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Parents and Family Association Grant Proposal

Program Title:
Women's Resource Center: Safe Walk Program

Submitted by:

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OVERVIEW OF ASUA'S WOMEN'S RESOURCE CENTER:

The ASUA Women's Resource Center is dedicated to increasing awareness of issues that impact women on the UA campus, in the broader Tucson community, and in our increasingly globalized world. Through a variety of programs and services, we seek to serve individual women in need, while also working to eradicate the broader social and institutional barriers that continue to impact women's lives.

PROPOSAL ABSTRACT

The Women's Resource Center seeks to enrich women's lives by addressing issues relating to safety and empowerment. We will continue to provide Safe Walk, a program that offers safe, escorted walks from one on-campus location to another from 7:30-11:30 pm, Monday-Friday. Because we are committed to focusing on the long-term potential of the Center, this programming and outreach will be used to promote long-term development by increasing the visibility and size of the center. Through increased student involvement, the WRC will identify alternative funding streams, create an internship program that is efficient and self-driven, and conduct programming that can be implemented on a larger scale for years to come. Most importantly, we will begin to create a Center that is well-known and well-respected on campus—one with institutional history, future goals, sustainability, and the ability to compete with Women's Centers at comparable institutions.

STATEMENT OF NEED

The vast majority of major U.S. universities have a sizeable and well-established Women's Center. Among Pac 10 schools, this trend is also observable. To remain academically and institutionally competitive, the University of Arizona needs a more visible and competent Center. In 2006-2007, UA enrolled 36,805 students. The majority, 52.5%, were female. To put this in perspective, the 1,041 African American students on campus comprise just 2.8% of the student body and have a well-organized, resourceful African American Student Affairs (AASA) center with academic support, leadership development, and many programs throughout the year. The vast differences in these percentages should not suggest that the AASA is not needed, but rather, that women students are also in dire need of greater support.

Oppression of women continues to exist throughout our world, and through recent events on our campus, we are reminded that sexual assault remains a major problem. These incidents have led to a frightened and angry buzz among women students, many of whom no longer feel safe walking around campus. While the trauma of this type of assault should not be dismissed, stranger rapes are statistically rare, as most victims of sexual assault know their perpetrators. This means that while stranger-rapes elicit broad media coverage, most rapes go unreported—the perpetrators unpunished and the victims unserved. Women on campus are harassed by men everyday, and there have been numerous assaults on campus that go unreported and others that are under-publicized.



According to Mary Koss, a University of Arizona Regent Scholar and internationally renowned expert on sexual assault, 1 in every 4 college- aged women are raped¹. Although this study was conducted two decades ago, the numbers have sadly remained constant in all subsequent studies. Clearly these issues do not stop at the border of our campus; most women understand what can best be described by the term “sexual terrorism,” or the constant fear of rape, sexual assault, and even walking alone at night. Because 25% of college-aged women experience sexual assault, almost all women have either been victimized, or know friends, sisters, or classmates that have experienced this trauma. All women understand the culturally pervasive and constant threat of sexual assault, whether or not it has been individually experienced. This begins to explain one dimension of the disempowerment of women at a societal level.

PROGRAM OVERVIEW

Women’s safety and empowerment must be promoted on our campus and in our communities. Thanks to the Parents and Family Association Grant in spring 2007, the Women’s Resource Center has been able to begin safety programming at the University of Arizona with self-defense workshops and an upcoming Take Back the Night rally. Over the past two semesters the Women’s Resource Center has implemented the Safe Walk program on the University campus.

The Safe Walk Program builds on the idea of “safety in numbers” and has two students available every weeknight to walk female students from building to building or from class to their car. Women’s Resource Center interns would be “on-call” from 7:30-11:30pm, Monday through Friday. The vision for the program includes ten regular students who divide the Safe Walk Program time during the school year and receive a stipend of \$500 each per semester. Other materials necessary for the program are flashlights and a cell phone for communication between students, and, if needed, Campus Police.

According to ASUA’s Safe Ride Director Brittany Smith, a student will wait an average of twenty-five minutes (ten minutes to get through on the phone, five minutes on hold, and ten minutes for the car) before a Safe Ride driver will arrive. For students that need a ride off-campus, it is often worth the wait. But for students that just want to get from one location on campus to another, they often decide to walk alone rather than wait twenty-five minutes. In response to this Safe Walk proposal, Brittany Smith stated, “I bet if there was a different option in addition to Safe Ride, especially for on-campus security, students would use it.”

¹ Koss, M.P., Gidycz C.J. and Wisniewski, N. "The Scope of Rape: Incidence and Prevalence of Sexual Aggression and Victimization Among a National Sample of Students in Higher Education. *Journal of Consulting and Clinical Psychology* 55 (1987): 162-70.



A Safe Walk program is successfully run at many universities throughout the country². While this program would provide a necessary service to students, it would also greatly increase the visibility of the Women's Resource Center. In addition to Safe Walk, we will also increase the number of everyday safety tools for campus women. Through promoting the Women's Resource Center, the Safe Walk program, and our ongoing self-defense classes, we have distributed over 1,000 key chains that are both flashlights and whistles to female students during our outreach events. Furthermore, we will equip women with pepper spray in the event that they are subject to assault.

In a conversation with Rebecca Levy, a Residence Hall director, she described that there is a general feeling of fear around sexual assault, as several threats of assault occur every semester this semester. She explained the benefit to letting freshman know about the threat of assault on campus, resources for preventing it, and when this doesn't work, resources to help students cope with the aftermath of assault. She stated that the students in the dorms really responded to getting the whistles and flashlight keychains in the past. Because the Women's Resource Center information is printed on both the keychains and pepper spray, this will also serve the additional function of promotion of the Center, our services, and broader campus and community resources.

Thus, the focus of this project is not only to provide a year's worth of necessary safety programming, but also to increase overall involvement with and knowledge of the WRC. Furthermore, we will assess the effectiveness of these programs and services, and learn from women students what additional issues they need addressed to feel more safe and empowered on this campus and in their lives.

SUCSESSES

Upon receiving funding from the Parents and Family Association in November of 2007, the Women's Resource Center put out a call for applications for Safe Walkers; eight were hired and Safe Walk took off at the very end of December. All Safe Walk interns are also required to work on Women's Resource Center related material. This has not only added extra help to the Center, but it has enriched the lives of Safe Walkers from their investment in the Center.

The Women's Resource Center's Safe Walk program has been featured in the UA news one time, the Daily Wildcat three times, and on the news four times—KOLD, KGUN 9, KVOA, and channel 3 UA TV. After each media hit featuring the Safe Walk program, the numbers of people that called Safe Walk would double and triple. An aggressive advertising strategy is necessary in this case because this is a new program being implemented on campus. In a poll conducted and published on the Wildcat website, 33% of students said they would use a program like Safe Walk. Through this year's Safe Walk program, we learned that devising an aggressive advertising campaign is of utmost importance. For increased success in upcoming years, we will need to develop and

² As an example, see Simon Fraser University in California.



implement an even more aggressive campaign. With the continued support of the Parents and Family Association, we will implement a strategic and intense advertising campaign beginning in August of 2008. For example, the WRC will promote Safe Walk at Freshman Orientation, in the Residence halls, through Greek Life, and through tabling on the mall and at events.

ASSESSMENT METHODOLOGY

In order to assess the impact of WRC programming and services, verbal evaluations are conducted with every person that calls safe walk. This is then used to evaluate where and what the Safe Walk program can improve. The Women’s Resource Center is dedicated to providing students, faculty and staff of the University of Arizona programming that suits the needs of everyone. We conduct formal evaluations at our events and review them to see what seems to work and what does not work.

ITEM	DESCRIPTION	COST
SAFE WALK	Student stipends to run “Safe Walk” program (\$500 stipend/semester for 10 student interns X 2 semesters)	\$10,000
SAFE WALK COMMUNICATION	Cell phone for students on call for safe walk (\$60/mo X 12 mo contract)	\$720
MARKETING	Advertising and marketing to students and community about the Safe Walk Program	\$4,000
SAFETY MAERIALS	Safe Walk uniforms for each intern \$15 X 20 plus set-up charges	\$500
	Pepper Spray (1,000 X \$2 each—this low price is only available through a connection that Safe Ride has)	\$2,000
Total Budget Requested		\$17,220

Potential Funding Sources:

- National, State and Local Women’s Organizations (E.G. Third Wave Foundation)
- Commission on the Status of Women
- Corporate Support (E.G. Ikon Grant, Xerox Grant)
- Graduate and Professional Student Council
- Faculty-Student Interaction Grant
- Residence Hall Association

Additionally, the WRC will presumably be granted a \$6-8,000 budget for the 2008-2009 school year through ASUA’s Programs and Services Branch. We also brought in approximately \$25,000 in grants over the past nine months. Nonetheless, this amount of money is insufficient to meet the needs of the approximately 20,000 female students on campus. Thank you for your time and consideration of our proposal, and your commitment to creating a safe campus community where young women can become empowered leaders!

