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Comedy dialogue

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The Register-Guard

EUGENE, OREGON

FRIDAY, MAY 2, 2014

\$1.00

"Just him being here, I'm so grateful for it."

— WHITNEY SWEET, FRIEND OF SCOTT SVETAL

REINVENTING HIMSELF

Injured skateboarder Scott Svetal tries to 'seize' every day



BRIAN DAVIES/The Register-Guard

Mike Svetal leads his son, Scott Svetal, through a physical therapy session at Green Valley Rehabilitation Health Center in Eugene.

By ALAN DO BALLANTYNE
The Register-Guard

eaning over his lap, Scott Svetal concentrates hard as he works, slowly pulling apart a ball of twist ties. His left thumb shakes slightly as his fingers untangle each tie one by one from the mass. Svetal loathes the exercise — it's boring, he says.

But 10 minutes later, Svetal finishes the job. His occupational therapist, Jan Pylar, asks him to pinch a device that measures how hard he can squeeze his fingers.

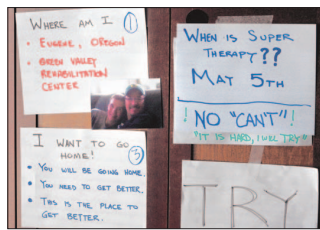
Earlier in the day, Svetal practiced lifting his legs quickly and then slowly low-

ering them. Then he worked on a memory exercise, going through a series of homemade flash cards — each a photo of a Green Valley Rehabilitation Health Center staff member — trying to recall more than a dozen names.

Svetal's days at the center in north Eugene are composed of such mental and physical exercises. His stamina is increasing, and depending on the task, he can stay focused for 20 to 40 minutes at a time before needing a break.

At age 20, he's the youngest one at the facility by far — the roughly 75 other, re-

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Messages of love, support and encouragement adorn Scott's room at Green Valley Rehabilitation Health Center.

Added privacy laws sought

The White House urges greater safeguards of Americans' data

By EILEEN SULLIVAN AND JULIE PACE
The Associated Press

WASHINGTON — The White House is asking Congress to pass new privacy laws that would add more safeguards for Americans' data and provide more protections for emails sought in the course of a law enforcement investigation.

The recommendations are among six offered by President Obama's counselor, John Podesta, in a report released Thursday. While large sets of data make Americans' lives easier and can help save lives, the report noted, they also could be used to discriminate against Americans in areas such as housing and employment.

"Big data" is everywhere. It allows mapping apps to ping cellphones anonymously and determine, in real time, what roads are the most congested. It enables intelligence agencies to amass large amounts of emails and phone records to help root out terrorists. And it could be used to target economically vulnerable people.

At Obama's request, Podesta and the president's top economic and science advisers conducted a 90-day review of how the government and private sector use large sets of data. While the recommendations are not binding, they do track with many of the president's previous calls for addressing privacy issues.

Obama has called for changes to some of the National Security Agency's surveillance programs that amass large amounts of data belonging to Americans and foreigners. The technology that enabled the surveillance programs also enables other programs used by the government and the private sector, such as data on financial

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SEXUAL ASSAULT ON CAMPUS

Gottfredson recommits to safer campus

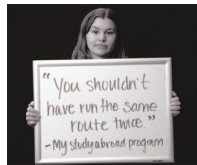
While the UO is not among those being investigated, two researchers say the university has a rape-tolerant culture

By DIANE DIETZ
The Register-Guard

The University of Oregon is extraneous on students who commit sexual assault, a pair of researchers from Occidental College in Los Angeles contend.

"Only one rapist — a person found responsible for rape — was expelled" from the UO between 2009 and 2012, researcher Caroline Heldman said in a recent presentation delivered on the Eugene campus on UO crime statistics, practices and policies.

The UO sanctions "don't" actually treat this like a crime," Heldman said. "You have a 1 percent expulsion



MICKEL STELLAVATO

Naomi Wright of UO TESTIFY provides a whiteboard example of comments that blame victims for the sexual violence against them.

rate for rape, compared with national data that ranges from 10 percent to 24 percent."

Sexual assault is the hottest topic

in higher education this week as the White House launched its own campaign to hold colleges accountable for campus safety.

"This has been unfolding at breakneck speed," said UO psychology professor Jennifer Freyd, who has studied the subject for more than two decades and was invited to the White House for its announcement this week.

Freyd said the change in conversation on the topic has been dramatic. "Normally, we try to get the world to listen to us and it's like shouting at a tide," she said Thursday. Now,

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INSIDE

• The U.S. military identifies a huge rise in the number of sexual assault cases being reported/A3

U.S. lists colleges under scrutiny over sexual attack reports

By DAVID JOACHIM
The New York Times

WASHINGTON — The Obama administration Thursday released a list of 55 colleges and universities that are being investigated for possible violations of federal anti-discrimination law over their handling of sexual assault complaints.

It is the first time that the Education Department has put out a comprehensive list of schools under investigation for potential violations under Title IX of the Education Amendments of 1972.

The list comes as the administration, reacting to a series of highly publicized rape cases on college campuses, is increasing pressure on universities to more aggressively combat sexual assault.

"We are making this list available in an effort to bring more transparency to our enforcement

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UO: University launches sexual violence prevention website

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"universities are like deer in the car lights — this is happening so fast."

At the UO, President Michael Gottfredson just last month highlighted banishing sexual assault as a top campus priority. And the UO Coalition to End Sexual Violence — made up of professors and graduate students — formed recently to make sure that the UO follows through.

In addition, the university has launched a new website with information about preventing and reporting sexual violence; hired several new employees, in the Dean of Students Office and elsewhere, to oversee complaints of harassment; and created a new Interpersonal Violence Response Team at the university's counseling center.

Further, the university requires all employees to complete an online training program on workplace harassment prevention.

"Sexual violence is a critical issue and the University of Oregon works closely with experts and survivors to improve the reporting process and provide support services," spokeswoman Julie Brown said Thursday. "As President Gottfredson communicated clearly, it is a shared responsibility for all members

RESOURCES

NotAlone.gov: Geared to help campus sexual assault survivors and guide university officials

Local clearinghouse on reporting sexual violence: safe.uoregon.edu

UO Coalition to End Sexual Violence: uocoalition.wordpress.com/

Around-the-clock hotline: 541-346-SAFE

President Gottfredson's page: bit.ly/1fy03MX

of our community."

The White House this week signaled it would use the federal Title IX law that outlaws sex discrimination in education to motivate colleges to better identify, prevent and respond to cases of sexual assault — or risk being cut off from federal funds.

On Thursday, the U.S. Department of Education announced it has 65 colleges in its sights for potential violations. None were in Oregon.

Also, the Obama administration gave sexual assault survivors a "road map" to filing Title IX complaints against their universities if their response is inadequate.

A university's initial response in a sexual assault case is vital to the health and recovery of the survivors, according to Freyd, who has studied and written extensively on what she calls "institutional betrayal."



Jennifer Freyd

Reports are too often met with disbelief or in-appropriate questions — "What were you wearing?" — or invalidating comments, Freyd said. "Strong research shows those kinds of comments can cause a great amount of harm," Freyd said. The harm can include depression, anxiety and a disconnection from reality, she said.

Many assault victims are too overwhelmed to finish school and so drop out, meaning it's likely that more of them are driven from campus than their perpetrators, Freyd said.

At the UO, Gottfredson sent out a campuswide message: "I write to reaffirm my commitment to ensuring a safe campus for all," he said. "Anything less is contrary to the values of our institution,

and to the commitment we make to our students and each other."

The UO's new website is designed to help assault victims figure out how and where to report the crime — and what they can expect when they do.

While the university also requires all employees to complete the harassment prevention program, Freyd said she has qualms about that training, which is an online module.

"It is not a solution to ignore to take a passive online test, and, in fact, a lot of people resent it," she said. "They feel they're being forced to do something, information is being stuffed down their throat. They see it as less than respectful and useful."

For training to be effective, it has to engage recipients intellectually and emotionally, she said.

"This online training is

being largely created by insurance companies," she said. "The problem right now is being addressed as a liability reduction risk management problem."

Universities should be focusing on education, not liability reduction, per se."

The Los Angeles researchers criticized the UO's general attitude about sexual assault, describing it as a rape-tolerant culture. The 15 to 35 UO students a year found to have committed forcible offenses are suspended for a limited time or forced to write essays, the researchers reported.

But Gottfredson said in his message that the university is committed to an entirely different kind of culture — one in which "the prevention of sexual violence and harassment is paramount, reporting expectations and processes are clear, excellent support services are readily avail-

able and easily accessible, and those who violate our policies receive appropriate discipline."

"Sexual violence and harassment in any form must not be tolerated," Gottfredson said.

On campus, the University Health Center and University Counseling Center are available to help victims. The UO recently launched a 24-hour hotline to help guide students through treatment and reporting.

At the UO, Freyd said, "Some students do not find the institutional response helpful; some find it harmful. Some have a better outcome. There's a certain amount of luck in this."

"We can increase the probability of a good outcome and not just leave it up to chance," she said. "We can go so much further in what we can do for students."

Title IX: Task force created after complaints

Continued from Page A1

work and to foster better public awareness of civil rights," Catherine Lhamon, the assistant education secretary for civil rights, said in a written statement.

The list includes Ivy League institutions like Harvard, Dartmouth and Princeton; other private universities, including Boston University, the University of Chicago and the University of Southern California; and public universities, including Florida State, Penn State, Ohio State and Binghamton (N.Y.) University. The University of Idaho in Moscow and Washington State University in Pullman are also on the list.

Title IX is best known for guaranteeing women equal access to athletic programs on college campuses, but it also prohibits gender discrimination in other contexts for schools that receive federal money.

President Obama established a White

House task force early this year to study how universities handle reports of sexual assault, after many universities, including Yale, Dartmouth, Swarthmore, Occidental, Wesleyan and Florida State, received wide criticism for mishandling complaints.

The task force found that nearly 20 percent of female college students have been assaulted, but that only 12 percent of cases are reported. It concluded that many women and girls feared that their reports might become public, discouraging them from coming forward.

On Monday, the White House released a report drafted by the task force that urges colleges to provide better assurance of confidentiality to those who report such crimes; conduct standardized, anonymous surveys on campus assaults; and replicate programs at the University of New Hampshire, the University of Kentucky and others that train bystanders on how to intervene.

Study: 4.1 percent facing death falsely convicted

THE NEW YORK TIMES

Some 4.1 percent of death row defendants are falsely convicted, according to a widely cited study published this week. The figure concerned but did not surprise opponents of the death penalty.

But prosecutors disputed the finding, saying that it was hypothetical and overstated.

Determining the number of false convictions is almost impossible, as the study authors observed, and correcting a false conviction is extraordinarily difficult.

But post-conviction capital cases receive far more scrutiny than other felony convictions. So Samuel Gross, a professor at the University of Michigan Law School, and Barbara O'Brien, an associate professor at Michigan State University College of Law, looked at 7,482 inmates sentenced to death between 1973 and 2004.

During that period, 117 inmates, or 1.6 percent, were exonerated, they found. But 107 were exonerated while they still faced the threat of execution. The other 10 had left death row, often resented to life in prison. The authors said that the likelihood of exoneration for a death row inmate was therefore far greater while execution loomed, because the defendant's claims stood a better chance of being investigated.

Would exonerations rise if all the in-

mates had continued to receive the same level of scrutiny as those still facing execution? Applying a statistical analysis typically used for medicine and mortality, Gross and his colleagues arrived at the 4.1 percent figure in the study published in the Proceedings of the National Academy of Sciences.

Earlier research has shown that about two-thirds of prisoners sentenced to death will have those sentences overturned. A handful will be exonerated, but most will be resented to life in prison.

Gross said that reducing a sentence from death to life in prison did not make the problem of false convictions disappear. "If they're innocent, the punishment is better than execution, but not a lot better," he said.

Joshua Marquis, the district attorney of Clatsop County, Oregon, who is on the board of directors of the National District Attorneys Association, took issue with the study. "That is an astronomical figure," he said. "I would quit my job and become a Buddhist monk if it was one-fifth accurate."

The study did not distinguish why inmates were exonerated, Marquis said. A defendant can be exonerated for a number of reasons, not only innocence, he said, including prosecutorial misconduct.

"That doesn't mean I don't think mistakes are made," Marquis added.

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