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**“We will need to spend some time weighing the pros and cons before determining what is in the best interest of the university as we work to address this critical issue.”**

— SCOTT COLTRANE, UNIVERSITY OF OREGON INTERIM PRESIDENT

# UO scholar questions assault survey

*Jennifer Freyd and other experts on sexual violence say a trade group's national effort lacks transparency*

By JOSEPHINE WOOLINGTON  
 The Register-Guard

A University of Oregon professor is leading a group of sexual violence experts who are urging dozens of university presidents to reject what they call a flawed nationalized survey that they say could undermine federal efforts to measure true rates of sexual violence on college campuses. In a letter signed by 16 researchers, UO psychology pro-

fessor Jennifer Freyd and other sexual assault experts criticized the Association of American Universities' efforts to oversee a campus "climate" survey that will be developed and administered by a private firm in April — at a cost of about \$85,000 to each university that signs on. Schools have until Dec. 1 to decide whether to give the survey to students.

The researchers say that the AAU — a nonprofit higher education trade group whose mem-



Scott Coltrane Jennifer Freyd

bers include some of the nation's top public and private universities, including the UO — is pressuring its university members to agree to a costly survey that university officials and sexual violence experts won't be able to review until after administra-

tors write the check.

Experts say the survey lacks transparency because universities aren't required to release the results to the public, a caveat that contrasts with recently proposed federal legislation that would require schools to conduct climate surveys and make the data publicly available online.

The AAU has indicated that it will compile aggregate data to publicly release next fall that will not identify schools, which bars researchers and the public from comparing rates of sexual violence at different universities. "That defeats the purpose of

these surveys," said Freyd, who has studied sexual violence for more than two decades.

The group of professors and researchers sent the letter to presidents of all 62 AAU universities on Monday afternoon.

UO officials previously said that they would consider participating in the AAU survey.

"The fact that the AAU is proposing member institutions participate brings a great deal

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View a link to the letter to AAU presidents with this story at registerguard.com

## POLICE CAR INVOLVED IN WRECK

PHOTOGRAPH BY CHRIS PIETSCH/The Register-Guard



Springfield police and Eugene Springfield Fire personnel converge at the scene of an officer-involved vehicle accident at the intersection of B and Seventh streets in Springfield at 3:30 p.m. Tuesday. The police officer was heading east on B Street, responding to a domestic dispute report on 10th Street, when her 2013 Chevy Caprice police car was struck by a 2003 Nissan 350Z heading south on Seventh Street, Springfield and state police said. The police car then careened into two parked, unoccupied vehicles, a Mercedes and a Toyota Prius, police said. The police officer, who was not identified, received treatment for minor injuries at a local hospital, police said. The driver of the Nissan, a female juvenile, and her male juvenile passenger were not injured, police said. No citations have been issued as an investigation into the crash continues, state police said.

## Bethel school raises approved

*The board endorses a contract for teachers and agrees to boost all employee salaries*

By JOSEPHINE WOOLINGTON  
 The Register-Guard

The Bethel School Board has approved a settlement with the teachers' union and, in a surprise move, voted to give all district staff an additional salary increase.

The cost-of-living increase that will be given to school secretaries, bus drivers, custodians and administrators in the west Eugene district will total 2.75 percent this school year. Classified employees were previously told they would receive a 1.25 percent increase, while administrators and other staff members who are not represented by a union would have received a 1 percent cost-of-living increase.

The school board on Monday settled on the 2.75 percent figure because that is what teachers will receive in the newly approved contract.

This is in recognition that all Bethel employees voluntarily agreed to certain concessions during the worst of the economic downturn," district spokesman Pat McGillivray said in an email sent to district employees Monday night after the board meeting.

The salary changes will cost the district \$3.9 million from its general fund. That figure includes the cost of paying staff for three additional school days that were previously unpaid furlough days and also includes the nearly \$2 million that the district spent to hire more teachers, McGillivray said.

Board members unanimously approved the pay increase and thanked Bethel employees for taking pay cuts to help the district avoid layoffs during the last several years.

The salary increases will keep the district's salary and benefits packages competitive with those of other school districts, McGillivray said.

"Doing what's right for Bethel employees — while maintaining fiscal responsibility — is all welcomed news," McGillivray said in the email to employees. "It is the board's hope that our combined efforts can now be focused solely on our shared mission of providing the best possible education for all Bethel children."

Follow Josephine on Twitter @jwoolington. Email jwoolington@registerguard.com.

## Sexual assault victim sues Lincoln school district

*The guardian of a developmentally disabled boy alleges that Taft High employees failed the victim*

By JACK MORAN  
 The Register-Guard

A developmentally disabled boy's court-appointed guardian has filed a \$5 million lawsuit against the Lincoln County School District, alleging that officials failed to protect the youth from being sexually assaulted by a classmate on campus.

The lawsuit was filed Tuesday in U.S. District Court in Eugene. It accuses school officials of negligence and a violation

of the state's Vulnerable Person Act, and also of federal Title IX and Civil Rights Act violations. The lawsuit says the plaintiff was sexually assaulted more than once by another boy while both attended Taft High School in Lincoln City in 2012 and 2013.

Both boys were enrolled at the time in a class for students with developmental disabilities.

According to the lawsuit, the plaintiff reported the abuse to a state Department of Human Services caseworker, who noti-

fied police. Lincoln County prosecutors later charged the assailant with sexually abusing the plaintiff and another student in his class, the lawsuit says.

The attacker pleaded guilty in December in juvenile court to second- and third-degree sexual abuse of the plaintiff, according to the lawsuit.

The incidents allegedly occurred after the attacker lured the boy to a secluded area on Taft's campus during school hours by promising to give him video games and other electronic items.

The lawsuit asserts that the district had a duty to keep the

plaintiff safe at school, and accuses the boys' teacher and other Taft employees of acting "with deliberate indifference to a known risk" of harm by giving the boys permission to leave school buildings without supervision.

School district spokeswoman Mary Jo Kerlin said Tuesday that she is "unable to comment" on any pending litigation.

The plaintiff is developmentally delayed and suffers from disorders that include Asperger syndrome and attention-deficit hyperactivity disorder, according to the lawsuit, which he filed through court-appointed guardian Ann Yela.

## Right-to-die advocate's mother criticizes Vatican remarks

*The grieving woman says a church bioethicist's comments were "more than a slap in the face"*

THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

PORTLAND — Brittany Maynard's mother responded angrily to criticism from the Vatican of Maynard's decision to end her life early under an Oregon law written to let terminally ill patients die on their own terms.

Days after Maynard's Nov. 1 death at age 29, the Vatican's

top bioethics official called her choice "reprehensible" and said physician-assisted suicide should be condemned.

On Tuesday, Maynard's mother, Debbie Ziegler, issued a sharp written response. She said the comments from Monsignor Ignacio Carrasco de Paula, head of the Pontifical Academy for Life, came as the family was

grieving and were "more than a slap in the face."

Her response was made through Compassion & Choices, an advocacy group that worked with Maynard in her last days.

Maynard had terminal brain cancer and in the spring was told she had six months to live. She moved to Oregon from Northern California with her husband and parents because Oregon allows terminally ill pa-

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Brittany Maynard (left) hugs her mother, Debbie Ziegler.

**BRIEFLY  
METRO**

**Woman assaulted in parking lot**

A woman in her 20s was sexually assaulted while walking to her car in a restaurant parking lot at 463 Coburg Road just before 6 p.m. Tuesday, Eugene police said.

The assailant, who was armed with a knife, took the woman to some nearby bushes, where he sexually assaulted her, police said. The assailant fled after he was pepper-sprayed, and he may have sustained some redness to his face and body because of the pepper spray, police said.

The woman was taken to a hospital and treated for injuries that were not life-threatening, police said.

The assailant is described as a white 40-year-old man, about 6 feet tall, with "Australian shepherd" blue eyes, short gray hair and a gray, scraggly beard. He was wearing a fur-rimmed hat, multiple layers of clothing under a dark overcoat and dark corduroy pants, police said.

Police ask anyone with tips in the case to call Detective Jeff Donaca, 541-682-5193, or the police nonemergency line, 541-682-5111.

**NORTHWEST**

**Four rescued after night stuck in snow**

SALEM — Marion County sheriff's search teams rescued four Washington men who lost their way en route to Bagby Hot Springs in the Mount Hood National Forest and got their rented sport utility vehicle stuck overnight in more than a foot of snow.

Sheriff's Sgt. Chris Baldridge said rescuers found the four Tuesday afternoon, pulled their vehicle from the snow and led them back down to the small town of Detroit, south-east of Salem.

Baldridge said the driver, 44-year-old Robert Record of Washougal, Wash., was following a GPS unit that took him 45 miles in the wrong direction up an unmaintained road that did not lead to the springs. After spending Monday night in the vehicle, the men activated the SUV's OnStar button. That helped deputies locate them. All are unharmed.

**Horse euthanized after pit bulls attack**

DAMASCUS — A 13-year-old Oregon mare was euthanized after the pit bulls that

**Beloved willow clings to life**

*Caretakers help protect and preserve the struggling riverside tree in Bend*

By TED SHORAK  
The Bulletin

BEND — After tipping into the Deschutes River more than two years ago, a cherished willow tree in Bend is still clinging to the east riverbank near the Galveston Avenue bridge.

With the help of some caretakers, the willow has put down new roots, has been protected from beavers and is living on through cuttings that have been planted around Bend.

"Its angle of repose has changed, but it keeps on ticking," said Pam Stevenson, who lives on Northwest Riverfront Street. Her backyard and a neighbor's are home to the tree.

The willow, which is believed to be about 50 years old, fell in August 2012. Stevenson said about 90 percent of its roots were rotted at the time and likely caused its fractured state.

There were plans to remove the tree, but some



RYAN BRENNER/The Bulletin

"Popcorn's Willow" stands in the Deschutes River just upstream of the Galveston Avenue bridge in Bend. "It's one tough old mother, that tree," Pam Stevenson says.

of its roots remained entrenched in the riverbank. Stevenson and friends reworked the area around the tree and preserved the roots that were still there. They also removed branches hanging in the river that were a potential danger to floaters.

"It was a beloved tree, and the whole community chipped in to help," said Stevenson.

The tree was dubbed "Popcorn's Willow" for Stevenson's corgi and Jack Russell mix, Popcorn, who is buried beneath the tree.

Preserving the tree hasn't been easy. When a hole emerged in the Mir-

ror Pond dam in October 2013, the waterline dropped and left the willow's roots "high and dry" and "stressed the tree," Stevenson said.

"It's one tough old mother, that tree," she said.

Beavers also went after the tree and "started to attack it," Stevenson said she spent several hundred dollars on chicken wire to wrap parts of the tree to keep beavers away. She thought about giving up at times after branches were lost.

"It will be interesting to see what happens this winter," Stevenson said.

Stevenson's friends have taken cuttings from the willow and planted them, and several are growing quite well. Stevenson is waiting before she replants a part of the tree.

"I haven't yet because the original is still alive and so I still have an opportunity to take cuttings," she said.

For years the willow has been enjoyed by many floating the river and served as a gathering place and a spot for small concerts Stevenson hosted in her backyard.

"The tree belongs to all of Bend," Stevenson said.

**Violence: Maryland firm to conduct national survey**

Continued from Page B1

of credibility to the survey," UO Interim President Scott Coltrane said in a statement. "However, Jennifer Freyd also has a great deal of credibility with the university, and her expertise is important to consider. We will need to spend some time weighing the pros and cons before determining what is in the best interest of the university as we work to address this critical issue."

The AAU announced last week that Westat, a research firm based in Maryland, will conduct the survey. AAU President Hunter Rawlings said the organization wanted to conduct its own survey because it is skeptical of a government-developed one.

If all 62 public and private universities agree to take the survey, the Westat firm would earn about \$5.3 million.

Freyd and other experts say they fear the AAU survey could possibly undermine the federal government's efforts to require universities to administer a federally mandated survey, which was recommended by the White House earlier this year.

"There is this worry

that universities will sign off on it and sort of wipe their hands and say, 'Well, we've done it,'" Freyd said.

Climate surveys seek to measure how often sexual violence occurs on college campuses and how students perceive such violence. Results from climate surveys may help universities craft new policies to address sexual violence and provide more resources for victims.

Sexual assault has been a topic of debate at the UO for several years but was heightened after three basketball players were accused of raping an 18-year-old student earlier this year.

U.S. Sen. Kirsten Gillibrand, D-N.Y., has proposed a bill in the U.S. Senate that would require colleges, among other things, to give students a standardized and anonymous survey to assess sexual violence on campuses. Survey results would be published online so "parents and high school students can make an informed choice when comparing universities," according to a summary of the bill on Gillibrand's website.

Barry Toiv, AAU's vice president for public affairs, said the organiza-

tion is confident in the survey firm's abilities. He told The Register-Guard on Tuesday that the survey will be based on a White House-recommended model and will be designed with a select group of 19 university professionals who have experience with survey research, sexual assault, gender studies and students affairs.

"The letter's authors appear to be unaware of the expertise among those we expect to be members of the survey design team and working on this at Westat," Toiv said.

Toiv said that, although the AAU won't require universities to release survey results, the organization "will encourage all that participate in the survey to be transparent with their results."

"Our goal is not to compare institutions," Toiv said. The AAU hopes the survey data will help universities create informed sexual assault prevention policies. The AAU also hopes to use the data to inform public policy, he said.

"This does not require individual data from each university," he said.

Critics of AAU's proposed survey — who work at universities in Wash-

ington, Illinois, Michigan, Arizona, Georgia and North Carolina, among others — argue that such a large survey, which could reach 1.6 million students, should be openly critiqued and peer-reviewed by scientists who study sexual violence.

Freyd and other researchers questioned the group of university officials selected to help design the AAU's survey because only two members seem to have experience conducting surveys on sexual assault, while others are administrators or lawyers.

Freyd conducted her own climate survey at the UO during the summer. Preliminary results suggest that nearly 1 in 5 female UO students have been raped or experienced an attempted rape while attending the university.

Her survey methods, along with others conducted at different universities, could be used to create one nationalized survey, she said. To create such a large survey now is premature, Freyd said.

Crafting a survey without public feedback and scrutiny, Freyd said, is "extremely problematic."

**Unauthorized immigrants dip in Oregon, grow in Idaho**

THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

Oregon was one of 14 states where the number of unauthorized immigrants decreased between 2009 and 2012, according to a report released Tuesday by the Pew Research Center.

Idaho was among seven states where the number of unauthorized immigrants increased in that same period, the report also showed. The number stayed relatively stable in the remaining states, including Washington.

Nationally, the number of unauthorized immigrants remained stable at 11.2 million between 2009 and 2012, the report found. The number of such immigrants peaked in 2007 at 12.2 million, the report said.

But changes occurred within states.

Idaho grew from 35,000 unauthorized immigrants in 2009 to 50,000 in 2012. Idaho's growth was "driven by increases in unauthorized immigrants from countries other than Mexico," the report said.

Other states that saw increases were Florida, Maryland, Nebraska, New Jersey, Pennsylvania and Virginia, the report said.

Meanwhile, Oregon saw the number of unauthorized immigrants drop from 140,000 in 2009 to 120,000 in 2012.

In most states, the losses "were due to drops in the number of unauthorized immigrants from Mexico," the report said.

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