Panel proposes UO sexual violence office

Breaking news throughout the day registerguard.com

IN THE NEWS

NATION

All attackers who enter the United States from Iraq, Afghanistan or Yemen have been killed or captured in recent years, according to a report to be released Wednesday.

WORLD

World War II

Germany’s chancellor said Wednesday that the country’s leaders are ready to apologize for the Holocaust.

CITY/REGION

City planners

The city of Eugene is considering a countywide wetland preservation plan.

SPORTS

Sports

The University of Oregon football team will play its first game of the season Saturday against a Pac-12 opponent.

QUOTE

"The reaction from his children was priceless. They hadn't seen him in a while, and the expectation would be that they would get so excited and they did, and, you know, they were happy to have him home." — Air Force Col. John Schuster, on the reaction of his family after he was released Wednesday from a North Korean prison.

COMMING UP

University of Oregon’s dean of nursing

The University of Oregon’s dean of nursing will speak at a conference on nursing education.

PRODUCT UPDATES

Blackwater guards

The company is facing scrutiny over its role in the deaths of civilians in Iraq.

EDITORS' NOTES

In this edition:

- TODAY'S WEATHER
- SPORTS
- COMING UP
- EMX PROJECT UPDATES
- QUOTE

THE REGISTER-GUARD

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"We know how enormous the problem is, but we want to be in the position to make meaningful changes."

— CAROL STABLE, UO VICE PRESIDENT FOR INSTITUTIONAL DIVERSITY

Panel proposes UO sexual violence office

Contracting resources for victims is one of the 23 recommendations from a task force studying prevention

By Joann L. Ackerman

Wishing the University of Oregon’s Office of Institutional Diversity would go away sounds like an oxymoron.

The task force’s co-chairwoman, Carol Stable, a journalism and women’s studies professor, said the recommendations are designed to improve the expectations and support policies for victims. The changes would cost the university at least $600,000 — a number that UO interim president Scott Carolus said at the meeting made him “feel like a little bit sad.”

The recommendations presented Wednesday to the university board for its task force’s work include expanding the campus’ sexual assault task force, auditing the UO’s Office of Institutional Diversity for efficiencies and funding a campus group passes and ticket voucher advertising campaign and free construction of EmX bus rapid transit for employers and residents, group passes and ticket vouchers for employees and residents, group passes and ticket vouchers for employees and residents.

The project will build 28 transit stations and widen sections of the corridor to accommodate so-called busway or BAT lanes that allow motorists to turn onto side streets or into businesses. The line will be nine miles round-trip.

The project is scheduled to start in late November in downtown Eugene.

The work will last two years.

Transit officials say the start date still could be pushed back a bit.

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UO: Panel asks for quick action on some issues

Continued from Page A1

“climate” survey to assess rates of victimization; expanding opportunities for women’s self-defense training on campus; developing proposals to mandate that all students take classes on gender, sexuality and social inequality; and empowering the University Senate Intercollegiate Athletics Committee to address sexual violence issues within the UO athletic department.

“This is just the beginning,” Stabile said. “We know how enormous the problem is, but we want to be in the position to make meaningful changes.

“We think the University of Oregon can be a leader in addressing this problem,” she added.

The University Senate will vote Nov. 5 on whether to approve the recommendations.

The University Senate task force — formally, the Task Force to Address Sexual Violence and Survivor Support — is urging the university to complete most of the recommendations by early next year, although the group is asking the university to act on some of the changes by Nov. 19.

The group has been meeting since July. It was formed shortly after three male UO basketball players were accused of raping an 18-year-old female student in the spring.

The 19-member task force’s initial recommendations represent a blueprint for long-term efforts to address sexual violence on campus, the group wrote in its lengthy report, called “Twenty Students Per Week.” That number is an estimate of how many female UO students on average during college experience some kind of unwanted sexual contact for the first time, based on preliminary results from a UO psychology professor and graduate students’ survey.

That survey’s early results suggest that nearly 1 in 5 female students has been raped or experienced an attempted rape while attending the UO.

The initial findings from the survey — conducted by sexual violence expert and UO professor Jennifer Freyd, with her graduate students, Carly Smith and Martina Rosenthal — also indicate that 30 percent of female students have had at least one sexual experience without their consent.

Women in sororities are much more likely to be raped or experience some kind of nonconsensual sexual contact compared with other students, the preliminary data show.

The task force — made up of UO faculty, students and a U.S. attorney — wrote in its report that such rates of sexual violence “directly jeopardize commitment to undergraduate and graduate education.”

A majority of rape victims suffer from chronic physical or psychological conditions and are more likely to commit suicide, according to the group’s report.

“We have no idea how many (students) are prevented from completing their education because of sexual violence,” Stabile said Wednesday. She said the task force believes the university should start tracking that data.

Task force members said the UO has defended existing sexual violence policies instead of working with campus and community leaders to improve those policies.

The committee also criticized the university for keeping secret information about sexual violence on campus and for blacking out most documents and emails related to the three now-former basketball players who were accused of rape. The committee said such actions have “had devastating and divisive consequences for our community.”

“We have a new opportunity to come together to do the hard but necessary work of creating effective, collaborative and sustained efforts to address sexual violence,” committee members said in the report.

Stabile said the university should not ignore research that shows that students involved in athletics and fraternities and sororities “play disproportionate roles in sexual violence” on campus.

The task force’s report includes several recommendations to give additional sexual violence training and education to those students, as well as to students in band, debate and club sports.

In response to the task force’s preliminary recommendations last month, UO interim president Coltrane established a $15,000 emergency fund to pay for prevention efforts and to support resources for sexual assault victims. He earmarked money from the president’s discretionary fund.

Coltrane on Wednesday spoke briefly about the recommendations. He said he appreciates the task force’s efforts and that his office will consider the changes.

“It’s a very important problem,” Coltrane said. “We need to get ahead of it.”

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