

Date rape incident prompts awareness

Professor cautions that Truman students are not immune to date rape

Jacl Devine
Assistant News Editor

Last fall, a University student said she thought she was given a date rape drug at a party, was raped and contracted herpes from her attacker.

She never reported the crime. Melody Jennings, instructor in health and exercise sciences, was told of this incident in confidence, and since then has been warning women that this man is still out there. She even wrote a letter to the editor of the Index in the Jan. 30 issue warning women.

"I was flabbergasted," Jennings said. "Not only had she been violated and raped, but she had been in so much pain. What we were thinking is that there could be others since she didn't report it, and other girls might not report it either."

Sgt. Steve Farnsworth of the Kirksville Police Department confirmed that no one has reported a rape with a date rape drug or involving a sexually transmitted disease in the last few months.

Farnsworth said that when a person reports a rape, the police call Victim Support Services, and the victim is encouraged to go to the emergency room for testing.

"A lot of times, [victims] are ashamed and embarrassed," Farnsworth said. "They have a lot of emotions they have to deal with, and that is why we call Victim Support Services."

Kim LeBaron, executive director of Victim Support Services, said it is very possible the rapist to whom Jennings referred has targeted other women as well.

"A rapist doesn't rape one time," LeBaron said. "They rape until they're caught."

From her experience dealing with rape victims, LeBaron said it is not uncommon for victims to avoid reporting the crime.

"The first and foremost reason is that as a society, we still blame victims for a rapist's actions," LeBaron said. "We say if she hadn't gone there by herself or she hadn't worn that outfit it wouldn't have happened. We find all these ways to blame the victim because it makes us feel safer."

LeBaron said a rape is not a man-

dated reportable crime, and the victim can receive treatment at an emergency room or from a physician without reporting it as long as no forensic evidence is collected.

A registered nurse at the emergency room of Northeast Regional Medical Center said forensic evidence is collected by using rape kits and includes samples of head and pubic hair, swabs of the mouth and vagina, and samples of blood. The hospital then turns the evidence over to the Highway Patrol.

"We get less than one rape case a month, maybe three a year," she said. "If date rape drugs are suspected, we send out the blood test for analysis."

The Jan. 3 issue of Newsweek reported that one of the most commonly used date rape drugs is gamma hydroxybutyric acid, or GHB, and it is becoming increasingly prevalent on college campuses. GHB is colorless, odorless and

leaves the body in a few hours, so it is very difficult to detect before or after the rape.

The State Journal-Register of Springfield, Ill., of Dec. 8, 2002, stated that rohypnol, or "Rooffies," also is used frequently in sexual assaults.

Jennings said students, especially women, need to be more conscious of the possible dangers that might lead to rape.

"We need to be more aware that these things do happen in Kirksville," Jennings said. "It's not just a city problem."

LeBaron added that date rape drugs and sexually transmitted diseases add a whole new dimension to a problem that is already a huge emotional challenge.

"Over the years I've worked with several young women who believe they have been victims of date rape drugs," LeBaron said. "It certainly is there — it's prevalent, and it's dangerous."

An added challenge is that rape victims have to pay for the evidence to be collected when they report the crime, LeBaron said.

"I don't know how this crime got to be treated so differently from other crimes," LeBaron said. "When rape victims go to the hospital, they are billed for that. State programs can help pay for the testing, but only as long as the victim agrees to prosecute."

Rape victims can contact Victim Support Services at 665-1617 or the University Counseling Center at 785-4014 for help.



Dave Lusk, assistant dean of student affairs, leads a panel discussion about mentoring at the January Conference. Students, faculty and staff discussed ways to create positive relationships between mentors with organizations and individual students.

Conference highlights concerns

Forum between students and faculty creates more questions than answers

Mandy Sheets
Staff Reporter

The January Conference provided a break in the middle of the week and gave faculty, staff and students the opportunity to discuss their concerns about Truman.

Michael McManis, dean of planning and institutional development, said this was the goal of the conference on Jan. 29.

"It serves as an opportunity for faculty, staff and students to pause and focus on their interests and concerns," McManis said.

Last year the major change to come out of the January Conference was the elimination of the Sophomore Writing Experience. This change came as a result of both faculty and student comments.

Lou Ann Gilchrist, dean of student affairs, said the elimination of the SWE happened soon after the conference last year, and while no immediate changes are planned after this year's conference, much of the feedback is being examined.

Residential Living hosted a session, "Creating a Living/Learning Environment," that gave students an opportunity to discuss the con-

ditions of the residence halls.

Gilchrist said consultants have been hired to come to Truman and talk with focus groups of randomly selected students next week. A survey, to be sent to all students in residence halls, will be developed based on information from these focus groups.

"The residence halls' renovation is a major change that could result from the conference," Gilchrist said.

Only 75 students registered for the conference. Gilchrist said this was not a good gauge of how many students actually attended because students only had to register if they wanted to eat lunch.

She said there was good student turnout at the student-oriented sessions and the speaker follow-up sessions.

Junior Vanessa Lincoln said she attended the conference for bonus points in a class but found Richard Light's speech about how students can improve their academic experience interesting and worth her time.

Gilchrist said she was happy to see so many professors use the January Conference in conjunction with their classes. She said making

attendance worth extra credit often speaks louder than any publicity could.

Junior Richard Goering attended the January Conference simply because he wanted to and said he thought it was well worth his time.

"It is one of the most phenomenal things Truman does," Goering said. "Everyone should attend."

Paul Parker, professor of political science, presented a session on the National Survey of Student Engagement. The research links certain factors to student success.

"The session raised more questions than we could answer," Parker said.

It is important to get the University to ask these questions as a process of self-reflection, Parker said.

"[These questions] allow for ongoing conversation about what Truman wants to be about," Parker said.

Jim Przybylski, professor of political science, attended Parker's workshop. He said it was useful and interesting.

"Students are happy when they are engaged, so we need to figure out how to engage them in a liberal arts setting," Przybylski said.

Arnold Preussner, professor of English, said he thought the guest speakers and follow-up sessions were interesting.

"They provided outside commentary and offered fresh opinions and suggestions on improving Truman," Preussner said.

Preussner said he found Light's strategy about advising useful and said he would try to implement it into his advising. Light said students should take a mixture of their major classes and basic liberal arts classes and not just try to get all the basic classes out of the way first.

Preussner also described the January Conference as a good opportunity to think about issues that are important to the larger Truman perspective.

"The January Conference gave us time to think about stuff we are usually too busy to think about on a daily basis," Preussner said.

Parker said he agreed with this idea as well.

"We can't do everything because our time is busy," Parker said. "It is important to take a day and talk about these issues."

Gilchrist said integrating students, faculty and staff into the same sessions was an idea that came out of last year's conference. She said she hopes faculty members communicate with students and take their suggestions into account.

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Arnold Preussner
professor of English



It didn't burn this time

Adrian Lorincz/Index

A firefighter from the Kirksville Fire Department investigates Pickler Memorial Library after the alarm went off at 11 p.m. Sunday, forcing students to evacuate. Library Director Richard Coughlin said a burning smell came from the elevator shaft. Wanda Cagle, library division secretary, said Tuesday that the VAV box motor fan went out and set off the alarm.

Increased transcript fee frustrates students

Those who need proof of grades have no way to get around the cost

Jessica Lowe
for the Index

A 150 percent increase in the cost of official transcripts that began Aug. 5, 2002, is still catching some students by surprise when they request copies.

The University raised the cost from \$2 to \$5 to keep up with the increasing cost of transcript production, Interim Registrar A. Kay Anderson said.

Anderson said most students have been understanding of the situation.

"We tried to discuss [the increase] with them if they have questions and concerns," Anderson said. "We explained it is very costly, and it's just an increase to keep in line with those fees."

Many students still were upset by the increase in costs.

"I knew it was \$2 before, and I needed my transcripts for my study abroad application," senior Candice Luebbering said. "As if studying abroad wasn't costly enough, I had to pay \$5 for a transcript."

The last time the cost of official transcripts increased at Truman was in 1988 from \$1 to \$2.

Anderson said the latest increase was calculated after looking at the cost involved with producing transcripts and the price

charged by other schools in the area.

"What they are charging and the new rate is comparable," Anderson said.

The average price of five area schools is \$4 for a copy of an official transcript. Moberly Area Community College charges no fees, the University of Missouri-Columbia charges \$7, Kirksville College of Osteopathic Medicine and the University of Missouri-Rolla charge \$5, and Northwest Missouri State University charges \$3.

Money from transcript fees is used to hire a full-time employee to run transcripts.

Transcript clerk Jennifer Matteson said the registrar's office produces nearly 1,500 copies per month.

The money also covers the cost of producing security paper specially made for Truman, which cannot be reproduced without a mark showing on the paper.

"We have transcript security paper made particularly for our use, the cost of mailing and other changes to honor students' requests," Anderson said.

One of the students' requests that was met was the ability to fax transcripts, Matteson said.

"I would assume providing transcripts would be a free service from the University. We pay money for the credits, we earn the grades. Why can't we get the proof for free?"

Candice Luebbering
senior

"We don't fax official copies," Matteson said. "Our policy does not allow transcripts to be faxed unless an official copy is mailed to the recipient."

The fee increase began the day after the summer semester ended.

"We chose that day so transcripts requested before that date would be honored," Anderson said.

The registrar's office attempted to notify students of the cost by updating information on the registrar's page of the Truman Web site, through publications such as Truman Today and by posting a sign outside the registrar's office. Not all students were made aware of the changes, however.

Senior Kevin Hayworth still had to purchase transcripts despite the increase because he applied to 12 graduate schools.

"I couldn't say, 'I didn't want to pay \$3, so I can't go to your school,'" Hayworth said.

Luebbering said she does not blame anyone for the policy of charging for transcripts but thinks it is unreasonable.

"I would assume providing transcripts would be a free service from the University," Luebbering said. "We pay money for the credits, we earn the grades. Why can't we get the proof for free?"