations and publications beyond that class.

Collection of data and survey responses using the internet involves the same risks that a person would encounter in everyday use of the internet, such as hacking or information unintentionally being seen by others. Your participation is completely voluntary and you may withdraw from the study at any time. You can skip any questions you do not wish to answer. Your decision to participate will not impact your relationship with Marquette University.

If you have any questions about this study, you can contact Rachel Harmon at 847-910-5115 or rachel.harmon@marquette.edu. If you have questions or concerns about your rights as a research participant, you can contact Marquette University's Office of Research Compliance at (414) 288-7570.

Thank you for your participation.

Appendix G

Student Focus Group Consent Form

MARQUETTE UNIVERSITY RESEARCH INFORMATION SHEET
Student Awareness and Education of Campus Sexual Assault and Resources
 Rachel Harmon
 English Department

You have been asked to participate in a research study. You must be age 18 or older to participate. The purpose of this study is to understand student awareness and knowledge of campus sexual assault and resources made available by Marquette University for students. The study involves focus groups and will take about 45 to 60 minutes to complete. You will be asked to answer questions about sexual violence, Marquette's related resources, and your own knowledge and education on these topics. Due to the group nature of the focus group there is no guarantee of confidentiality. Please do not share information that you do not wish others to know. Your name will be replaced by a pseudonym in the transcription of the session's audio and report of research. The audio of the session will be recorded. The risks associated with this project are minimal and there are no direct benefits to you. Although you will not be asked about your personal experiences with rape, there is a small chance that you may become upset. Resources for help and support will be provided at the end of every interview. All data will be deidentified and kept indefinitely. Data will be used in a class research report and in research presentations and publications beyond that class.

Your participation is completely voluntary and you may withdraw from the study at any time. You can skip any questions you do not wish to answer. Your decision to participate will not impact your relationship with Marquette University.

If you have any questions about this study, you can contact Rachel Harmon at 847-910-5115 or rachel.harmon@marquette.edu. If you have questions or concerns about your rights as a research participant, you can contact Marquette University's Office of Research Compliance at (414) 288-7570.

Thank you for your participation.

Appendix H

Student Interview Consent Form

MARQUETTE UNIVERSITY RESEARCH INFORMATION SHEET
Student Awareness and Education of Campus Sexual Assault and Resources
Rachel Harmon
English Department

You have been asked to participate in a research study. You must be age 18 or older to participate. The purpose of this study is to understand student awareness and knowledge of campus sexual assault and resources made available by Marquette University for students. The study involves interviews and will take about 30 minutes to complete. You will be asked to answer questions about sexual violence, Marquette's related resources, and your own knowledge and education on these topics. Your name will be replaced by a pseudonym in the transcription of the interview and report of research. The audio of the interviews will be recorded. The risks associated with this project are minimal and there are no direct benefits to you. Although you will not be asked about your personal experiences with rape, there is a small chance that you may become upset. Resources for help and support will be provided at the end of every interview. All data will be deidentified and kept indefinitely. Data will be used in a class research report and in research presentations and publications beyond that class.

Your participation is completely voluntary, and you may withdraw from the study at any time. You can skip any questions you do not wish to answer. Your decision to participate will not impact your relationship with Marquette University.

If you have any questions about this study, you can contact Rachel Harmon at 847-910-5115 or rachel.harmon@marquette.edu. If you have questions or concerns about your rights as a research participant, you can contact Marquette University's Office of Research Compliance at (414) 288-7570.

Thank you for your participation.

Appendix I

Staff Interview Consent Form

MARQUETTE UNIVERSITY RESEARCH INFORMATION SHEET
Student Awareness and Education of Campus Sexual Assault and Resources
 Rachel Harmon
 English Department

You have been asked to participate in a research study. You must be age 18 or older to participate. The purpose of this study is to understand student awareness and knowledge of campus sexual assault and resources made available by Marquette University for students. The study involves interviews and will take about 45 to 60 minutes to complete. You will be asked to answer questions about sexual violence, Marquette's related resources, and your own knowledge and education on these topics. Your name and other identifying information, including your profession and job, will be collected. The audio of the interviews will be recorded. Your responses will not be anonymous. The risks associated with this project are minimal and there are no direct benefits to you. All data will be kept indefinitely. Data will be used in a class research report and in research presentations and publications beyond that class.

If you have any questions about this study, you can contact Rachel Harmon at 847-910-5115 or rachel.harmon@marquette.edu. If you have questions or concerns about your rights as a research participant, you can contact Marquette University's Office of Research Compliance at (414) 288-7570.

Thank you for your participation.

Appendix J

Student Focus Group Script

These student focus group sessions are semi-structured. The questions below serve as starting points and inspiration for the session's discussion.

- How often do you hear of sexual assault and related issues on campus?
- How do you hear this discussion – in class, with friends, Marquette Tribune articles, etc.?
- How much do you know of sexual assault resources made available by the Marquette University administration?
- What resources do you know of?
- How much do you trust the Marquette University Police Department (MUPD) with cases of sexual assault?
- Do you feel informed and educated about how to prevent or intervene into sexual assault?
- What has Marquette University's resources taught you about sexual assault and violence?
- What do you think should be done regarding sexual assault on campus? Do you have any ideas for change?
- What aspect of rape culture is most important to target and change first?

Appendix K

Staff MUPD Interview Script

This interview with a staff member of the Marquette University Police Department is semi-structured. The questions below serve as starting points and inspiration for the interview.

- How exactly is a sexual assault reported by the MUPD?
- How often are sexual assaults reported?
- Why are sexual assaults and other offences of sexual violence not reported like robberies – with text safety alerts and emails to students?
- What does MUPD provide for students affected by sexual assault, violence, and misconduct?
- How is reporting to MUPD different than reporting to the Milwaukee Police Department?
- Should students report to the MUPD or the Milwaukee Police Department? Why or why not?
- How do you think students perceive and understand MUPD's resources and authority in cases related to sexual assault, violence, and misconduct?

Appendix L

Other Staff Interview Script

These interviews with staff members of Marquette University are semi-structured. The questions below serve as starting points and inspiration for the interview.

- What sexual violence resources do Marquette University provide for its student body?
- From your perspective, how well do students use these resources?
- From your perspective, how well do students understand these resources?
- How successful are these resources, in terms of keeping Marquette's students safe?
- Is there anything preventing Marquette staff and administration from providing more resources for student safety and education related to sexual violence? If yes, what exactly? Why?
- What new resources would you like to create for students?
- How can you reach students?
- How receptive are students to your efforts and work?

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