A Historical Analysis of Institutional Support for Sexual Violence:
The Campus Rape Crisis Center, Student Activism and Other Best Practices for the
American College Campus

Senior Thesis

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Acknowledgements

As an advocate for better sexual violence awareness and resources at Brandeis University, I consider this paper a piece of my own activism. My interest in the topic of institutional response to sexual violence was born from a number of factors: my early experiences studying feminism and women’s studies in the Women’s, Gender & Sexuality Studies department, my collaborations with other feminist activists on campus, and my involvement in Brandeis University’s adjudication process for sexual misconduct. During my second year at Brandeis, I had the opportunity to serve as an advisor in the University’s first Special Examiner’s Process—which then resulted in the first recorded expulsion from Brandeis for a violation of the sexual misconduct code. This experience launched my role as an unofficial advisor to sexual violence survivors at Brandeis. I began meeting with friends, friends of friends, and strangers who had survived rape or sexual assault at Brandeis, and wanted to either talk about it, or in many cases, do something about it.

I immediately noticed the deeply ingrained tolerance of sexual assault on my campus. University officials and law enforcement alike were largely ignorant as to the complexities of sexual violence within the setting of a university such as Brandeis. I became involved in a student activist coalition called Brandeis Students Against Sexual Violence, or BSASV, the formation and importance of which I discuss later in this paper. BSASV demanded reformation of Brandeis’ policies and resources for sexual assault survivors, one request being the establishment of a Brandeis Rape Crisis Center—a space where I am now honored to work as a student coordinator.

This paper is my way of marrying my on-the-ground activist work, both in the Brandeis Rape Crisis Center and outside of it, with my academic interests in feminist ideology and
institutional responses to systemic violence throughout American history. In calling for better infrastructural support of student sexual violence activism as a best practice for universities, I am demanding acknowledgement and appreciation of the work that so many of my peers have been doing for decades. I hope that this paper will contribute to defining and recognizing the rich history of student sexual violence activism at Brandeis, and perhaps even inform activist movements or institutional response to sexual violence in the future.

I would like to thank my thesis advisor Deirdre Hunter (without whom this paper would not have been possible) for her expert advice, editing and endless support. I would also like to thank Professor Jasmine Johnson, my second reader and a member of the Brandeis community who is consistently working towards making safe, creative spaces for students. I would also like to thank the entire Women’s, Gender & Sexuality Studies department at Brandeis for continually pushing me to expand my horizons and for supporting me to affect change in my community. I would like to thank my family and friends for their ceaseless encouragement and support of my research interests, even if that has sometimes meant hours-long conversations about institutional support for sexual violence. I would also like to thank the staff and volunteers at the Brandeis Rape Crisis Center, who are so incredibly dedicated to making our university a better and safer place for all students, and inspire me every day.
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Institutionally tolerated, and even supported sexual violence has deep roots in American history. From the systemic abuse of slave populations to the prevalence of sex trafficking and domestic violence, social attention and priority is rarely assigned to the marginalized communities most at risk for experiencing these traumas. And now, in the past few years, the epidemic of sexual violence\(^1\) on the American college campus has seemingly just come to light: due to the inherent privileges associated with being a college student that identifies as a sexual violence survivor, in addition to the ebbing waves of sexual violence activism in college campuses for the past few decades, the issue of campus sexual violence has at last made its way to the forefront of American social consciousness. Statistics from the U.S. Department of Justice show rampant sexual violence on college campuses across the board: 1 in 5 college women, and 1 in 16 college men experience attempted or completed rape while attending college.\(^2\)

The relationships between waves of activism surrounding campus sexual violence and the campus itself are not one-sided, but rather necessarily reciprocal: this activism is needed to initiate any cultural or policy change within the institution, and in turn, that activism must be supported by the university’s administration in order to promote a comprehensive response to violence within the community, and one that is actually tailored to the student populations that are directly affected by this violence. For sexual violence rates to be decreased within institutions like American universities, specific and directed efforts must be taken to foster a climate that is supportive of activism. History has been repeating itself: the activism efforts of the feminist movement in the 1970s and 1980s are nearly identical to the highly publicized student organizing around college sexual violence in the past few months and years—not

\(^1\) Throughout the paper, I will be using the term “sexual violence” to refer to any sexual act or series of sexual acts committed against someone without their explicit consent. This includes sexual harassment, sexual assault, stalking and

because students are running out of material, but rather, no significant institutional changes have been made.

This research seeks to identify the factors that encourage or discourage both student sexual violence activism and the campus rape culture, as well as offer best practices for university response. By both examining the historical context of sexual violence activism and using Brandeis University as a case study for the application of these best practices, it can be concluded that one of the most advisable of these practices is the careful and deliberate establishment of a campus rape crisis center, among other pointed prevention and response efforts. Additionally, institutional support of student activism is a best practice that is vital to creating any long-term community change in both attitudes towards sexual violence and its actual prevalence on the college campus.

Sexual violence on college campuses might be framed by the media as a revolutionary epidemic sweeping the nation only in the past few years, but in fact these issues are age old and sit squarely in a historical context of institutionalized misogyny, classism, racism and patriarchy. By exploring this context and how sexual violence within a university community might fit into such a history, this research also seeks to provide background for eventual social change through better resources and policies for the American college campus.

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A History of American Sexual Violence Activism

Sexual violence activism on the modern American college campus has never existed in a vacuum; rather, activists today stand on the shoulders of some of the great American men and women of other movements, who also fought the systemic sexual violence experienced by their people. Specifically, the women of the American Civil Rights Movement made sexual violence a focus of their work, along with the discrimination and race-based harassment rampant in a post-slavery America. The history of oppression and racial violence faced by Black people in America has had direct implications on perceptions of, and reactions to, gender-based violence faced by the same communities. As Gillian Greensite says in her History of the Rape Crisis Movement, “the history of the rape crisis movement in the United States is also a history of the struggle of African American women against racism and sexism.”

During the Reconstruction period of the United States that followed the Civil War, Black communities were targets of deliberate and intense violence. This included both actual sexual violence against Black women, perpetrated by White men, and the myth that all Black men were potential rapists of White women, fueling a fear and thus reactionary violence against Black men. In the Feminist Alliance Against Rape Newsletter of 1975, as published in Deb Friedman’s Rape, Racism and Reality, it is calculated that thousands of Black men were killed between Emancipation and World War II, in reaction to false charges of rape. Additionally, “rape laws made rape a capital offense only for a Black man found guilty of raping a white woman. The rape of a Black woman was not even considered a crime, even when it became officially

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4 I choose to use the term “Black” to describe African-American people throughout the paper, to accurately reflect the terminology used in the majority of contemporary feminist literature.
illegal.” In the wake of Emancipation, the systemic sexual violence against Black women and the vilification of Black men represented political violence just as much as it was personal violation. Estelle Freedman explores the connection between historic violence against women and political movements in *Redefining Rape*, and concludes that “rape in the post-war South clearly represented not only an assault on black women but contestation between white and black men,” and that the masked, night-riding terrorist organization, the Ku Klux Klan, consistently used sexual assault of Black women as tool of political threat against their families: “these rapes were intended to humiliate husbands, to discourage them from political participation, or punish them for their successes.” Violence against Black women during this era (and many times since) is used as a tool of symbolic violence against the entire community, meant to emasculate Black men and dehumanize Black people as a whole. Researcher Gerda Lerner, in *Black Women in White America: A Documentary History*, writes, “when black men are prevented from defending their women and their children, they are symbolically castrated and assaulted in their essential dignity. Black women... are doubly instrumentalized—as objects of forcible rape and as instruments in the degradation of their men.”

Newly legally-entitled Black communities protested against the horrors of this ignored and systemic sexual violence by attempting to turn to their community leaders. The often-futile, though existent, sexual violence activism of this time resulted in protective legislation, like the removal of the descriptor “white” from rape laws. During the Reconstructionist Era, “sexual violence against Black women had clearly entered the political discourse on the rights of

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9 Ibid.
African-Americans,”\textsuperscript{12} according to Freedman’s extensive research, though the actual amount of violence far outnumbered the political efforts for it to cease: “these postemancipation moves toward redefining black women as rape victims pale in comparison with the cases of rape as a weapon of political terror and the more quotidian assaults on black women by white men that never reached the press, police or prosecutors.”\textsuperscript{13}

The systemic devaluation of Black people in correlation with both internalized and externalized misogyny makes for a cultural space in which sexual violence against Black women is ignored in favor of other, more valued or prioritized topics—such as violence against men. Author and artist Hazel Carby writes, “the institutionalized rape of black women has never been as powerful a symbol of black oppression as the spectacle of lynching.. The links between black women and illicit sexuality consolidated during antebellum years had powerful ideological consequences for the next hundred and fifty years.”\textsuperscript{14} In this, Carby points out both the de-prioritization of Black women’s pain in comparison to the pain of men, as well as the implications for institutionalized sexual violence on the modern day lived experiences of Black women.

It was this reality that inspired Black women’s sexual violence activism of the Reconstruction Era, and in turn, inspired and informed sexual violence activism of today. In her piece, “Rape and The Inner Lives of Black Women of the Middle West,” researcher Darlene Clark Hine explores the connections between slavery, sexual violence, and the survivors of both who went on to change America: “that these women [slaves and former slaves] were sexual

\textsuperscript{13} Ibid.
hostages and domestic violence\textsuperscript{15} victims in the South (or other regions of the country) did not reduce their determination to acquire power to protect themselves and to become agents of social change once they settled in Midwestern communities.\textsuperscript{16}

In terms of sexual violence activism during this time as it may have set the stage for contemporary sexual violence activism, there are a number of cases and individuals to look towards as particularly historically impactful. During the Memphis Riot of 1886, in which “a jostling incident between Black militia men and White policemen became the excuse for a white mob attack on the entire black community,”\textsuperscript{17} a number of Black women were gang-raped by a mob of White men, many of whom were law enforcement officials. These women went on to testify in front of Congress about the violence, the transcript of which has been archived. Frances Thompson, a Black woman who at the time was living with another Black woman, 16-year-old Lucy Smith, reported: “between one and two o’clock Tuesday night seven men, two of whom were policemen, came to my house... They drew their pistols and said they would shoot us and fire the house if we did not let them have their way with us. All seven men violated us two. Four of them had to do with me, and the rest Lucy.”\textsuperscript{18}

The bravery and strength of these women to testify against such abhorrent acts of violation is, in and of itself, activism. The rape of Black women had just recently become informally illegal, through the aforementioned removal of the descriptor “white” from law. Frances Thompson and her contemporaries were among the first women to testify in court about the racial and sexual violence they survived. In breaking the silence around the systemic sexual violence.

\textsuperscript{15} Domestic violence refers to a pattern of coercive behavior used to subordinate another person in an intimate relationship; sexual violence is often a part of domestic violence, though not always, and the terms are not interchangeable.
\textsuperscript{18} Ibid.
violence suffered by Black women, these women were far ahead of their time in challenging the boundaries of where, when and how sexual violence is discussed in the public arena. Speaking out against such institutionally acceptable sexual violence is a distinctly political and activist move, and for the population of Black women who at this time had just recently gained any political autonomy, testifying in court about their gang-rape in 1886 was groundbreaking. The contemporary rape crisis movement is often interpreted as centered around creating a space for survivors of sexual violence to speak out: theses Black women, survivors of the Memphis Riot of 1886, were the first to do so and thus much of the sexual violence activism movement today is owed to their bravery.

Other women in the Reconstructionist Era, and even before, also contributed to creating a space for marginalized individuals to speak out about systemic violence and oppression. Rosa Parks is one well-known Civil Rights activist who also spoke out broadly against sexual violence and for women’s rights. Parks’ infamous moment on a Montgomery, Alabama bus, wherein she refused to relinquish her seat for a White man, launched the Montgomery Bus Boycott, which lasted 381 days until December 1956 when the U.S. Supreme Court ruled bus segregation laws unconstitutional. Parks’ bus activism has largely been portrayed as spontaneous, though she has been recorded as saying: “when I made that decision, I knew I had the strength of my ancestors with me.”

Often portrayed as an accidental activist, in reality, Rosa Parks’ activism was deliberate, longitudinal, and built on a foundation of lived experiences of racist violence. A survivor of sexual harassment and assault herself, both at the hands of “white youngsters” in her neighborhood and the family friend, “Mr. Charlie,” Parks used her own experiences of

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interpersonal violence as a launching pad upon which to speak out against the institutional misogyny and racism that allowed for those events to occur. Parks is consistently described by biographers as “determined” in her fight to speak out. When being harassed by Mr. Charlie, Parks spoke to him about “white man’s inhuman treatment of the negro. How I hated all white people,” Parks writes, “especially him.”

Parks went on to serve on the three-person executive committee of the state conference of the NAACP (the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People), and used her political platform to bring attention to the systemic sexual violence against black women: “she forwarded dozens of reports to the NAACP national office documenting suspicious deaths [and] rapes of black women by white men.” Parks’ activism represents the legions of survivors who built, and continue to lead, the sexual violence activist movement. By marrying her women’s rights work with her Civil Rights work, Parks serves as a model for intersectional activist involvement.

Another example of the intersection of race and sexual violence that resulted in revolutionary activism (along with serious cultural and legislative shifts), though many years later, is the widely publicized sexual harassment case brought forth by Anita Hill against her supervisor, Head of the Equal Employment Opportunities Commission Clarence Thomas in 1991. Anita came forward with claims that she endured repeated sexual harassment by Thomas (then a Supreme Court Justice nominee) via being shown pornographic videos and receiving graphic sexual propositions, during the years she worked in Thomas’ office. Throughout the congressional hearings, the media ruthlessly assassinated Hill’s character. David Brock, former The American Spectator reporter and author, has since expressed his journalistic goal in

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21 Ibid; p. 27
portraying Hill as “a little bit nutty and a little bit slutty” in his reports of the hearings.\textsuperscript{22} Though the Hill vs. Thomas hearings took place in the early 1990s, when the concept of the state-funded rape crisis center had been established and even legislation protecting students from gender-based harassment was in place,\textsuperscript{23} the public perception and treatment of Hill points to greater issues: misogyny, the vilification of women’s sexuality, and pervasive racist stereotypes. Additionally, as Hazel Carby pointed out, sexual violence against Black women is made a lesser priority in comparison to instances of violence against Black men.\textsuperscript{24} Clarence Thomas referred to the legal proceedings of 1991 as a “high-tech lynching”\textsuperscript{25} of his character, alluding in no subtle way to the history of systemic racial violence against Black people (though specifically Black men) in the United States. Hill’s lived experience of sexual harassment was thrown into the shadow of Thomas’ claim of symbolic oppression.

Anita Hill’s trial represents feminist sexual violence activism and race equality activism for the ways that she and her supporters, including other women who spoke out against Thomas for similar episodes, unequivocally demanded attention to Black women’s lived experiences of sexual harassment. Anita Hill broke the silence endured by so many who have experienced sexual harassment at the hands of the powerful, and challenged boundaries even within her own community for her daringness in accusing a Black man of such harassment, being a Black woman herself. Though Clarence Thomas was in fact appointed Supreme Court Justice by the end of the hearings, Hill’s bravery in coming forth made great strides for public understanding of workplace sexual harassment in the United States, as well as actual reporting rates of sexual

harassment: according to *The New York Times* review of the hearings twenty years later, “the Equal Employment Opportunity Commission, where Ms. Hill worked for Mr. Thomas during his time as its chairman, saw a 50 percent increase in sexual harassment filings the year after the hearing.”26 Additionally, one month after the hearing, George W. Bush signed into law a bill that allowed sexual harassment victims to collect damages—he had been expected to veto this bill before having heard Anita Hill’s testimony at the trial. 27 Anita Hill’s speaking out against Clarence Thomas, though by no means the beginning of sexual violence activism in the United States, did make headway for both legislative and cultural change regarding workplace sexual harassment and the perception of women’s lived experiences of sexual harassment.

The sexual violence activism movement in America has many inspiring faces behind its leadership. The movement itself cannot be disentwined from the history of racism and race-based violence upon which this country is built. Those who fought for abolition, emancipation and human rights since the Civil Rights Movement and the Reconstruction Era of the United States are also those responsible for creating a foundation for sexual violence activism of today. Though the modern American college campus seems a far different setting from Jim Crow’s South, a similar strength of institutional, widely accepted violence against the marginalized, and subsequent strength of reactionary activism, can be seen in both. The racism, sexism, and misogyny that allowed for ignorance and acceptance of sexual violence in the Reconstructionist Era is the same racism, sexism and misogyny that ignores and devalues the experiences of contemporary sexual violence survivors in the university setting, and in Anita Hill’s case, in the workplace.

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27 Ibid.
As illustrated by the trajectory of Anita Hill’s case against Clarence Thomas, legislative changes regarding sexual assault, rape and gender-based violence have often been impacted by sexual violence activism, and serve as an effective lens through which to view the history of sexual violence activism in the United States. In fact, defining legislation around sexual assault has long been a goal associated with various movements of activism, as documented by author of *Redefining Rape*, Estelle B. Freedman: “generations of women’s rights and racial justice advocates have contested the narrow understanding of rape,” she writes.28

The American rape laws of the early 19th century define rape as a property crime, due to the leftover maintenance of coverture laws, “by which male heads of households represented women and children [and] denied women the right of political consent.”29 Other research shows that the American history of understanding rape in terms of coverture has had severe and negative implications for the way that rape cases have been adjudicated in the public court. From a 2014 report on sexual assault out of the U.S. Department of Justice: “the historical view of rape and its categorization of a property crime also perpetuated the belief that women lie about being raped.... [also], the legal system’s hostile treatment of rape cases and rape victims was unique and in marked contrast to other assault crimes... the legal system emphasized the victim’s character, behavior and words in order to ascertain whether the victim consented.”30 Though coverture laws are no longer standing, the impact of this historical perception of rape is still clear. The first activists against coverture laws can be traced to 1840, an era during which a series of anti-coverture campaigns were launched and served to both gain women the right to political consent, and also set the stage for the forthcoming suffrage movement in which this

29 Ibid, p. 7
political consent translated to the right to vote.\(^{31}\) Though many of the coverture statutes were dissolved in the 19\(^{th}\) century, there were still many legal implications from their existence, such as a married woman’s right to property, which will be explained further.

By the 1920s, those protected by current understandings of sexual consent included young boys and young girls—statutory rape and sodomy entered the scene as widely recognized sexual crimes. Freedman points to the inclusion of underage boys in this definition as a “shift toward a gender-neutral legal approach to rape,” which is “one that developed [even] more fully in the late twentieth century.”\(^{32}\) Another impactful piece of legislation in terms of sexual assault was the Moral Penal Code of 1962, under which rape became defined as “sexual intercourse with a female not his wife,” by force or threat of severe harm. Under the Moral Penal Code’s terms, rape is not a felony of the first degree if there is no serious bodily harm or if the victim was a voluntary social companion.\(^{33}\) The Moral Penal Code’s definition of rape allows for nonconsensual sex within the context of marriage. This ideology has been traced by historians to Sir Matthew Hale, Chief Justice in 17\(^{th}\) century England, who said: “the husband cannot be guilty of a rape committed by himself upon his lawful wife, for by their mutual matrimonial consent and contract, the wife hath given herself in kind unto her husband which she cannot retract.”\(^{34}\) This notion went largely uncontested until the 1970s, when activists across the nation began campaigning to change the Moral Penal Code in favor of illegalizing rape within the context of marriage. Feminist activism was a key component in actually changing the problematic legislation around marital rape as defined by the Moral Penal Code, thus further demonstrating the impact of early sexual violence activism. Research shows that “feminists [of the 1970’s


\(^{32}\) Ibid.


women’s rights movement] criticized both a husband’s legal right of sexual access and the coverture rules that [still] stripped married women of control over their family’s resources.”

Due to the protests, campaigns and relentless activism of feminists and women’s rights activists for decades, on July 5th, 1993, marital rape became a crime in all 50 states, under at least one section of the state’s sexual offenses code. However, as of 1999, there were still marital rape exemptions in 33 states, including when a wife “is mentally or physically impaired, unconscious, asleep, etc., and is legally unable to consent, a husband is exempt from prosecution.” As of 2015, the only marital rape exemption that exists in any state is for statutory rape (i.e., if a spouse is legally married but under the state’s age of sexual consent, statutory rape laws do not apply to the other spouse).36 37

Freedman credits legislative change around rape laws as certainly important, though not the activist end-all-be-all: “legal change does not necessarily change culture.”38 That said, legislation has historically defined violence for a society, and in turn, affected the way that society responds to violence. From the early days of rape as a property crime primarily against fathers or husbands, as opposed to autonomous women, to contemporary definitions of sexual assault—one might argue that legislation not only reflects cultural perceptions of sexual violence, but also defines the context in which those perceptions are formed. Through reading research and historical accounts of how United States sexual assault legislation came to be altered throughout history, to both be more inclusive and serve the needs of all American

citizens, it is clear that dedicated activists and feminists have played a large role. The bravery and willingness of so many to speak out about experiences of sexual violence and advocate for legislative reform has served to set the stage for modern sexual violence activism. Contemporary activists in the sexual violence awareness and prevention movement seek to reflect the strength of spirit of Frances Thompson, Rosa Parks, the early suffragists, Anita Hill and so many more in the work that is being done today.

**Raising Consciousness and Raising Hope: The First Rape Crisis Centers**

A tangible result of sexual violence activism of the 1980s, and the activism which preceded it, is the establishment of the first rape crisis centers. Though, as previously explicated, sexual violence activism in the United States may not have begun with either Anita Hill’s brave testimony in 1991, and certainly not with the original establishment of the first rape crisis centers in the 1970s, looking towards these groundbreaking events isn’t a bad place to start when examining modern, American sexual violence activism. And, in fact, referencing the early rape crisis centers as a model for how to change and restructure current systems may be quite strategic: researcher Nancy A. Matthews explains in her book, *Confronting Rape: The Feminist Anti-Rape Movement and the State*, that “although rape crisis centers vary in their organizational location quite a bit, they are associated with a surprisingly consistent set of services.”

Examining the strengths, weaknesses and organizational origin of early rape crisis centers provides a platform by which one might determine the best option for a present-day rape crisis center, or set of sexual violence services within a given institution.

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The evolution of rape crisis centers first began in the United States during the 1970s, with the opening of rape crisis centers in big cities like Berkeley, Chicago, Boston, Philadelphia and Washington. 42 The centers were inherently based in the activism that preceded them, specifically the early consciousness-raising feminist groups in which women shared their experiences of harassment, daily misogyny and often, sexual violence. From the very beginning, the first rape crisis centers were both survivor-focused and survivor-led. Because of this intimate connection with the subject, volunteers and staff at these rape crisis centers took their work both very seriously and very personally. Matthews’ research also identifies this trend in early rape crisis center projects: “internal factors converged to make hotline and counseling services the centerpiece of their projects,” she writes, “these factors included the activists’ value on bringing the political down to the personal level.” 43 The personal experiences of having been impacted by sexual violence in some way, either culturally or through survivorship, created a need for these early activists to react, and bringing these experiences into rape crisis work was the way they did so. Being distinctly survivor-led was a factor that distinguished the early rape crisis movement. This has remained largely consistent within contemporary college campus sexual violence activism as well. The most publicly recognizable leaders in the college campus sexual violence activist movement are for the most part, identified as sexual violence survivors. Emma Sulkowicz, a senior at Columbia University, is carrying a 50-lb mattress wherever she goes on campus for as long as she attends the same university as her rapist, and has made national headlines for this performance/endurance art thesis titled “Carry That Weight.” 44 Andrea Pino and Annie Clark both experienced sexual violence at University of North Carolina, Chapel Hill, and

and went on to co-found the student activist organization, End Rape On Campus.\textsuperscript{45} The early rape crisis activists, reflecting upon the spirit of consciousness-raising, created safe places for survivors through the act of sharing their own stories. Leaders like Emma Sulkowicz, Andrea Pino and Annie Clark, among others, also empower survivors nationwide in their strength and bravery in coming forward. Sharing these experiences has led the way for legislative reform and even the establishment of physical spaces to serve as a resource for other survivors.

The radically feminist origins of rape crisis centers established in the United States effectively created a space for feminist, survivor-led sexual violence activism of today. In the context of the modern American college campus, the personal and the political are quite clearly intertwined just as it was for the early rape crisis workers of those original big cities. When student activists live, work, eat and socialize within the context of a singular institution for years, as they do on college campuses, their personal experiences of violence, harassment and aggression (and how those experiences are responded to by the community at large) reflect upon the politics of the institution. It’s impossible for college students to disentangle their personal from their political, when the politics of their university quite literally govern the judicial processes (or lack thereof) of very personal injustices and traumas. Thus, organized and deliberate activism on behalf of students impacted by sexual violence on the college campus is only logical. The institution itself must also recognize this cohesion of personal and political: in an effort to enact any sort of sexual violence related social change, university administrators need to respond to students’ personal traumas in a way that reflects a political commitment to student safety. This includes, but is not limited to, the institutional support (demonstrated through providing physical space and funding) of survivors being empowered to share their

stories and to actually do the invaluable rape crisis work of education, counseling and advocacy on their college campuses.

**Sexual Violence on the College Campus**

Until recently, campus-based sexual violence had not come to forefront of public consciousness, largely due to the institutional bureaucracy present in American colleges. The administrative systems that govern universities have exerted effort into ignoring and covering up the very real problem of this violence on their campuses, in addition to masking their own problem with responding to it. Sexual violence activism has played a large role in changing both public understandings of campus-based sexual violence as well as actual legislation; both feminist organizations such as *Ms. Magazine*, and efforts on behalf of the state (such as the Campus Sexual Assault Victims’ Bill of Rights, and President Obama’s White House Task Force to Protect Students from Sexual Assault) has contributed to sexual violence activism in this arena.

The first campus sexual assault-specific feminist activist and research campaign occurred in 1984, organized by *Ms. Magazine* and formally directed by renowned researcher Mary Koss. The project, titled the *Ms. Magazine* Project on Campus Sexual Assault, consisted of a self-report questionnaire distributed to college students throughout the United States, the results of which were translated to Robin Warshaw’s 1988 publication *I Never Called it Rape*. Koss’ affiliation with *Ms. Magazine* and the validity of this research study was meaningful for both the feminist activist movement at the time and sexual violence activist efforts today. By conducting a study with such a renowned and respected researcher as Koss, *Ms. Magazine*, a feminist publication and activist organization founded in, gave a new academic legitimacy to feminist activism and in
turn, the issue of college campus sexual assault. No longer was this movement grounded solely in feminist ideology; *Ms. Magazine*, by associating with Mary Koss on this groundbreaking 1984 study, made the issue research-worthy and thus worthy in the eyes of the academic and public health community. In 1995’s *Attitudes Towards Rape: Feminist and Social Psychological Perspectives*, Colleen Ward identifies that feminist scholarship like that by *Ms. Magazine* and Mary Koss comes from a place of feminist ideological exclusion from other literature: “feminist scholarship of the 1970s was responsible for demystifying the topic of rape. It was also the first literature to identify popular misconceptions about sexual violence and to contextualize myths in a theoretical framework of male oppression and domination of women.”46 The *Ms. Magazine* study came in the wake of this 1970s surge of feminist scholarship on sexual violence, and held special interest in the research community of that time for its groundbreaking topic choice of sexual violence on college campuses. The *Ms. Magazine* Campus Sexual Assault Study is an inherently feminist, activist publication, and yet one with an empirical validity that is especially valued in often-exclusionary research communities.

And yet, the study’s tangible result, Warshaw’s 1988 *I Never Called it Rape* does not veer in its format from the goals of the consciousness-raising feminist groups of the 1960s, thus maintaining a strong connection with the roots of the movement itself and relatability where it matters most: with the survivors and other young activists. The afterword of Warshaw’s piece identifies interesting obstacles faced by Koss and the *Ms.* research team during the study’s duration, as posed by university administrations. The documentation of these obstacles during one of the first formal attempts at campus sexual assault quantification serves as a fascinating baseline by which current obstacles posed by university administrations, in similar contexts.

today (such as campus climate surveys and student activism) might be judged. Warshaw writes: “in all, 93 schools were contacted and 32 agreed to allow the survey... some schools with the most liberal reputations in the nation refused.” In regards to why some schools refused to participate in the study, Warshaw explains in detail: “the excuses given by the 61 administrators for refusing to participate were the following (the number of times each excuse was used is indicated in parentheses): religious objections (11); concerns about subject anonymity (2); concerns about sensationalization of the results (3); concerns that people would be harmed by participation (10); lack of interest in the topic (13); no research allowed in classes (6); doing their own survey (3); would not give a reason (13).” Many of these reasons, it can be presumed, still hold true for university administrations today that procrastinate either providing comprehensive resources for their students, publishing accurate statistics about sexual violence on their campuses, or conducting a campus climate survey. The Ms. Magazine project served to both illuminate the prevalence of college campus sexual violence, as well as place current issues with communication between university administrations and activist communities in a distinct historical context. 

After the Ms. Magazine project, Koss went on to complete another study on acquaintance rape as it became a more well-understood and recognized phenomenon in the 1980s; in her 1987 study funded by the National Institute of Mental Health, Koss found that one in four college women had experienced rape or attempted rape, a widely publicized thought not undisputed statistic.

48Ibid.
Warshaw’s *I Never Called it Rape* also made suggestions as to best practices for university response to sexual violence on the college campus. The results of the *Ms. Magazine* study were both quantitative and qualitative; the majority of *I Never Called it Rape* consists of student survivors’ first-hand accounts of sexual violence. Through personal interviews and the other data collected from the 1984 survey, Koss and Warshaw determined the content of the chapter “What Schools Can Do.” Notably, though it’s been thirty-one years since the report’s publication (and there have been follow-up studies, since) many of these suggestions are hardly heeded by college campuses to this day, as evidenced by activist publications out of Brandeis University in 2014, which call for the establishment of many of the same resources. Koss and Warshaw suggest the following list of best practices for universities:

1. *Implement programs in junior and senior high schools.*

2. *Improve college programs...* education programs should be incorporated into freshman orientation workshops, with additional sessions for *all* students during the school year, particularly during the most dangerous period—from the first day of classes to Thanksgiving break.

3. *Establish an on-campus rape counseling and education group and finance it generously...* encourage the group to use male and female students as well as staff members to lead workshops. Have the group train workshop leaders who are members of fraternities, sororities and athletic teams. To get a successful program going, ‘you need a strong women’s center and then you need faculty and staff who are going to fight for the bucks’

4. *Distribute information on rape, rape treatment, and university procedures for dealing with offenders*

5. *Mandate acquaintance-rape programming for social clubs and athletic teams.* Fraternities, sororities and other groups operating on campus should undergo rape-awareness training each year before being allowed to hold parties on college grounds.

6. *Establish university control of fraternities and sororities.* Outlaw ‘little sister’ programs at fraternities because they offer too great a risk for exploitation. Consider reestablishing

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51 In *I Never Called it Rape*, all of the suggestion points of this list are further explained, comprehensively. For the purposes of this paper, I excerpted what I determined to be the most relevant explanations of each point.
the requirement of having a ‘house parent’ living on the premises in every fraternity and sorority house. Appoint a college administrator to watchdog the campus Greek system.

7. *Rethink dorm safety...* all dorms should have live-in supervision, residence-hall assistants should receive acquaintance-rape training every semester, and dorm residents should receive such training early in the school year. Take quick action against sexual offenders.

8. *Take a strong institutionalized stand against acquaintance rape, sexual assault and harassment.* Administrators need to make their views about acquaintance rape known—and forcefully. ‘Colleges should not just do the minimum necessary to avoid a lawsuit in these kinds of cases, says Berkeley’s Ervin-Tripp, ‘to deal effectively with the problem, university officials must make clear that they are concerned about the moral environment on campus, that there are regulations governing student behavior, and that those regulations will be stringently enforced.’

9. *Analyze college judicial board and police contact procedures.* Investigate how well the college judicial board can respond to cases of acquaintance rape and, if necessary, make reforms before the next attack is reported. Provide campus security personnel with acquaintance-rape awareness training. Determine how local police should be involved in crimes occurring on campus.

10. *Make self-defense and assertiveness training classes available on campus each semester.*

---From Robin Warshaw’s 1984 *I Never Called it Rape*, p. 173-175---

The activist spirit of change that is inherent in this piece by Warshaw and the *Ms. Magazine* research team served to set the stage for decades of student activism to follow. Though *I Never Called it Rape* was first published in 1984, years before significant legislative attention the issue of campus-specific sexual assault, many activist efforts of today echo the very same goals and suggestions. Though it is certainly fascinating to re-read these sexual violence activist manifestos of the 1980s and early 1990s as an important baseline for the activism of today, it’s also frustrating to see how little has changed.

There have also been defining moments of modern campus sexual violence activism on behalf of the state, as opposed to a feminist organization like *Ms. Magazine*. One of these very moments was in July of 1992, when President George Bush signed The Campus Sexual Assault
Victims’ Bill of Rights into law.\textsuperscript{52} The Campus Sexual Assault Victims’ Bill of Rights exists as part of the campus security-reporting mandate, the Jeanne Clery Act of 1990, which requires campuses to report all crimes to the U.S. Department of Education.\textsuperscript{53}

The Campus Sexual Assault Victims’ Bill of Rights came on the heels of feminist activism from the early 1990s, one example of which is previously mentioned in this paper: Anita Hill’s bravery in bringing forth concerns about sexual harassment in the workplace during the same few years. The Campus Sexual Assault Victims’ Bill of Rights, and the Jeanne Clery Act at large, is the first government legislation specifically geared towards protecting the rights and safety of sexual assault survivors on the college campus. The responsibilities under The Campus Sexual Assault Victims’ Bill of Rights clearly reflect recognition that the university is a microcosm of society in itself; the standards of crime-reporting and survivor resources that may be acceptable in the greater community are not enough to account for crime within the institution of the American university.\textsuperscript{54} The Campus Sexual Assault Victims’ Bill of Rights obligates universities to afford students the following rights:

1. To be informed of their right to notify law enforcement, and to be assisted by campus authorities in doing so.

2. To be informed of existing counseling, mental health and student services for victims on and off campus.

3. To be informed of options for changing academic and living situations if requested by the victim and reasonably available.

\textit{–From The Campus Sexual Assault Victims’ Bill of Rights, 1992} \textsuperscript{55}

\begin{itemize}
\item \textsuperscript{52} “The Federal Campus Sexual Assault Victims’ Bill of Rights.” The Clery Center. The Clery Center, n.d. Web. 20 Apr. 2015.
\item \textsuperscript{53} Ibid.
\item \textsuperscript{54} Ibid.
\item \textsuperscript{55} United States. Cong. House. The Campus Sexual Assault Victims’ Bill of Rights. 102\textsuperscript{nd} Cong. 1\textsuperscript{st} sess. Washington, DC, 1992. The Library of Congress. Web. 20 Apr. 2015.
\end{itemize}
Additionally, in the case of a judiciary proceeding for sexual misconduct, institutions must allow both parties the same opportunity to have others present during a disciplinary hearing, and allow both parties to be informed, unconditionally, of the outcome of any disciplinary hearing. The Campus Sexual Assault Victims’ Bill of Rights and the Jeanne Clery Act are both examples of legislative progress in terms of an institutional response to sexual violence. The Campus Sexual Assault Victims’ Bill of Rights understands the complexities of the college campus, and the violence that occurs within such a specific context. This 1992 amendment to the Jeanne Clery Act set the stage for other important government moves regarding campus sexual assault, though under future administrations—such as the formation of the White House Task Force to Protect Students from Sexual Assault.

The White House Task Force to Protect Students from Sexual Assault was established on January 22nd, 2014, during President Barack Obama’s second term. In the administration’s official memorandum on the Task Force’s establishment, the goal of the organization is identified as “lead[ing] an interagency effort to address campus rape and sexual assault, including coordinating Federal enforcement laws by executive departments and agencies and helping institutions meet their obligations under Federal law.”56 Thus far, the Task Force has accomplished some, if not all of the goals outlined under this broad mission. The Task Force initiated and implemented a widely recognized media campaign in 2014, titled “Not Alone,” which sought to publicize conversation around sexual violence survivorship on college campuses.57 In September 2014, the Task Force also launched another campaign, “It’s On Us,”

which portrays popular celebrity, sports and media stars taking responsibility for sexual and domestic violence in their communities, and urging others to do the same.\textsuperscript{58}

However, there is much to be done. The Task Force has made serious efforts to respond to campus based sexual violence, but stills falls short of actually confronting the deep infrastructures of these institutions that remain tolerant of sexual violence. The popularity and tolerance of secret societies based in a violent social hierarchy at universities across the United States (namely, fraternities) succeed in creating a space so subversive to legislation that any efforts of the White House to “protect students” are completely for naught. By maintaining administrative boards and faculty primarily consisting of white men in universities throughout the United States,\textsuperscript{59} the very real violence being done to students of varying backgrounds and privileges within college institutions cannot be properly acknowledged or dealt with. It may be impossible or unlikely for the state to impose such policies on private institutions, though making strong suggestions just short of mandate is certainly not unprecedented. In fact, as further explicated in the official memorandum, “the functions of the Task Force are advisory only.”\textsuperscript{60}

And yet, the White House Task Force to Protect Students From Sexual Assault, and other well-intentioned state efforts, have not yet provided the advisory services that would make the difference for which they claim to strive. While the Task Force may accomplish its broad mission of “interagency efforts” in the fight against campus sexual violence (in that it may collaborate within government departments as far as their participation in awareness campaigns),

it hasn’t truly protected students on these campuses, since the institution of violence still remains quite literally in bed with the institution that is higher education in America.

The idea of the college campus itself is ripe with its own cultural code in the United States. The widely accepted utopian myth of what it means to go to college, and realistically, who can and does go to college, affects both instances of sexual violence and reactionary activism that occurs at American universities. In 1996’s *Bright College Years: Inside the American College Today*, author Anne Matthews opens by explaining, “the American college campus is not an easy mechanism for social change, nor a particularly cooperative one. Campuses often look pastoral but act commercial, [and] struggle to maintain serene facades even though questioning and conflict are their natural condition.” For example, Brandeis University evidences its purported history of social justice, and racial diversity and openness on the website and in brochures released to the general public: “Brandeis University was founded in 1948... and it has been committed from that day to the principles of non-discrimination,” cites the official Diversity page of the university website. According to the optimistic university mission statement as submitted to the New England Association of Schools and Colleges for reaccreditation in 2011, Brandeis has a “commitment to building a diverse campus community,” as apparently demonstrated by choosing “Brandeis students, whether... undergraduates, graduate students, or adult learners, [who] seek a Brandeis education because they desire to be leaders in their field, are self-motivated, appreciate learning from diverse peers, and believe in the values of open inquiry and social justice.”

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This mission statement describes Brandeis’ student body almost utopian; how could a population so committed to social justice and open inquiry perpetuate or ignore violence? In reality, statistics from the U.S. Department of Justice in 2007 show rampant sexual violence on college campuses across the board: approximately 1 in 5 college women, and 1 in 16 college men experience attempted or completed rape while attending college. Based on these statistics and the current Brandeis University undergraduate population as of 2015, it can be calculated that there are a likely 525 undergraduate sexual assault survivors currently on the Brandeis University campus. Additionally, studies have shown that between 64% and 94% of all rapes are never reported.

Recent research from David Lisak and Paul Miller also shows that the majority of undetected college rapists are repeat rapists, and that each of those repeat rapists commits an average of 5.8 rapes each. Such research, when applied to the Brandeis population, demonstrates what can only be described as a far cry from the idealistic vision of the Brandeis student as outlined earlier by the mission statement. It seems the likelihood of encountering a sexual assailant or being assaulted while at Brandeis is alarmingly high. Sexual assault on college campuses is rampant across the nation; these statistics are certainly not specific to Brandeis, by any means. However, where Brandeis is different is in the University’s insistence

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65 According to the Brandeis registrar, there are currently 1,601 undergraduate men and 2,128 undergraduate women for the academic year 2014-2015. In apply the “1 in 16” men and “1 in 5” women statistics of sexual assault survivors from the U.S. Dept. of Justice’s 2007 study, I concluded there are a potential of 525 sexual assault survivors in the current undergraduate population.
on these values of community and social justice even in the face of Office of Civil Rights-
recognized violations of Title IX, and deceivingly low sexual assault report rates. According to
the mission statement document currently on the Brandeis website, “the University does not
anticipate changes in its fundamental mission... its values and goals are timeless; how it defines
and achieves them will change.” In keeping with not altering the University’s mission
statement, perhaps the Brandeis administration should consider a greater commitment to making
sure students who are in leadership positions, and effectively represent Brandeis, better adhere to
those very values and goals. One best practice for Brandeis University would be to begin by
redefining the process by which students are selected to leadership positions on campus (such as
by instating sexual assault perpetrator screening protocol), and if found guilty of sexual assault,
adjudicated fairly. “Truth unto its innermost parts,” Brandeis’ proud motto, can indisputably be
defined as adherence to basic governmental mandates like Title IX: a goal that this University
has blatantly fallen short of in recent years.

In regards to the purported racial and ethnic diversity of Brandeis but many other liberal arts
colleges as well, studies show that once students of color actually do enter the college campus
and contribute to the institution’s heralded diversity statistics, their experiences are far different
than the optimistic brochures might have initially let on: African-American students report
experiencing racially microaggressive behavior from others in both the academic and social
setting of the college campus, which contributed to their feeling that they could not perform well

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73 I use the term “students of color” to describe students of varying ethnic and racial backgrounds, besides White.
74 I use the term “African-American” here to because this is the wording used in the context of the research study.
academically.\textsuperscript{75} Research shows that the greatest stress felt by White college students stems from “personal issues” as opposed to stress from institutional racism, reflected in the lived experiences of African-American students on their college campuses.\textsuperscript{76}

Additionally, Brandeis University’s unique role in subverting the standard of anti-Semitism at academic institutions during the late 1940s makes for a specific campus culture around perceptions of both sexual assault and diversity. Founded in 1948 as “the youngest private research university in the United States, and the only nonsectarian university in the nation founded by members of the American Jewish community to embody its highest ethical and cultural values,” Brandeis is known both formally and colloquially as a Jewish school.\textsuperscript{77} Upon its founding, Brandeis was considered necessary in the wake of rampant academic anti-Semitism throughout the United States; Albert Einstein, an initial friend to the idea of Brandeis University, is known for having remarked upon its necessity by saying “under present circumstances, many of our gifted youth see themselves denied the cultural and professional education they are longing for.”\textsuperscript{78} In the beginning, Brandeis was criticized for its lack of responsibility to maintaining Jewish customs (i.e., hosting commencement on the Jewish Sabbath), as well as the purported hypocrisy around simultaneously describing one’s institution as nonsectarian and Jewish.\textsuperscript{79} Brandeis University’s logo boasts wrapping Hebrew text, which reads “truth unto its innermost parts” when translated. The university’s mission statement, unaltered since the institution’s founding in 1948, declares commitment to “academic excellence, nonsectarianism, social justice and sponsorship by and service to the Jewish community.” Recent university


\textsuperscript{76} Munoz, D. "Identifying areas of stress for Chicano undergraduates." (1986). n M. Olivas (Ed.), \textit{Latino college students (pp. 131-156)}. New York: Teachers College Press. Print.


\textsuperscript{79} Ibid.
population reports are inconsistent, but speculate that between 40% and 50% of the undergraduate student population is Jewish.

In an institution like Brandeis, with such a deep Jewish history, sponsorship and thus inherent affiliation, the rape culture and climate of sexual violence that is specific to Jewish communities can and does contribute to the university’s specific campus climate on sexual violence. In comparison to other universities that have little or no religious affiliation, Brandeis’ strong tie to its Jewish community means that the campus climate on all issues, including sexual violence, is impacted by that Jewish community. Research shows that Jewish communities often maintain a veil of silence around intimate partner violence and sexual violence experienced by community members, for a variety of reasons: “although studies document domestic violence in fifteen to thirty percent of Jewish families, as far as... cultures are concerned, Jewish men never abuse the women in their lives...[also] Jewish women internalize the stereotyping of male/female Jewish relationships and are less able to picture themselves as battered.” Quite prominently, the stereotype of the “nice Jewish boy” who wouldn’t commit acts of sexual violence is popular in contemporary Jewish communities like that at Brandeis. Research from Jewish activist and educator Paul Kivel has concluded: “we have the image of the Jewish man as the mensch, as a thinker, as a scholar, as someone who is more passive than aggressive, perhaps even unable to defend himself. Because of these stereotypes, the Jewish community continues to be in a great

80 For the purposes of this section, I will be conflating “sexual violence” with the term “domestic violence.” Sexual violence is a form of domestic violence, though it is also a form of non-domestic violence. The majority of research thus far within the Jewish community focuses on domestic violence, however the paradigms in which this violence occurs are comparable to those in which sexual violence within college communities occurs.
82 Mensch is a Yiddish colloquialism meaning a person of integrity or honor.
deal of denial about the high levels of incest, sexual assault, sexual harassment and domestic violence committed by Jewish men.”83

What does this mean for a university like Brandeis, with a high Jewish student population, or for any other university with one large religious community, in terms of best practices for response to and prevention of sexual violence? Studies have shown differences in how minoritized84 women receive domestic violence service provision, and Jewish women are one of those recognized minorities. The differences in service provision have been identified as stemming from stereotypes on behalf of service provider, rather than the minority woman themselves encountering barriers to accessing services. Research has shown that “race/cultural anxiety [on behalf of both the minority woman and the service provider] fuels a dynamic of ‘cultural privacy’ which renders domestic violence within minoritized communities more invisible, running the corresponding risk of creating further barriers to services.”85 Additionally, for many Jewish survivors of sexual or domestic violence, there is shame associated with the belief that one represents the entire community: “beyond familial reputation, women were sometimes blamed bringing the whole community into repute. They [Jewish women] spoke of incidences where, rather than supporting them, the community told them: ‘you have disgraced us.’”86

In responding to survivors of domestic and sexual violence within the institutional community of a university, it is vitally important to recognize the distinct social and cultural context in which the violence occurs. As Colleen Ward’s 1995 research identifies, “pervading

86 Ibid.
social values and attitudes towards rape victims are reflected and embodied in social institutions and official responses to rape; these shared values and attitudes also influence the way individual members of a community respond to sexual violence.\(^{87}\) At Brandeis University or other institutions with large cultural stake in a specific religious community, the “shared values and attitudes” of the community are likely to be reflective of that religious overhanging. The Brandeis University campus climate on sexual violence is impacted by the presence of the Jewish community on campus, and the various experiences of sexual violence within the Jewish community. In many ways, Brandeis University buys into cultural stereotypes of the Jewish community: by emphasizing its “special relationship” with the Jewish community and Jewish sponsorship, and by coinciding that very relationship with values of “academic excellence” and “social justice,” it may seem as if the Jewish community is unlikely, if not incapable, of committing wrongdoing. The colloquialism of the “nice Jewish boy” and “nice Jewish girl” in some ways, at least socially, exempts Jewish Brandeis students from the possibility of committing such abhorrent acts like sexual violence. While survivors of trauma at large experience feelings of isolation,\(^{88}\) the experience of surviving sexual violence at the hands of someone that nobody believes capable of such an act due to their religious affiliation within an institution sponsored by such an affiliation, may be especially isolating.

To properly serve its students, the institution of the American college must tailor its sexual violence services to the actual student community. For a university like Brandeis, this means acknowledging the very specific barriers to service provision experienced by Jewish people, and enacting creative solutions to making these services more accessible. From an institutional


perspective, a student’s religious or social affiliation, regardless of associated stereotypes, should be blinded from those involved in any adjudication process so as to minimize the risk of bias.

Additionally, universities must also reform those very adjudication processes for allegations of sexual misconduct. In *Confronting Rape: The Feminist Anti-Rape Movement and the State*, researcher Nancy A. Matthews explores aspects of the judicial system that contributed to the need for the first rape crisis centers of the 1960s, and similarly, the often-dysfunctional components of university judicial systems that have grandly affected both prevalence of student activism in the last decade as well as the need for campus rape crisis centers. In fact, Matthews credits part of the birth of the feminist anti-rape movement to displeasure with how police and judicial systems dealt with the issue of sexual violence. Matthews cites the story of Barrie Levy, a social worker and initial leader in the Los Angeles Commission on Assaults Against Women, who faced controversy when needing to apply for law-enforcement related funds. “‘[W]e saw ourselves as...as an alternative to criminal justice system involvement for rape victims, because the criminal justice system was doing so badly.’”

Similarly, when the campus justice system also does badly, the students living within that system must respond with activism and a call for change. The establishment of a campus rape crisis center can certainly be a part of that change, but justice system reform is a necessary component as well. Before reform, however, must come comprehensive review of the existing system and its compliance or noncompliance with governmental regulations such as Title IX as clarified by the U.S. Department of Education in recent years.

The campus judicial process varies from the state’s judicial system both in the threshold of evidence utilized throughout, as well as the privacy of the process itself. The Dear Colleague

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Letter (DCL) released to universities by the U.S. Department of Education on April 4th, 2011, often referred to as the latest Title IX guidance, clarifies that in order to adjudicate sexual misconduct, a university must find a “preponderance of evidence,” defined by legal dictionaries as “more likely than not” that the event occurred. Many interpret this to also mean “51% likely to have occurred.” The standard of evidentiary findings used in the U.S. criminal court system is “beyond reasonable doubt,” a higher threshold of proof, referring to the concept that there is a much greater likelihood that the defendant committed the alleged act of sexual misconduct, also referred to as “91-95% likely that the event occurred.”

“Preponderance of evidence” is also the threshold of proof used by U.S. civil courts, thus in some ways conflating the civil courts with the adjudication process expected of any U.S. institution of higher education that receives any Federal funding. There are serious implications for comparing the civil courts to the “courts” of a college campus. For one, the expectation that a plaintiff will come into direct contact with the defendant in any given case is much higher. The DCL of 2011, however, addresses the safety concerns implicit in such a scenario: in this Title IX clarification, the DCL discourages creating a disciplinary system that requires the accused and the accuser to directly interact, due to the likelihood for re-traumatization and emotional distress.

While the DCL of 2011 outlines what exactly might make a campus adjudication process of sexual misconduct compliant with Title IX, compliance is not enough. Given the highly hostile environments of many campuses (for the purposes of a Department of Education investigation, one instance of campus-based sexual violence is sufficient to determining a hostile

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environment), and the unique interpersonal and social components of many smaller college institutions like Brandeis, a Title IX-compliant adjudication process is not fully sufficient for ensuring student safety and fair treatment.\textsuperscript{94} Additionally, due to the inherent privacy of these processes (and the low likelihood that survivors of sexual violence feel comfortable speaking out about the entire experience, including the disciplinary procedures) there’s very little accountability of universities to actually maintain strict adherence to Title IX in every single process. According to Title IX and the DCL of 2011, adjudication processes for sexual misconduct should not go on longer than 60 days.\textsuperscript{95} Based on Brandeis’ specific process (the Special Examiner’s Process, or SEP) as explained in the most recent version of the Student Rights & Responsibilities Handbook, the process is supposed to last no longer than 24 days.\textsuperscript{96} Even with a 36-day buffer between what’s outlined and what is the Department of Education’s suggested model of compliance, Brandeis University SEPs drag on, providing little to no symbolic or real justice for either the accuser or the accused. I have served as both an official and unofficial Advisor\textsuperscript{97} in three supposedly Title IX-compliant sexual violence adjudication processes at Brandeis in the past four years, and I have never seen the process progress faster than five to six months.

Mere compliance on paper isn’t enough—beyond that, “above-and-beyond” paper compliance (i.e., stating that one’s goal for process length is 24 days as opposed to the suggested 60) is certainly not enough. What speaks louder than processes on paper is community members’ lived experiences with a university adjudication process. When these student experiences

\textsuperscript{95} Ibid.
\textsuperscript{97} In the Brandeis SEP, the Advisor is any individual chosen from within the Brandeis community, or outside counsel, who is allowed to provide passive assistance during the SEP as well as any university meeting related to the adjudication that involves the accuser or the accused. Both the accuser and the accused are permitted to select an Advisor.
overwhelmingly reveal vast disparities between what actually happens and what the University promises, trust in the University system declines and thus the health and safety as perceived by campus climate, too declines. A trusting campus climate is nearly impossible to achieve when the University administration doesn’t live up to its written promises of safety, fairness and due process for all students wishing to undergo the incredibly difficult process of seeking justice for an act of sexual misconduct they may have faced.

University adjudication process must be in compliance with Title IX and its clarifications under the DCL of 2011, true, but beyond that, universities must be dedicated to carrying out the fairest process every single time. Though every case of sexual misconduct is complicated in its own right, students must be able to trust that their institution of higher education will make every effort to complete a effective investigation and swift carrying-out of justice on their behalf—just as they have for the leagues of students preceding them. Universities must strive to create a legacy of fairness in their adjudication process, and must hold themselves accountable to this goal, even though other systems may not.
Brandeis University’s History of Sexual Violence Activism

Brandeis University has a long history of commitment to social justice: the University was founded with the intention of subverting the anti-Semitism so rampant at other schools, and also is well-known for its institutional response to the Ford Hall Takeover of 1969, during which Black Brandeis students successfully occupied an academic building on campus until a list of ten demands, which called for better minority representation and resources, had been met by the university. ⁹₈

As evidenced by the Ford Hall Takeover of 1969, student social justice movements at Brandeis are often reflective of greater, nationwide conversations about much-needed change, and the sexual violence activism movement has been no different. In the past months and years, the Brandeis student population has participated in the national campaign of awareness and a call for better resources regarding campus sexual violence. However, just as sexual violence activism in the United States stands firmly on the shoulders of its foremothers of the Civil Rights Movement, sexual violence activism at Brandeis also exists within a distinct and important history spanning far before the past decade.

The fight for better sexual violence awareness and policy at Brandeis can tentatively be traced to 1986, with the establishment of The Brandeis Rape and Sexual Assault Hotline, which is still in existence, but is now referred to as the Brandeis Counseling and Rape Crisis Hotline, or Brandeis 6-Talk. Around 1986 (though the exact publication date is unknown), a booklet titled “A Resource Booklet: Addressing issues of sexual assault, sexual harassment, antigay violence and battery” ⁹⁹ was released by the members of The Brandeis Rape and Sexual Assault Hotline.

The author cohort describes themselves as “a core group of four to seven women working to edit, [with] only three members involved with the entire process from beginning to end.”\textsuperscript{100} The group recognizes their societal and cultural stance and the associated potential limitations: “as individuals we represent a small and very homogenous group of women, and this is reflected in the particularity of our experiences and education, and ultimately, our work... Throughout this booklet, we have attempted to address some of the ways differences in race, ethnicity, nationality, religion, gender, sexual preference and physical ability can effect the nature and experience of kinds of violence and harassment.”\textsuperscript{101}

The booklet itself covers of a variety of topics, but can be seen as the first major activist publication concerning sexual violence at Brandeis. The author cohort describes their collective drive to write the booklet as due to an apparent lack of sexual assault response and prevention resources at Brandeis during this time period. “We have become profoundly aware of the need for more information and general awareness of these issues in the community at large,” they write, “responding to the... needs of survivors of harassment and assault is crucial. Alone, however, this response is only a short-term reaction and does not really begin to address the broader societal attitudes and myths that allow such acts to occur in the first place.”\textsuperscript{102}

Remarkably, not much actually changed since the publication of this resource booklet in 1986 at Brandeis University. Even in an institution broadly admired for its commitment to honoring student voices and opinions, the problems brought to light by the author cohort of the resource booklet were not addressed whatsoever for decades, and even still go largely ignored. The resource booklet identifies the Brandeis judicial process as specifically problematic, for a

\textsuperscript{100} Ibid, p. 5
\textsuperscript{101} Ibid, p. 4
\textsuperscript{102} Ibid.
multitude of reasons: a definite time limit on the adjudication procedure had never been formally identified by the university, the language is dangerously vague, and the format of the actual process often results in traumatization of a survivor. Only twenty-three years later, with the 2012 establishment of the Special Examiner’s Process, was any real change made to the process for adjudicating sexual assault or harassment at Brandeis. One must question—what was going on during those twenty-three years? Why did it take Brandeis so long to make any significant alterations to its culture and policy, even with comprehensive resource booklets, cohorts of dedicated student activists, and a collective cry for change from sexual violence survivors themselves?

Sexual violence activists at Brandeis were not silent for those twenty-three years. In 2011, before the formal establishment of Brandeis University’s Special Examiner’s Process for adjudicating sexual assault and harassment cases, the sexual violence activism movement saw resurgence. In response to the publication of Brandeis Public Safety’s official crime report that there had been only three sexual assault cases between 2008-2010, students protested.103 Members of the Feminist Majority Leadership Alliance (FMLA) and other student organizations surged forward with the More Than Three Campaign, alluding to the statistical oversight that was the 2010 crime report. The inaccurate report validated students’ feelings that Brandeis silenced its students against speaking out about sexual assault. Brandeis University Class of 2014 alumnus, Amalia Bob-Waksberg, recorded her experience as a leading activist during this time in an artistic magazine she created for a class project: “We decided... to address the silencing of students,” she wrote. “To bring attention to the fact that Brandeis has few resources for survivors of sexual assault, we decided to set up a ‘rape crisis center’ in the library to illustrate [how]
desperate we are for services. We also wanted to show students that even if the administration won’t listen, we will and we will not be silenced.”\textsuperscript{104} This group of activists used the mock library “rape crisis center” as a means for physical protest against the crime report’s inaccuracies, as well: “we decided to occupy the library on Wednesday, May 2\textsuperscript{nd}... We would make signs... that people could wear in solidarity. We also decided to use tape to cover our mouths.”\textsuperscript{105}

The More Than Three campaign was not prophetic in its faux “rape crisis center,” but rather, incredibly intentional. Many of these same activists would go on to create the group that demanded the establishment of the Rape Crisis Center that is in existence today: Brandeis Students Against Sexual Violence, or BSASV. BSASV is a group of anonymous student activists gathered in the 2014 Spring semester, by student leadership that again recognized, and brought attention to, the lack of cohesive sexual violence activism efforts on the Brandeis campus. BSASV identifies themselves as consisting of survivors and supporters of survivors, compiled from other campus sexual violence activist groups. “There were many people doing this work, but nobody had a way to communicate with one another,” according to an original leader of BSASV who wishes to remain anonymous, “bringing the group together was a way to collaborate a lot of disjointed activism into one central place; to coalesce the many students doing this [sexual violence prevention and response] work throughout campus.”

BSASV compiled and published a letter addressed to the Brandeis administration soon after its establishment in 2014; the letter detailed eleven demands for better sexual assault services, policy and awareness on campus. BSASV’s petition, titled “A Call for Better Sexual

\textsuperscript{104} Bob-Waksberg, Amalia. \textit{Because We've Had Enough}. N.p.: n.p., 2012. Print.
\textsuperscript{105} Ibid.
Assault Response, Prevention Awareness at Brandeis University,” consisted of the following demands:

1. **Clear and accessible information on existing reporting paths, options and resources.**

2. **A permanent, on-call rape crisis counselor.**

3. **A psychologist on the Psychological Counseling Center staff who specifically specializes in sexual trauma, violence and assault for long-term counseling.**

4. **Proper training of university staff, faculty and administrators on the roles and responsibilities of mandated reports and/or responsible employees under Title IX.**

5. **Pro-social bystander intervention, effective consent and healthy relationship workshops at [freshman] orientation and extensively offered throughout the entire school year.**

6. **Specific sexual assault training of Brandeis police.**

7. **An effective campus-wide campaign to combat rape culture.**

8. **Awareness of non-abusive sexual behavior and a list of resources as part of [the campus] party registration process.**

9. **Safety networks for students.**

10. **Engaging broader campus resources.**

11. **A permanent rape crisis center.**

   –From Brandeis Students Against Sexual Violence Change.org petition, 2014

The letter was converted to an online petition on the website change.org, and accumulated over 2,500 supporters (or signatures) before the university administration officially responded. To date, the now-closed petition has 2,717 support signatures. In the weeks following the BSASV petition publication, Brandeis created an official response on the University website, itemizing each petition demand and addressing how it might be responded to in the future. In

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regards to BSASV’s demand for a permanent rape crisis center, the university’s official response discussed the implications for potentially including the space alongside or within the newly renovated Gender & Sexuality Center, professed acknowledgement that these spaces mustn’t be intertwined, and added: “the rape crisis center is currently projected to be staffed by students counselors, with coordination and advising from the Sexual Assault Prevention and Services Specialist.”  

Many of BSASV’s suggestions and demands on Brandeis University are reminiscent of the suggestions to campuses from the *Ms. Magazine* research team in Warshaw’s *I Never Called it Rape*. The need for universities to respond to feminist activism in regards to sexual violence awareness and prevention is clear, if only by the repetition apparent when examining activist publications from 1984 and activist publications of today. The similarities between Warshaw’s campus suggestions and the BSASV petition are not coincidental, though there was no deliberate collaboration: rather, the reason for their sameness lies in the institutional ignorance of sexual violence on college campuses for the past thirty years. College administrators had the statistics from Koss’ numerous research topics on sexual violence on college campuses and acquaintance rape, and they had Warshaw and the *Ms. Magazine* research team’s clear and concise suggestions for change, and yet little to no action was taken. It was the wave of activism that occurred in recent years that forced university officials across the nation to take tangible action—students were quite literally protesting, no longer passive in their activism. It was the 2,717 signatures on BSASV’s petition, not Warshaw’s thirty-one-year old spot in the library stacks, that made administrators at Brandeis University take notice.

The Brandeis Rape Crisis Center was officially opened in March 2015, though there were months of organizational planning preceding the opening event. The Brandeis Rape Crisis Center (Brandeis RCC) is staffed by three student coordinators (categorized by Marketing & Outreach, Volunteer and Office), eight peer advocates and supervised by three professional university employees, with varying levels of counseling and sexual assault response experience. Though the actual idea and the establishment of the Brandeis RCC has deep origins in decades of grassroots student activism and a national social movement, the Brandeis RCC is overseen, supervised and funded by the greater institution of Brandeis University. This implicitly imposed bureaucracy on what was originally a social movement that in many ways had anti-establishment goals, means for a far different outcome than many student activists might have expected. A similar scenario arose with the original rape crisis centers of the United States: when the first rape crisis centers sought the support of government grants and funding for their service work, the government bureaucracy came along with it, and thus dissolved much of the original mission and actual capacity of that service work. Originally, the coalitions of women building rape crisis services out of their consciousness-raising backgrounds were able provide other women with whatever type of hospital accompanyment, informal counseling and legal aid that they wished. With the need for government funding came the need to decrease and formally define these services, which restricted the breadth of the rape crisis work itself.

Researcher Nancy A. Matthews explores this repeated structural conundrum in *Confronting Rape: The Feminist Anti-Rape Movement and the State*. Matthews explains: “[in early rape crisis centers], the roots of a more therapeutically-oriented movement were present all along... and were a source of ambivalence in the movement. But the state came down firmly on one side of that ambivalence, and had a significant effect on consolidating the more service-
oriented framework. In order to participate in the state’s grant economy (the most viable source of resources), centers had to play up the provision of their services, constructing an individualistic ‘treatment’ model of their work.” Matthews claims that the modern rape crisis center, in its therapeutic model, has been forced to streamline its service provision options in order to receive the necessary government funding throughout the years. For a type of organization that was originally quite free in what services its members were able to provide, these restraints meant serious changes for the way that early rape crisis centers operated.

Similarly, the original work of the Brandeis sexual violence activists has been streamlined and formalized in a somewhat restrictive way with the establishment of the rape crisis center. No longer can any student in the Brandeis community serve as an Advisor in the Special Examiner’s Process. Because of the Brandeis RCC’s current physical proximity to the Title IX Investigator’s office, peer advocates may pose a risk of implied conflict of interest in such a role, and thus have been disallowed from participating. This ruling is especially restrictive given the lack of other advisory resources on campus for students wishing to pursue the Special Examiner’s Process. Matthews identifies a lack of adherence to bureaucratic policy by the early rape crisis centers: “Despite the state’s attempt to absorb rape crisis services into its service/information bureaucracy, a strong social movement orientation in the rape crisis centers resists this trend,” Matthews writes of the early centers. The Brandeis RCC is still in its early years, however if Matthews’ research holds weight, there may be similar resistance on behalf of its activist employees in the future. When Brandeis imposes a management framework on sexual violence, which previously had only been managed by the needs of the survivor community

109 Ibid.
(however they varied), the restrictive nature of that framework may limit the services that are provided by students, for students.

**The Campus Climate Study: A Prevention-Oriented Best Practice**

Understanding and quantifying the environmental specificities of any institution in which violence occurs is vital to identifying the roots, and eventually affecting the course of, that very violence. In the context of sexual violence on the college campus, the complex bureaucracies, power dynamics and interpersonal student relationships of that specific campus must be deeply examined in order to fully grasp why, how, and when sexual violence occurs. Studies have identified the “culturally normative nature of rape and sexual assault” specifically within the college community.\(^{110}\) For universities seeking to lower their rates of sexual violence, or create a safer campus environment for all students and faculty regarding this issue, conducting a campus climate survey is an important first step to any policy changes or social campaigns that may ensue.

As previously mentioned, In January 2014, the Obama Administration established the White House Task Force to Protect Students from Sexual Assault (in collaboration with the “Not Alone” awareness campaign), a coalition of politicians and leaders gathered “with the mandate to strengthen federal enforcement efforts and provide schools with...tools to help combat sexual assault on their campuses.”\(^{111}\) In an initial document of suggested practices for college campuses, the Task Force identifies Campus Climate Surveys as a best practice for identifying the problem of sexual violence. The Task Force published a toolkit for developing and conducting a climate survey regarding sexual violence, complete with Institutional Review Board compliance advice.

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and suggestions of empirically based psychological self-report measures. While for the time being, the Obama administration has merely strongly suggested that universities conduct their own climate surveys, the initial report from the Task Force explains that by 2016, universities may be compelled by legislation and administrative requirements to conduct sexual violence climate surveys of their campus communities. 112

Since the report’s publication in 2014, a few universities have conducted climate surveys regarding sexual violence, to alarming results that are only occasionally published for public consumption or research inclusion. In the spring of 2014, Rutgers University of New Brunswick, New Jersey piloted the Task Force’s climate survey model, garnering a 28% response rate. The results from their pilot survey have not yet been published. 113 Additionally, the Massachusetts Institute of Technology, of Cambridge, Massachusetts conducted a model of the climate survey as well, which resulted in the widely publicized finding that among the 35% of the undergraduate participants in the survey, 17% of women and 5% of men reported having experienced a sexual assault. 114 What’s been cited as unique about the climate survey model in general, and specifically the published results from MIT, is that rather than only examine instances of sexual violence on the campus, the survey also records and analyzes campus attitudes towards sexual violence. 115 Examining the range, and strength of community attitudes towards sexual violence is a vital step towards understanding why, how and when sexual violence happens within the community itself. Climate surveys are necessary for painting a comprehensive picture of sexual

115 Ibid.
violence in any institution, though especially institutions as insular and driven by tradition as the American college campus.

Brandeis University has not yet conducted such a climate survey on its campus, but has plans to do so in approaching months. Given advancements in Title IX violation investigation of the University by the Office of Civil Rights, the need to more comprehensively understand sexual violence in the Brandeis community is only growing by the day. The necessity of this survey is made even clearer by recent and past research that shows the importance of climate intervention in prevention efforts, as well as the validity of quantifying any singular institution’s unique sexual violence problem. The Brandeis University Campus Climate Survey of Sexual Violence will serve to illuminate Brandeis’ climate in regards to attitudes towards rape victims, rape myth acceptance, and bystander intervention, among other factors.

Dr. Michael Sulkowski of the University of Florida investigated college students’ willingness to report threats of violence in campus communities. Using the model already established in assessing willingness in high school populations, Sulkowski measured various psychological and community factors which play a role in college students’ aptitude to report violence on campus. Sulkowski found that 69% of students were “at least somewhat willing” to report a threatening peer, however this willingness was positively related to both “trust in the college system” and “feeling connected to the campus environment.” Sulkowski’s research clearly demonstrates both the importance of establishing trust in college support systems (like the judiciary process and the administration), as well as campus connectedness in the community, in order to increase

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reporting rates of violence among students. In reality, however, a study by the U.S. Department of Justice on crime victimization between the years 2008-2011 found that only 12% of sexual violence survivors report their assaults to criminal justice officials.\textsuperscript{119} Data from the Brandeis Campus Climate Survey should utilize some of Sulkowski’s measures in surveying participants, and thus be able to assess these factors in the Brandeis community.

Often times with sexual violence research, especially that with college-aged participants, the focus of interest is placed solely on survivors. In reality, research has shown that sexual violence on a college campus not only affects its individual victims, as few or as many as they may be, but the entire community. Dr. Victoria Banyard and colleagues of the University of New Hampshire determined this fact in their research with the community impact of unwanted sexual experiences. Banyard found that sexual assault survivors are most likely to disclose experiences to a friend.\textsuperscript{120} Therefore, measuring not only formal disclosures but also friend-disclosures is an important tool in understanding the vastness of any campus’ sexual violence problem. Banyard found that 1 in 3 female undergraduates and 1 in 5 male undergraduates were told by a friend that her or she had been a victim of an unwanted sexual experience.\textsuperscript{121} The impact on the friends who received disclosures was serious; this research study found a significant amount of friends experienced anger and distress in the event of hearing such a disclosure.\textsuperscript{122} Unwanted sexual experiences affect not only the victims, but also the community at large. Related research stresses the need for programming and widespread education on campuses, not only about sexual violence but also about handling disclosures, in order to hopefully minimize the psychological

\textsuperscript{121} Ibid.
\textsuperscript{122} Ibid.
distress of receiving a disclosure from a friend.\textsuperscript{123} The Brandeis Campus Climate Survey should not only assess the friend-disclosures received by Brandeis students, but should also seek to gather data on the psychological impact of these disclosures. The Brandeis Campus Climate Survey should recruit the entire Brandeis undergraduate population as participants, as Banyard’s research clearly shows the widespread impact of sexual violence even to those who do not identify as survivors. The Brandeis Campus Climate Survey will indubitably contribute to community education of sexual violence, and community awareness of the strides the Brandeis administration is making towards assessing campus and continuing the trend of important policy changes.

In conducting any study that uses participants that may have experienced trauma, and requests in some capacity that they recall that trauma (like the climate survey), an understanding of that vulnerability is important to both protect participants and gather ethical data. While there are no vulnerable subject populations being specifically recruited for the Brandeis Campus Climate Survey, by nature the study will identify subjects that are survivors of sexual violence. These subjects’ data are especially valuable in that it will shed light on University treatment of survivors and the applicability of available campus resources for survivors. Using survivor populations in this study would increase University knowledge of how valid its current resources for survivors are, as well as provide suggestions for how to better these resources. Research with college students has shown that participants, including survivors, do not find answering these

questions distressing. However, because some participants may be distressed by some questions, appropriate trauma resources should be noted throughout the Survey.

The Brandeis Campus Climate Survey, like other sexual violence prevention and service goals of the University, should also be purposefully tailored to the University community. For Brandeis University, which has a large and vibrant LGBTQIA community, the Brandeis Campus Climate Survey must measure both perceptions of sexual violence and instances of sexual violence in that community. Though research shows that members of the LGBTQIA community are at a higher risk of experiencing attempted or completed rape, stalking and intimate partner violence than their non-sexual minority peers, Brandeis University’s commitment to a number of queer resource groups may have implications for sexual violence rates in this specific community on campus. To better grasp the magnitude of sexual violence in the LGBTQIA community at Brandeis, it may be beneficial for the upcoming Brandeis Campus Climate Survey (or even later versions) to include a measure of sexual orientation, such as an updated version of the Kinsey Scale. The Climate Survey might also consider providing the option for sexual orientation identification (a write-in question model, to allow for discrepancies in personal identity-naming) in order to link data about sexual violence prevalence at Brandeis with sexual minorities. The more information garnered by the Brandeis Campus Climate Survey

125 LGBTQIA represents the Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender, Queer/Questioning, Intersex, Asexual/Ally umbrella.
127 The term "queer" as a descriptor for individuals under the LGBTQIA umbrella is sometimes perceived as in-group only terminology. For this reason, I only use the "queer" when discussing queer resource groups on campus, or other self-identified organizations and individuals, rather than impose that identification.
about the university’s marginalized communities, the better sexual violence provisions on
campus might informatively serve these communities.

As campus climate surveys of sexual violence have been identified by comprehensive
research as a best practice for universities to respond to sexual violence, Brandeis University’s
initiative in conducting such a survey is commendable. The baseline of sexual violence
prevalence at Brandeis can only be assumed and calculated based on research done in other
contexts, thus the foundation upon which most of Brandeis’ sexual violence prevention and
response work is actually conducted is shaky in its empirical validity. The results from the
Brandeis Campus Climate Survey will provide an incredibly necessary factual baseline upon
which to continue forth with the establishment of better sexual violence resources and policy at
the university, and will hopefully illuminate the vast range student experiences at Brandeis.
Who Are the Perpetrators?

When examining the phenomenon and prevalence of campus-based sexual assault, one may logically question: who are the perpetrators of sexual violence? When perpetrators can be identified within a given institution for specific behaviors and affiliations, they can subsequently be screened out of leadership or power positions so as to minimize their risk of harm, if not also (preferably) expelled from the university.

Dr. David Lisak is the nation’s leading researcher on rapists and rapist behavior, specifically within the institution of the American college campus. His work, in collaboration with Dr. Paul Miller, on undetected rapists and repeat rapists from 2002 created an important baseline of valid information from which episodes of sexual violence activism have been launched. Lisak and Miller found that of the 1,882 college-aged men surveyed in their 2002 study, 120 (or 6.4%) met criteria for having had attempted or completed rape. Of those men, the majority (80%) “reported committing rapes on women who were incapacitated because of drugs or alcohol; 17.5% reported using threats or overt force in attempted rapes; 9.2% reported using threats or overt force to coerce sexual intercourse, and 10% reported using threats or overt force to coerce oral sex.” Lisak and Miller’s research did not find ethnic group differences in these perpetrators’ likelihood to attempt or complete rape. Lisak and Miller’s research identified that of the surveyed rapists, 63.3% committed repeat rapes—either against multiple victims, or more than once against the same victim.¹²⁹

Lisak and Miller’s work has not necessarily identified “warning signs” of sexual violence perpetrators that institutions may employ in order to protect their communities, like some other research which will be further explained later on. They did, however come to the important

conclusion that the majority of rapes are committed by those 63.3% of repeat offenders, who average 6 rapes each in their lifetime. Other research has shown that among sexual violence survivors on college campuses, 90% know their assailant, compared to 66% of the general population of sexual violence survivors who know their assailant.130

These accumulated statistics serve to paint the picture of the average college-campus sexual violence perpetrator: they are recognizable to the survivor because they are known, and they are more likely than not to be a repeat offender of attempted or completed rape, if they are positively identified to have committed sexual violence once. In terms of adjudication processes, these statistics point to an obvious need for a no-tolerance policy regarding sexual violence perpetrators on college campuses. If a survivor of sexual violence comes forward with the name of their attacker (which is a statistically rare care, given research that shows only 5% of rapes or attempted rapes of college students are reported to either campus authorities or criminal justice officials),131 it is likely that they are coming forward with the name of an individual who either has already perpetrated multiple offenses, or is quite likely to. A best practice for universities, in light of this groundbreaking research by Lisak, Miller and so many others, is to expel all individuals found guilty of attempted or completed rape. If there are to be lighter sanctions (i.e., temporary suspensions, detentions, or monetary fines), the offender has the opportunity to offend again, and in the same environment they were found guilty of offending originally: an environment which has proven conducive to their offense strategies, as it had clearly already worked at least once.

Research has identified common psychological and social factors of sexual violence perpetrators, many of which are directly encouraged by campus organizations like fraternities, and other aspects of campus culture. Recognizing these common factors of sexual violence perpetrators, and how campus culture emboldens their development, may be a helpful tool for universities looking to create legislation or supervision around how campus organizations function with the hopeful goal of decreasing instances of sexual violence. For example, research from 1988 which surveyed college students found that individuals recognized as “sexually aggressive males” also had high correlated levels of Negative Masculinity, Hostility Towards Women, and Acceptance of Interpersonal Violence, among other factors. These psychological and emotional factors were determined by a self-report survey of behavior.

Campus organizations such as fraternities can be identified as directly encouraging of the above listed factors correlated with college men’s sexual aggression. Negative Masculinity and Hostility Towards Women are both also identified, under different language, by the aforementioned researchers Schwartz and DeKeseredy as factors that contribute to male peer support of sexual assault on the college campus. The researchers write: “in addition to learning to hide their peers’ deviant activity, fraternity members are often taught to sexually objectify women. Rather than regarding them as complete people, brothers often conceptualize women as subordinate ‘things’ to be used as sexual outlets, as servants at parties, or as ‘bait’ to attract new members.” In regards to the establishment of Negative Masculinity, Schwartz and DeKeseredy recognize systems of patriarchy as contributors of male college student’s sexual

assault of college women, also a basis upon which the feminist anti-rape movement was established. These researchers identify patriarchy as an overarching theme, though also with specific subcategories of a societal patriarchal system, familial patriarchy, and courtship patriarchy: “building a new model of male peer support requires that the model take account of the fact that North American culture is a patriarchal culture.”

Schwartz and DeKeseredy also allude to Koss and Dinero’s Acceptance of Interpersonal Violence factor in discussing the ways in which college men help each other justify violence against women: “one thing that a male peer group may do [when attempting to provide relationship advice to a fellow man] is teach or support or suggest to... [a] man... that he should not put up with this behavior by women and should strike back... In DeKeseredy’s early empirical work, he found that... among those men suffering from stress caused by their relations with women, the ones who chose to abuse women were friends with other men whom they knew also abused women.”

It should be acknowledged that, as Schwartz and DeKeseredy write, “researchers have not been able to uncover a direct link between fraternities and acquaintance rape. Many groups of men on campus are able to provide the male peer support for such actions. However, there is some clear evidence that fraternity men are more likely than other men on campus to use actions short of force in order to engage in sexual behavior.” Additionally, the fraternity environment and emphasis on other factors such as brotherhood and group secrecy create a space that in many

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136 Ibid.
cases is tolerant of the sexual assault of women.\textsuperscript{138} The components that make up a fraternity, research has shown, “create a sociocultural context in which the use of coercion in sexual relations with women is normative and in which the mechanisms to keep this behavior in check are minimal at best and absent at worst.”\textsuperscript{139}

One of these components is the use and abuse of substances, including but not limited to alcohol. Alcohol abuse and heavy drinking is common on college campuses, as determined by research as early as 1986.\textsuperscript{140} Alcohol use has been recognized as a common factor in facilitating sexual assaults, and on many college campuses, fraternity parties are regarded as underground, largely underage dispensaries of alcohol. In fact, alcohol abuse is more common in social networks such as fraternities,\textsuperscript{141} and research has also shown that men living in fraternity houses were “much more likely to have attitudes that showed a tolerance for alcohol abuse.”\textsuperscript{142} Lisak and Roth’s study from 1988 recognized that men who were sexually aggressive were also typically heavy drinkers, though this finding raises questions of causation versus correlation.\textsuperscript{143} Nevertheless, the fraternity culture and the fraternity house itself are both environments conducive to alcohol abuse, as previously explicated in this paper. Such rampant alcohol abuse is another component of fraternity life that, when unsupervised as it most often is not, creates a space both hostile to women and conducive to instances of sexual violence against women:

research in 1996 estimated alcohol intoxication was a factor in anywhere between one third and three fourths of sexual assaults.  

Both women and men’s consumption of alcohol in the college setting and the subsequent facilitation of sexual assault that sometimes follows has serious implications for how criminal justice officials and university administrators actually respond to instances of sexual violence. Research has shown that assumptions about those who consume alcohol can color outside perceptions of an encounter. Women who drink alcohol in a situation in which they were later sexually assaulted are perceived as less believable; studies have shown victim intoxication to be associated with negative evaluations of the victim and increased perceptions of her responsibility, whereas perpetrator intoxication leads to diminished perceptions of blame and responsibility in the same instance.

In the university setting, the impact of these biases must be recognized from the perspective of law enforcement and university administrators, in order to facilitate the fairest judicial and investigation process for survivors of campus sexual violence. Research assessed police officer’s judgments of credibility, attributions of blame, and evaluations of sexual assault claims and concluded that the more intoxicated a victim seemed to a police officer, the less
credible her claim of sexual assault.¹⁴⁹ In the college campus setting, where heavy drinking and intoxication is the social norm, there is high likelihood that a survivor of sexual assault may appear intoxicated to officers; when police officers use personal judgments of intoxication to judge the validity of sexual assault claims, as research has shown they are likely to do, there is the risk of survivors both being blamed for their own attack and also not being believed about their experience of sexual assault.

Fraternities’ Role in Contributing to Campus Rape Culture

When sexual violence occurs within an institution, as previously explicated research has shown it inevitably does, the social and political climate of that institution and its place within a greater cultural context directly contributes to the encouragement or discouragement of sexual violence activism. The prevalence of rape myths within the community, government or administrative financial support of survivor resources, and the specific community’s willingness to take on radical activism are some factors which affect the prevalence of sexual violence attitudes in that community, and in turn the success of sexual violence activism.

One specific aspect of college culture that has been found as rape-supportive in its very structure is the continued administrative support, or even denial, of fraternity culture at many American universities. In fact, in a study conducted by Garrett-Goodyng Senter in 1987, fraternity men were found much more likely than other men on campus to sexually abuse women. But, why? Fraternities, age-old male social groups ripe with a history of systemic sexual assault, homophobia and other acts of institutional violence, perpetuate the overarching patriarchy omnipresent at U.S. colleges and universities. In exploring the history of American fraternities in his book, The Company He Keeps: A History of White College Fraternities, researcher Nicholas L. Syrett identifies both misogyny and racism as key factors to the establishment and success of these men’s groups. Syrett’s research of postbellum white American fraternities also points out that “from the end of the Civil War until approximately 1910, fraternity men increasingly defined their manliness through athletic success, extracurricular activity, wealth and whiteness.”

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racial violence and sexual violence is historically pervasive in the United States, and remains consistent in violence perpetrated by fraternities as well. It is no coincidence that American fraternities are infamous both for their racial violence and their sexual violence both within and outside of their insular communities, with national scandals of racist chanting as recent as March 2015. The inherent social hierarchies of race, class and sex that are perpetuated by these groups, in combination with ritualized, normative and aggressive performances of masculinity, lends itself to community ignorance and acceptance of violence. For a university administration to condone or ignore the presence of institutional racism and sexism within fraternal organizations is to take responsibility for the violence that, as history and research has shown, will follow as a result.

Researchers Matthew Schwartz and Walter DeKeseredy have conducted extensive research into rape-supportive cultures and the role of male peer support in perpetuating both attitudes about rape and rape victims within these cultures. “When men band together,” Schwartz and DeKeseredy write, “the chances are increased that they will see women as Other, a weaker sex that can deservedly be abused.” Using the framework of an overarching patriarchy to explain rape-support on college campuses, Schwartz and DeKeseredy identify four main factors associated with male peer support for sexual assault on a college campus. Fraternities, and fraternity culture, encompass all of these factors to a defining degree.

Schwartz and DeKeseredy first identify alcohol consumption as one factor associated with male peer support for sexual assault on the college campus. Drinking is an incredibly common social activity on the college campus in general, despite the fact that many students are

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under the legal drinking age. Alcohol consumption within fraternity culture is not merely social, but defining, and inherently problematic in terms of links to woman abuse and sexual assault.\textsuperscript{154} Research has shown that when consuming alcohol, the perpetuation of microaggressions against women is higher: drinking, for men, is associated with misogynist conversations about women’s sexuality and sexual nature.\textsuperscript{155} Even when men gather at male-only events (such as “boy’s night out,” or “internal” fraternity gatherings), women are the main focus of conversation—specifically, women’s sexuality and “the effective control of it.”\textsuperscript{156} Research has shown that these alcohol-driven, male-only conversations about women often “emphasize violence as a means of maintaining control.”\textsuperscript{157} Additionally, renowned sexual violence researcher David Lisak and his colleague Susan Roth determined in 1988 that sexually aggressive men were more likely to have high uses of alcohol.\textsuperscript{158} In further support, researchers Barnes, Greenwood & Sommer (1991) found that “alcohol was the stronger predictor... of courtship violence”\textsuperscript{159} as perpetrated by college men. This fact, plus the prevalence of both forced and consensual alcohol abuse in fraternity culture, creates a dangerous combination. While there is not yet an actual causation determined between alcohol abuse and sexual aggression, the correlation is cause enough for concern. Fraternities disproportionately attract male students with existing substance abuse issues.\textsuperscript{160} Though the substance abuse itself would still exist in the college community, if

not for fraternity culture and fraternity recruitment of these specific students, the substance-abusive men would not have the male peer support and secrecy of their fraternity as a shroud for the sexual aggression that is shown to be a potential side effect. Researchers have found empirical evidence that actually residing in a fraternity house (compared to just membership) is strongly associated with high levels of alcohol use.\textsuperscript{161} Additionally, members of fraternities that abuse alcohol or drink in excess perceive the risks of their drinking to be much lower than the perceptions held by the majority of the campus community.\textsuperscript{162} This perception may lead to a generally more lenient perspective on behaviors while drinking, thus possibly condoning the sexual violence that might occur during this time.

The fraternity culture of Group Secrecy around sexual aggression, alcohol consumption and hazing, is also identified by Schwartz and DeKeseredy as a factor of male peer support of sexual assault. Group Secrecy is an aspect of fraternity culture that is mostly revered by members and alumni alike. By enforcing community silence under the guise of ritual or tradition, fraternities can effectively cover up their own abuses and violence—both intra-communally, and outside of the group. Researchers point to the “codes of silence” in these communities, and “demand for group loyalty” as a reason why fraternity “brothers” uphold secrecy even in the face of deliberate destruction and violence.\textsuperscript{163} In regards to the perpetuation of sexual violence on college campuses, brothers will hide other brothers’ indiscretions. Rape and sexual assault are acts to be bragged about between fraternity brethren, rather than reported to outsiders. As Schwartz and DeKeseredy have determined, when “a brother victimizes a woman, he knows that his peers will not attempt to stop him or cooperate with ‘agents of social control’” [administrators,


university or Greek governing bodies].”164 These codes of brotherhood, silence and secrecy make for a particularly dangerous environment for the women victimized by brothers’ sexual assaults: not only might their assailant deny charges, but so will all of his tightly-banded brothers, and often the entire university’s Greek community to boot (including sororities and other fraternities). Because an individual brother will be protected and believed by an entire organization, if not the university at large, his victim will be denied and berated by that entire organization as well. The codes of secrecy and silence that are so deeply ingrained in fraternity culture make for a space where a survivor is effectively assaulted by an entire community of men, in their rampant and contagious denial of an assault having been perpetuated by one of their “brothers.”

Another factor of male peer support for sexual support, as identified by Schwartz & DeKeseredy, is Male Support Group Membership— i.e., communities of men that support sexually aggressive and sexually inappropriate behaviors, much like fraternities. In a study conducted by Garrett-Gooding Senter in 1987, fraternity men were found much more likely than other men on campus to sexually abuse women.165 Mere membership in these groups is so problematic due to the many microaggressions (and even aggressions) that occur within the group community. Fraternities are known for their “highly masculinist, racist, homophobic views... the preoccupation with loyalty; the use of alcohol and physical force as weapons; the obsession with competition, physical force, superiority and dominance.” All of these factors, inherent to fraternity life, “encourage social and sexual violence against women.”166

It must be noted that Schwartz and DeKeseredy, while highlighting fraternities in their discussion of Male Peer Support Group Membership, acknowledge that any group of men gathered together can serve the same purpose in terms of perpetuating these problematic ideas and actual violence against women. However, what makes fraternity groups specifically dangerous in this regard is the university support for their brother or denial of their existence, either circumstance without supervision, which they receive. While it’s true that “any” male group could (and often do) maintain cultural patriarchy and create environments unsafe to women, fraternities often receive both financial and social support from the institutions they reside within. Universities themselves often build and staff the houses these sexual assaults are taking place in. Such tangible support of fraternities, empirically proven to be dangerous spaces for women (who make up the majority of college campus populations, with 12 million college women in America compared to 9 million college men)\(^{167}\) is a clear support of the sexual assaults that take place within fraternities and victimize women.

Schwartz and DeKeseredy also identify the Absence of Deterrence as another factor that contributes to male peer support of sexual assault on campuses. Besides the fact that rampant alcohol abuse, sexual objectification of women, hazing and group secrecy take place within fraternities, it’s especially problematic that these behaviors and traditions go largely unquestioned—by fraternity members themselves, the larger community, and the university administration. The Absence of Deterrence effectively refers to male peer support by omission. By failing to object to problematic behaviors, one stands in support of these behaviors. From an institutional perspective, this renders university administrations essentially responsible for the debauchery of the fraternities that they either deny the existence of, or blatantly support.

Brandeis University does not formally recognize fraternities or sororities or allow these organizations to receive school funding or use university space for events. However, Greek life exists anyway, just in a completely unregulated sphere: to date, Brandeis has four fraternities and three sororities functionally associated with the university, though not formally recognized or funded. Therefore, just as there is a clear and purposeful Absence of Deterrence within the fraternity itself, at universities with Greek-life policies of blissful ignorance like at Brandeis University, there is Absence of Deterrence from an administrative perspective, as well.

Additionally, the all-too-regular Sexual Objectification of Women has been identified by Schwartz and DeKeseredy as a factor that contributes to male peer support of sexual assault. Schwartz and DeKeseredy claim that this objectification is a learned process—a rite of passage for many brotherhoods. In the sea of a higher educational institution, where the equality and autonomy of women is often a purported priority ever since they were first rewarded admittance, fraternities can serve as an island of allowed misogyny. Fraternities purposefully exclude women, and in their ritualistic language, often inherently create woman as the devalued Other, and as an object incapable of autonomy or independent accomplishment. The sexual posters and paraphernalia common as decoration in fraternity housing contribute to the objectified-woman ideology, as does the commonness of misogynistic language used within the brotherhood. “Language is an important part method of dehumanization,” claim Schwartz & DeKeseredy.

What does it mean for university administrations to turn a blind eye, or more often even support the prevalence of fraternity culture on campuses? The support of fraternities is equivalent to the inherent support of all that goes on within fraternities; and, as demonstrated,

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this includes Schwartz and DeKeseredy’s four factors associated with male peer support of sexual assault on the college campus. By supporting and even funding fraternities on college campuses, university administrators are supporting spaces of sexual assault and violence to occur. By ignoring the presence of fraternities and participating in a cultural Absence of Deterrence, universities are effectively supporting the fraternity’s very existence, as well. The safety of university students is impossible if these spaces continue to be so strongly supported by the very systems that claim to protect and educate all students.
Campus Rape Crisis Centers: A Service-Oriented Best Practice

Throughout all the research done on the topic of sexual violence on college campuses and sexual violence activism, one theme runs consistent: the unmatched need for a comprehensive, organized campus response. The campus response must be on behalf of the institution’s administration, and be recognized as relevant to the institution’s specific culture by those who participate in it. In the campus setting, this means the students.

The collection of valid, ethical empirical data is absolutely necessary in order to first identify the campus culture and thereby what might be considered relevant or necessary in terms of an organized and comprehensive administrative response. As previously mentioned in this paper, the Campus Climate Survey (a project currently in process at Brandeis University, among other institutions, due to White House suggestion) is the current existing best practice for collecting such data. The Climate Survey, and other efforts to collect facts about campus sexual violence attitudes, is a vital piece in the ultimate goal of altering those often-problematic attitudes for the better. Changing cultural attitudes about sexual violence has historically been a key component in the feminist anti-rape movement. In researcher Nancy A. Matthews’ *Confronting Rape: The Feminist Anti-Rape Movement and the State*, she states “the overarching project of this movement was changing consciousness about rape.”[^170] In order to apply this same, historical approach to contemporary campus rape culture, one must first grasp the unique “consciousness about rape” present within a given institution.

For many institutions, Brandeis University included, the establishment of the Campus Rape Crisis Center (CRCC) is the administrative action that responds to the need for student involvement, support and understanding of activism, and a space to build organized,

comprehensive resources for those impacted by sexual violence within the community. In *Confronting Rape*, Matthews cites the Feminist Alliance Against Rape (FAAR) Newsletter of 1974, a publication that reflected the need for this movement decades ago which still rings true today: “societal attitudes toward the rape victim have been nothing short of harsh and often run the gamut from brutal to indifferent... the rape crisis center is the vehicle through which all these voids in society’s handling of rape can be filled.” As previously explicated, college campuses are essentially microcosms of society in which the attitudes about rape culture are even more extreme than in the greater community, due to fraternity culture, cultural attitudes towards substance use and myths about campus safety. Therefore, it can be assumed that due to these extremist perspectives on rape, rape victims, and racial and sexual minorities, the need for a space in which these communal problems are dealt with in a broad and inclusive way is even greater than elsewhere.

On some campuses, the CRCC is a space where students (and student activists) can play a very real role in the services provided. Often, prior to the CRCC’s development, it is the students that have provided services unofficially within the university. Serving students’ work with fairness, honesty and support can certainly strengthen trust in the university system and contribute to a more positive campus climate. However, the implicit dangers associated with placing undergraduate students in the situation of operating their own rape crisis center are not to be ignored. For one, there is the risk that students are too close to their own communities to perform this work efficiently. Undergraduates are living, working, studying and socializing within the very small and insular communities that they then serve in the CRCC facility. Additionally, Matthews along with other researchers, has identified the high level of vicarious

171 Ibid.
trauma and even re-traumatization among those who perform rape crisis work: “‘burnout’ is a common reaction among dedicated activists in any movement, but in the anti-rape movement its onset appears to be acute and rapid.”\textsuperscript{172} Additionally, Matthews writes that: “though anti-rape work is meant to empower women, one unintended consequence of work on hotlines [and in crisis centers] appears to be a heightened fear of sexual assault.”\textsuperscript{173} The concept of purposefully exposing inexperienced (professionally and in general) undergraduates to work that might make them feel vulnerable and fearful is initially quite unsavory. But, who understands the incredibly complex microcosm of society that is the college campuses? Those who are living and experiencing that very college campus, the undergraduates, are obviously some of the best at handling trauma and controversy in that environment. Undergraduates on contemporary campuses already feel vulnerable: they are surrounded by sexual harassment and violence on a regular basis, given the aforementioned problematic environments that make up their living, learning and working spaces. While vicarious trauma and even burnout in this work and in activism in general is a liability, one could argue that living as a college undergraduate in an increasingly symbolically and physical violent sexual environment could also be cause for severe psychological distress and vicarious, if not direct trauma. In fact, as mentioned previously in this paper, the student sexual violence activism is mostly led by survivors— not just survivors of rape or sexual assault, but those survivors of living in a larger, inescapable climate of sexual hostility and microaggressive violence that is the modern, American college campus. In \textit{Confronting Rape}, Matthews claims that “being confronted on a regular basis with the reality of women’s vulnerability is not empowering; instead, it reminds many activists just how realistic their fears

\textsuperscript{172} Ibid.
\textsuperscript{173} Ibid.
are and heightens awareness to a level that can interfere with daily life.\textsuperscript{174} This may be true for rape crisis center workers in general, but in the context of the college campus, there is significant reason to differ from Matthews: having the opportunity to directly confront the fears and vulnerabilities inherently associated with living as an undergraduate on a college campus can be empowering. These undergraduates are already “constantly reminded of the reality of their fears;” it’s a reality facing them at every social gathering and in many of their classes. Above all, reimagining or even dissolving the current model of student rape crisis centers is not what is necessary for these centers to function effectively. Rather, if establishing CRCCs, universities must dedicate themselves to providing comprehensive and regular supervision and psychological resources for the students doing this tough work. Regular supervision by trained trauma counselors or certified social workers is necessary to maintaining both a high level of services provided by student workers and to protect the student workers from the consequences of the inevitable vicarious or direct trauma they might experience. CRCCs cannot be run only by students and for students, though undergraduate participation is a necessary and valuable component, the institution must work to protect and support the center and those who work within it.

There are a number of potential best practices universities might consider employing in the process of establishing a Campus Rape Crisis Center. For one, the screening of CRCC volunteers and employees for sexual violence perpetrator behavior as well as bias is important to providing the most comprehensive and impartial services to the student population. Research has shown that attitudes towards rape (including but not limited to belief in rape myths) impacts reaction to, and treatment of rape victims. For instance, research in social psychology “has

\textsuperscript{174} Ibid.
revealed that allegations of acquaintance rape are frequently viewed with inherent skepticism and that forced sex between people who know each other is deemed less believable and less serious.”¹⁷⁵ For service providers such as student volunteers or staff in a CRCC, adoption of rape myths and belief in rape stereotypes could be an important factor in what type of treatment rape survivors receive. Using screening tools such as the Attitudes Towards Rape Victims Scale (ARVS),¹⁷⁶ along with other measures as an employment criterion for a student to work in the CRCC is a best practice for maintaining a staff that remains fair, impartial and unbiased towards whatever type of survivors may seek out the CRCC services. Additionally, both a survivor’s perceived ability to report sexual violence to the community (be that through the CRCC or criminal justice officials), as well as a service provider’s stance on a specific survivor may be impacted by widely-held community attitudes towards sexual violence. Research has shown that “rape myths exert direct and indirect influences on self-concept and mental health. In one instance, victims may already hold negative and prejudicial attitudes towards sexual violence which affect their interpretation of rape, undermine their self-esteem and have detrimental consequences for their psychological recovery. In another instance, stereotyped misconceptions of coercive sex can influence other’s responses to victims, which, in turn, colour victim’s perceptions of themselves.”¹⁷⁷ Thereby, assessing service providers’ belief in rape myths and general attitudes towards rape is important in determining that sexual violence survivors will receive fair and comprehensive treatment at the CRCC or other campus resources.

Additionally, as previously explained in this paper, it is vital for universities to adopt sexual violence service models that are sympathetic and tailored to the unique campus

community. For Brandeis University, this includes cultural competency of sexual violence services for the Jewish community, the international community, and the LGBTQIA\textsuperscript{178} community. The LGBTQIA community at Brandeis is vibrant, with eight different queer-life specific student groups listed on the website.\textsuperscript{179} And yet, studies show that individuals in the LGBTQIA community are often at an equal or higher risk for experiencing intimate partner violence and sexual violence than non-sexual minorities: “forty-four percent of lesbian women [and] 61% of bisexual women... experienced rape, physical violence and/or stalking by an intimate partner in their lifetime” as compared to 35% of heterosexual women, according to a 2010 study by the Center for Disease Control. The same study found that “twenty-six percent of gay men [and] 37% of bisexual men... experienced rape, physical violence and/or stalking by an intimate partner in their lifetime,” as compared to 29% of heterosexual men.\textsuperscript{180} Additionally, the unique social and cultural factors in the LGBTQIA community make culturally competent service provision an even higher priority: the Center for Disease Control suggests “implementing prevention approaches that promote acceptance and recognition of healthy, respectful relationships regardless of orientation,” as a best practice for sexual violence prevention and awareness in sexual-minority communities.

In terms of the CRCC, this means training staff and volunteers (students and faculty alike) in cultural competency around LGBTQIA issues. This includes awareness of the high rates of violence, and a comprehensive understanding of the specific institution’s stance on, and prevalence of, bigotry and homophobia within the community. A study from 1990 revealed that

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\item \textsuperscript{179} “Sexualities and Gender Diversity.” Brandeis Queer Life. Brandeis University, n.d. Web. 20 Apr. 2015.
\end{itemize}
30% of surveyed college students “preferred a college environment with only heterosexuals.”\textsuperscript{181}

While this probably has shifted significantly as a result of the last few decades of LGBTQIA rights activism, the prevalence of harmful attitudes about sexual minorities on the college campus is still potentially impactful on the likelihood of those individuals to feel comfortable seeking out sexual violence services. Additionally, the presence of unsupervised fraternities on the college campus contributes to community hostility towards sexual minorities. In \textit{The Company He Keeps}, Nicholas Syrett explores the origins of rampant homophobia in post-World War II fraternity culture, an attitude that has reasonably been maintained in contemporary white, male fraternity groups on college campuses. “Postwar Americans were intolerant of homosexuality, and this fear found its way to college men,” and in fact, this intolerance and fear may have served as a driver for heterosexual sexual aggression: “[this] fear is one which haunts the campus, putting pressure on many young men to be guarded in their relations with one another... while at the same time, putting pressure on them to seek out relations with girls to convince others and perhaps themselves that they are not [homosexual].” Also during that time, “to label a fraternity as ‘gay’ had become the ultimate disgraceful epithet, the supreme marker in the lack of masculinity.”\textsuperscript{182}

For an institution like Brandeis, which chooses to ignore and not supervise the on goings of fraternal life in its midst (though acknowledging that this fraternity culture does in fact exist), the risk of rampant homophobic practice and the maintenance of cultural hostility towards sexual minorities is high. Since fraternities historically exist in an intolerant and homophobic context, their very existence still represents a spirit of exclusivity and even violence towards sexual

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minorities. In designing community-tailored, comprehensive and competent rape crisis services, a university must take into consideration how students involve themselves in, and relate to, organizations like fraternities with such problematic histories. Along with training CRCC staff and volunteers in cultural competency, the hiring committee for the CRCC may consider student involvement in organizations with homophobic or exclusive origins, such as fraternities.

The Campus Rape Crisis Center has symbolic value in the university community, as well. Research has identified the importance of social and institutional support for survivors of sexual violence in terms of facilitating the psychological and emotional healing process; the very existence of a university-funded, official CRCC alludes to this institutional support. “Both the outcome of the institutional intervention [i.e., an adjudication process] and the manner in which the victim interfaces with the system can affect psychological responses to sexual assault,” finds research by Colleen Ward.\textsuperscript{183} The CRCC is capable of mediating the manner in which a sexual violence survivor interacts with the institution at a college campus, and thus can assist in facilitating healing from sexual assault. By providing services like adjudication process advising and peer counseling, the CRCC staff both represents institutional support of the survivor, and can interfere with the ways the university institution may disappoint.

The Role of Feminist Activism in Breaking Down Campus Rape Culture

The establishment of campus feminist organizations is vitally important to the dissolution of, and response to, campus rape culture. Feminist organizations have long made sexual violence awareness and response a key tenant of their practice, and the administrative support of these organizations on college campuses is absolutely necessary to creating a safer and more inclusive space, specifically in terms of gender-based violence of all kinds. In *Tales From the Trenches: Politics and Practice in Feminist Service Organizations*, researcher Diane Kravetz explores the founding and developmental trajectory of five original feminist service organizations and draws important conclusions about how to successfully support these types of groups.

Kravetz identifies feminist service organizations, and feminist practice, as essential to breaking down dynamics of patriarchy: “feminist activities that were by women, for women and on behalf of women challenged assumptions of male authority and female dependence on men and disrupted conventional male-female relationships.”184 For a university administration to support the actions of these feminist activities is to support the ideology of breaking down these problematic social structures. In the university setting, this can include, though is not limited to, the financial and infrastructural support of protests, awareness campaigns and community-wide feminist activist projects.

In terms of rape crisis centers and university support for student advocacy and sexual violence activism, Kravetz identifies a few factors as specifically beneficial. Recognizing and prioritizing the “authority of personal experience” when it comes to a survivor’s story of sexual violence is essential to creating a safe, feminist space for those affected by sexual violence. Kravetz quotes the Rape Crisis Center of Wisconsin’s mission statement in saying: “Valuing an

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individual’s experience, rather than the abstract formulation of some ‘expert’ shall be the primary source of new ideas.”

In using Brandeis University as a case study for the formulation of a CRCC with a basis in feminist activism, there have been a number of ways in which the history of feminist rape crisis centers has been referenced throughout the process, and other ways in which it’s been ignored. Kravetz speaks to how institutional sexism and misogyny were large drivers for initiating early rape crisis centers, and this is also reflected in Brandeis’ aforementioned history of activism that led to the current Brandeis Rape Crisis Center. Kravetz references early consciousness-raising group conversations as a source of this ideology: “for many years, the tenet [that] the personal is political provided the foundation for feminists’ understanding of women’s problems. Through discussions in small groups, women identified their common experiences as victims... they realized that the problems they had viewed as personal and private were actually shared and political.”

Similarly, the goal of the Brandeis RCC is not only to provide crisis services and resources to the community, but rather, to directly respond to the cultural influences that create a space tolerant of sexual violence to begin with. The Brandeis RCC states that, as an organization, it “works to bring about a campus climate in which sexual violence is unacceptable.”

However, there are inherent bureaucratic issues with establishing a crisis center identified publicly as “feminist,” even if its values and mission statement is based in feminist practice. For many on the modern American college campus, feminism is misunderstood, isolated, or considered an unattractive ideology. Perceptions of feminism are changing with the adoption of a

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185 Ibid.
186 Ibid.
mainstream feminism by celebrity figures and popular culture at large, such as the pop singer Lady Gaga, who has stated: “I am a feminist. I reject wholeheartedly the way we are taught to perceive women. The beauty of women; how a woman should act or behave.”\(^{188}\) The world-renowned singer Beyoncé also includes feminist spoken word by Nigerian novelist Chimamanda Ngozie Adichie in her record-breaking 2012 album.\(^{189}\)

Celebrity endorsement aside, modern feminism remains tinged with its own complicated politics—and university-affiliated (and funded) organizations tend to veer towards the non-partisan. Additionally, given the variations on feminism for each individual who may work in a sexual violence service organization on a campus, nailing down that exact definition could be a source of leadership conflict. As Kravetz writes in regards to the foundations of early feminist organizations: “members recognized that feminism represents many different philosophical and political frameworks and there are multiple interpretations of what constitutes feminist practices and strategies within each of these frameworks.”\(^{190}\) In examining the defining principles of these early sexual violence service organizations, Kravetz stresses the importance of feminism as an ideological tenet for the strength of the organizations’ actual foundations: “in these organizations, understanding the dynamics of female oppression provided the foundation for assessing needs, establishing goals, and determining the nature of their programs and services.”\(^{191}\) Kravetz’s work is corroborated by Nancy A. Matthews, who cites early radical feminism as a leading contributor to the establishment of the first West Coast rape crisis centers: “women in the collectivist strand,” she explains, “particularly radical feminists, were the first to


\(^{189}\) Adichie, Chimamanda Ngozi. ***Flawless.*** Beyoncé. Columbia Records, 2013. CD.


\(^{191}\) Ibid.
address violence." Ignoring this incredible history of activism upon which the entire modern movement is built would be a crass attempt to de-politicize the rape crisis center, which is a subversive, activist and feminist space in its very definition. And yet, this need to de-politicize is incredibly real when receiving university or state funding for the campus rape crisis center. When establishing a best-case scenario for the CRCC in a world where universities increasingly disaffiliate their institutions from any political movement for fear of donor retaliation and community outcry, how might one include a distinctly feminist ideology in the establishment of the center?

As a best practice, university sexual violence services should align with the campus’ feminist organizations. If not able to officially adopt an explicitly feminist ideology, maintaining a historical understanding of privilege, oppression and activism is essential to creating a resource that is comprehensive, useful and accessible to students. The obstacles faced by those attempting to establish a rape crisis center on a university campus are formidable, as Kravetz goes on to explore in *Trenches*, and aligning with activist organizations can provide a collaboration which is necessary for goal accomplishment.

Kravetz details many of these significant obstacles faced by those founding the Rape Crisis Center of Wisconsin, and for universities like Brandeis that are in the process of building their own such center, these obstacles are increasingly apparent and must be recognized for the center’s eventual success. “For The Rape Crisis Center [of Wisconsin], the most significant service issue was dealing with the continually expanding numbers of women asking for assistance and having no funds to increase it’s staff.” Because of this, the Center was forced to

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reduce the availability of its services for fear of burning out its limited number of volunteers. Such reduction was in direct contradiction to their original mission. Campus rape crisis centers are at a similar risk if significant administrative support is not communicated; to operate any sort of crisis management center in any capacity, though specifically for sexual violence, accessibility of services is crucial. While ideally, constant availability would provide the most comprehensive level of community and individual support for these issues, universities like Brandeis have financial and staffing roadblocks to providing 24-hour services. By employing primarily student staff and student volunteers (with full academic workloads and other necessary extracurricular obligations) to run a CRCC, the “crisis” aspect of the center is essentially lost. Just as the Rape Crisis Center of Wisconsin struggled to maintain its originally set standards of service availability for lack of funding, a CRCC will never be able to reach any sort of standard without administrative support from the get-go.

The decades of campus sexual violence activism that have preceded the current movement at Brandeis University and on college campuses throughout the country have been focused, deliberate, radical, and have accomplished bounds in terms of the policy and culture change that has resulted from the dedicated work of students and survivors alike. The new frontier of sexual violence activism must continue to make demands of the governing bodies and administrations of their respective institutions, however the difference between the activists of decades past and students today is the increasing support and pressure from the White House. The macro-institutions that run the United States are taking serious notice of student activism, and current policies are beginning, slowly, to reflect this changing culture. The aforementioned White House Task Force to Protect Students from Sexual Assault is an informative and comprehensive resource for university administrations, yes, and their suggestions are valid.
However, to enact serious change in the ways that universities are condoning, tolerating and even ignoring the rampant violence on college campuses, governing bodies must go beyond mere suggestion. From an institutional perspective, one best practice for responding to sexual violence on college campuses is government mandates. Until mandated campus climate studies, no-tolerance policies for institutional violence within fraternity culture and other societies based on social hierarchy, and university support of student activism is a universal reality, however, university administrations must take this change into their own hands.

The student sexual violence activism movement is largely survivor-led. Thus, honoring the voices of these survivors through commitment to creating activist alumni networks and other environments in which stories, experiences and wisdom might be shared, is one way for a university to improve their campus climate on sexual violence and reiterate their commitment to not tolerating sexual violence within the community.

As evidenced by the uncanny consistencies between Robin Warshaw and Mary Koss’ suggestions for campuses in 1984 and BSASV’s demands in 2014, the waves of student sexual violence activism have been repeating themselves. Rather than force students to reinvent the wheel time and time again, universities should create spaces for the sharing of wisdom, experiences and stories from activist to activist – examples of this might include creating a space for activist alumni networks, and allotting resources to carefully archive the work of activists past. Demonstrating a commitment to student activism would improve campus climate on sexual violence, reiterate a commitment to a no-tolerance policy of violence, and increase trust in the university system—all factors which have been shown to decrease instances of sexual violence within the community itself. Infrastructural support of student activism is the ultimate best practice for college campuses in terms of sexual violence response and resources; listening to the
voices of students who stand upon years of research, activism and experiences of violence is vital for creating a campus community within which students are actually safe to live, work and learn.


