

# **The Leadership Prize: APPLICATION**

## **Part I: Preliminary Information**

**Title:** Active Bystander Intervention as a Means of Reducing Sexual Assault on Campus

**Names:**

**Abstract:** The prevalence of sexual violence on college campuses is both a timely and substantial problem. The likelihood of being sexually assaulted while in college has risen to alarming numbers: 1 in 5 women will be sexually assaulted over the course of her college career, making college campuses one of the most dangerous places for women aged 18-24. The implications of this problem are many, not least among them making college campuses an adverse environment for victims and survivors of sexual violence. Survivors of sexual assault face enormous physical, mental, and social obstacles throughout their recovery processes. Active Bystander Intervention programs help to challenge campus culture, empower all students to intervene on behalf of fellow students in potentially dangerous situations, and support survivors. I seek to research the effectiveness of these programs as well as lay the groundwork for such a program here at Elon University.

## **Part II: Problem Description and Personal Statement**

### **1. Problem Description**

Sexual assault and violence towards women is a prevalent and widespread problem facing women across the world. Worldwide, 35% of women have experienced sexual violence by a partner or non-partner (UN Women). On college campuses alone, 1 in 5 women are sexually assaulted at some point in their college career, usually by someone they know (White House Task Force to Protect Students from Sexual Assault, 2). Up to 96% of sexual assault cases go unreported to the police and most rapists are never prosecuted (Lisak and Miller, 73). The regularity and commonness of sexual violence towards women is rampant and has in many arenas gone unnoticed or ignored.

However, in recent months sexual violence on college campuses has been brought to the forefront of the American public's consciousness through the White House Task Force to Protect Students from Sexual Assault. The offices of the Vice President and The White House Council on Women and Girls have joined together on this task force to combat the sizable problem of sexual assault on college campuses. This task force seeks to investigate the problem of sexual assault on college campuses, hold schools accountable for acts of sexual violence on campus, and show survivors of assault that they are not alone.

The problem has captured the attention of the President, who asserts that sexual violence:

Threatens our communities; ultimately it threatens the entire country. It tears apart the fabric of our communities . . . we have the power to do something about it as a government, as a nation. We have the capacity to stop sexual assault, support those who have survived it, and bring perpetrators to justice (White House Task Force to Protect Students from Sexual Assault).

Our community here at Elon University is also threatened by the prevalence of sexual violence on campus. My goal in applying for The Leadership Prize is to implement a solution that will reduce this threat to the community I live in and love.

The consequences of sexual violence on the students affected are immeasurable. Feelings of shame, isolation, and self-blame often prevent victims of sexual violence from coming forward and reporting incidents of rape to any kind of authority on campus. Additionally, the risk of the rapist finding out about a victim coming forward and retaliating with yet more sexual violence is a very real fear with which victims live following an assault. Finally, many victims fear simply not being believed and supported by family, friends, law enforcement, and school officials if they do come forward, making the intimidating act of coming forward even more so (White House Task Force to Protect Students from Sexual Assault). It should be noted that every survivor of sexual assault has a different reaction to the assault (RAINN). In many cases, survivors essentially shut down emotionally and might not seem visibly upset; this is a defense and self-protective instinct, not an indication that nothing happened. Other survivors are immediately ready to report and tell their stories. The important point here is that all survivors, regardless of what their various reactions may or may not look like, deserve to be believed and protected.

In David Lisak and Paul Miller's "Repeat Rape and Multiple Offending Among Undetected Rapists," the authors explain how instances of sexual violence in general and instances of sexual violence on college campuses are often perpetrated by the same people over and over. Because of how few incidents of rape are reported to authorities, rapists are not prosecuted, and even when they are reported and prosecuted, these perpetrators rarely spend time in jail. This combination of factors makes it extremely easy for rapists to commit acts of sexual violence multiple times in the same community.

The many effects of sexual assault on survivors are such that affect a survivor's body, mind, and academics. Some of the most common are Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD), sleep disorders, depression, flashbacks to the trauma, and suicide, among many others. The effects of this crime on survivors are substantial and life altering (RAINN).

The effects of sexual assault on Elon as an institution lie mainly in the fear such crimes create. A culture of fear of sexual assault is common among women in college to the point where there is more and more research on this topic. In "Fear of Rape Among College Women: A Social Psychological Analysis," authors Douglas Pryor and Marian Hughes state: "Fear of rape exerts social control over women, restricting choices about social activities, living arrangements, dress and style, personal associations, and daily movement (444). The fear of encountering sexual assault, coupled with the already high statistics on campus sexual assault showing what a real and founded fear it is, make college an all too often intimidating environment for young women.

Here at Elon, we have very good resources for survivors in The Office for Health Promotion, an office that provides confidential reporting and support for survivors of sexual violence (Office of Health Promotion). However, even these resources are not always enough to encourage survivors to come forward. A shift in the cultural climate towards sexual violence is necessary in order to make survivors feel safe and supported enough to report incidences of sexual violence on campus. Our community as a whole must be engaged in preventing and reducing interpersonal violence.

Past efforts to solve the problem of sexual assault on campus have mostly focused on risk reduction. Risk reduction focuses almost solely on telling women what they "should" do to

“avoid” being assaulted. This strategy has been proven, time and time again, to be ineffective. More importantly than being ineffective, risk reduction places responsibility of reducing instances of assault on victims instead of on perpetrators (Colorado State University). Efforts to reduce sexual assault on campus should be focused on telling potential perpetrators *to not rape*. Rape is a crime about power and control; it is not about sex, it is about rendering someone powerless, asserting dominance over them, and taking away their power (Colorado State University). The perpetrators of these assaults are the only ones who should be held responsible. Giving women a laundry list of “tips” on how to avoid being assaulted is unsuccessful, counterproductive, and placing blame on the victim.

## **2. Personal Background and Motivation:**

Sexual violence has been an issue I’ve cared about all throughout my teenage years up to the present day. Due to the prevalence of sexual assault, everyone knows someone who is a survivor, whether or not that person ever actually says it out loud. I have close friends and family members who have been victims of sexual violence. My love for them, my respect and admiration for their strength, and my desire to see some measure of justice for them and those who have been in their place inspires the activism I do with my organization, EFFECT, and is one of the core reasons I am applying for The Leadership Prize.

My mother is my inspiration for so much in my life, and she has given me permission to write about her experiences. She home-schooled my six siblings and I from pre-school through high school, and her strength in the face of the sexual abuse she endured as a child and teenager is incredible. Watching her stand up for herself and go through the trauma, setbacks, and victories throughout her recovery from the abuse impressed on me the dreadfulness of sexual trauma, but most importantly the strength it took for her to recover, and without very many resources at her disposal. Sexual violence has generational repercussions, and the effect it had on my mother and by extension her family cannot be overstated. In addition to my mother, I have stood by close friends going through the process of recovering from sexual assault and have seen first-hand the fear, isolation, stress, feelings of helplessness, and countless other obstacles they have to face.

Paramount to the issue of sexual violence on college campuses is how little help and justice survivors receive. Here at Elon, we have great resources for survivors and advocates dedicated to helping them, but it is still a concern for survivors that they will not be believed. One of the biggest reasons victims do not seek help is because they are afraid of this, or because they do not know what resources are available and how to get them. This issue is one of the reasons I am a member of the organization EFFECT, Elon Feminists for Equality, Change, and Transformation. EFFECT hosted Elon Supports Survivors week towards the end of spring semester of 2014. The purpose of the week was to show survivors of sexual assault that we care about them and they will be believed and supported, to raise awareness about the problem of sexual assault on our campus, and to communicate to all members of the Elon University community the services Elon provides for survivors of sexual assault. Elon Supports Survivors week showed me how many people have been affected, directly or indirectly, by the problem of sexual assault on my campus. I was disheartened by the amount of sexual violence that has taken place at the school I love; at the same time I was encouraged by the outpouring of love and support from members of not only my organization, but so many others on campus as well. People care about this problem, deeply and personally, and that only became more evident when we all stood together in support and solidarity with survivors during that week last April.

Also at the end of last spring semester, I was elected to the executive board of EFFECT as Public Relations Chair, essentially Editor-in-Chief of materials produced for EFFECT. My responsibilities include running our various social media accounts, such as the Elon Feminists Facebook page, the Elon Feminists Twitter, and the Elon Feminists Tumblr blog. We use these social media platforms to raise awareness of feminist and social justice issues and disseminate information about the events EFFECT hosts and supports. Social media is a dynamic and effective way to spread awareness of issues such as these, and I truly enjoy the job and have learned a great deal from being PR Chair. This leadership position has taught me how to concisely, effectively, and responsibly represent my organization's core values and concerns. Additionally, I am responsible for evaluating the credibility of multiple sources of information as well as continuously educating others and myself about relevant issues. The leadership skills I have developed and am still gaining through this position are substantial, not least among them people skills, and of course PR skills. I am confident that these skills will put me in a unique position to implement a solution to the problem of sexual assault on campus.

### **Part III: Plan for Intellectual Inquiry**

Sexual assault on campus is a large and multi-faceted problem. Much more research needs to be done on this issue in order to best solve it, but there are many aspects of this problem that are already well-researched, meaning there is a good foundation on which to build more solutions. While there is much more planning to be done, my current plan is to research the nature, causes, and consequences of sexual assault on campus through focus groups, attending conferences, conducting surveys, and potentially interviewing survivors of assault who are willing to share their experiences. My current and continued work with EFFECT will also be a large part of conducting my research.

Perhaps the most significant part of my intellectual inquiry into this problem will be researching the various bystander intervention programs that have found success on college campuses across the U.S. as well as right here in North Carolina. Bystander intervention programs are incredibly effective tools for changing campus culture regarding attitudes toward rape and sexual assault. Being an active bystander simply means intervening in a way that keeps both you and the other people involved safe when you see something potentially harmful happening to another person. Various bystander intervention programs exist, such as Mentors in Violence Prevention (MVP), Bringing in the Bystander (University of New Hampshire), and Green Dot (CALCASA), all of which seek to empower every member in a community with skills to intervene in potentially harmful situations to prevent interpersonal violence before it even happens. This approach takes some of the focus off of interactions between perpetrators and survivors and instead engages an entire community in their responsibility to each other and reducing interpersonal violence. Bystander intervention programs “teaches bystanders how to safely intervene in instances where an incident may be occurring or where there may be risk” (UNH), as well as “reducing power-based personal violence by targeting all community members as potential bystanders” (CALCASA). Such programs teach all members of a community how to reduce violence, as well as how we all have a responsibility to each other and our community.

Successful bystander intervention programs can be found locally as well. The My Stand Mentor Program at the University of North Carolina Wilmington is an active bystander intervention program that “is designed to give all students the tools to be the change agents in our culture to reduce violence and improve each others lives” (UNCW). Another effective North Carolina program is University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill's One Act program, “a skills

training for interpersonal violence (IPV) prevention and intervention that gives individuals the knowledge, skills, and confidence to recognize signs of IPV and take preventive action – all to help create a safer Carolina and community” (UNCCH). Both of these programs have easily recognizable branding that is specific to their respective communities. The success of these programs lies in their ability to engage members of their communities across all organizations and affiliations.

It is my hope that an active bystander intervention program such as one of these could be created here at Elon. This is where focus groups, surveys, and interviews with members of the Elon University community would be very helpful. Discovering how students feel about the campus climate regarding interpersonal violence, what they would like to see change, and how we could implement an Elon-specific program that addresses the distinctive needs of our campus would be vital to creating such a program. These strategies would help me understand the nature, causes, and consequences of sexual violence on Elon’s campus. With that said, I am also open to researching many other methods of addressing and solving this problem.

Researching various leadership theories will be instrumental in applying solutions for this problem, and many great leadership theories exist. The following are just a few of the leadership theories I can research further. These theories, (and this project overall) clearly match with Elon’s Leadership for Social Change model. In “Transformation Now!: Toward a Post-Oppositional Politics of Change,” author AnaLouise Keating investigates feminist women-of-color and queer studies theories, calling for a shift in how we think of social change and justice. Keating analyzes the intersections of multiple identities such as race, sexuality, and class, among many others. Her focus on feminist social justice and change will be essential to understanding the kind of leadership required of a project such as I have proposed here. Additional theories and theorists that will prove to be helpful in my research are “Leadership for a Better World: Understanding the Social Change Model of Leadership Development” by Susan R. Komives and Wendy Wagner et al, and “Feminist Rhetorical Practices: New Horizons for Rhetoric, Composition, and Literacy Studies” by Jacqueline Jones Royster and Gesa E. Kirsch. In “Leadership for a Better World,” leadership is presented as collaborative, intentional, and utilizing diverse perspectives to achieve social justice goals. In “Feminist Rhetorical Practices,” the Royster and Kirsch talk about “linking ethics to responsible rhetorical action” (145), meaning responsible, ethical practices that lead to “ethics of hope and care” in order to “assess current situations, contexts, and institutional forces” to lead to positive change (145).

Outlined in the budget and timeline below are the various conferences and workshops I can attend to increase my knowledge of this problem, active bystander intervention programs, and leadership skills. Bringing in the Bystander Regional Training, Mentors in Violence Prevention (MVP) Training Institute, and Greendot Fall Institute for Colleges are just a few of the conferences and training programs I can attend to accomplish these goals. My continued work with EFFECT as PR Chair will undoubtedly remain a vital resource for honing leadership skills. Additionally, I will be studying abroad in London, England, during Winter Term of 2015, an experience I am confident will be valuable for broadening my experience in and perception of the wider world.

## **Part IV: Feasibility, Budget and Timeline**

### **Feasibility**

This project lends itself well to the timeframe and budget allotted by The Leadership Prize. The research I plan to conduct will be based on the timeline below and can be adjusted as needed. The way the problem of sexual assault on campus will be addressed is through research, focus groups, attending conferences, conducting surveys, and potentially interviewing survivors of sexual assault. Researching an active bystander program at Elon is feasible for the simple reason that these programs has found resounding success on both national and local levels. While it is my intention to lay the groundwork for an active bystander program that is uniquely suited to the needs of the Elon community, there are multiple existing programs that can act as templates, significantly streamlining this process. As previously mentioned, the My Stand Mentor Program at UNCW is an active bystander program tailored to the needs of the UNCW community. Students are trained as My Stand Mentors and encouraged to wear their My Stand t-shirts on “My Stand Mondays,” a day that aims to “build support for the idea that being an active and engaged Seahawk is a norm at UNCW” (UNC Wilmington). The language used here indicates that a cultural shift is the goal of the My Stand Mentor Program, as is true of active bystander programs in general. By challenging the existing norm with a new, healthier norm, culture shifts toward a safer campus like those at UNCW are much more likely to happen. By researching the potential of an active bystander program here at Elon like UNCW’s, I will not only have a great place to start, but also a very realistic project to complete within the timeframe set by the Prize.

The timeline in table format below shows the progression of the various steps of the Prize in a more organized manner, but in the most general terms, the next three semesters will be split into three categories: researching, planning, and launching. Spring semester of 2015 will be used to research leadership theories, visit schools with successful active bystander programs such as UNCW, hold focus groups, and attend relevant conferences in order to determine exactly what elements are needed to create an effective and distinctive active bystander program for Elon. Fall semester of 2015 will be used for planning the introduction of the active bystander program to Elon by finding interested parties to be involved with the launch, creating a recognizable brand for the program, and finalizing goals and outcomes. Spring semester of 2016 will be used for launching the program and integrating it into the wider Elon community.

The main resources needed to complete this project are funds for travel, conferences, and focus groups. These resources are outlined below and are well within the budget allotted by the Prize. While it is very difficult to know at his point exactly how funds need to be utilized and will most likely change over time, the following is a good estimate of how the funds of the Prize will be used. One of the best aspects of this project is that it is relatively low-cost, but still warrants a need for the funds provided by the Prize:

## **Budget**

- Conferences/Training Programs
  - Bringing in the Bystander Regional Training (December 8, 2014)
    - Round trip flight from Greensboro to Philadelphia \$300
    - Registration \$350
    - One night in a hotel \$130

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Food</li> </ul> </li> </ul>	\$200
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Mentors in Violence Prevention (MVP) Training Institute           <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Gas to and from Charlotte, N.C.</li> <li>▪ Registration</li> <li>▪ Three nights in a hotel (250 X 3)</li> <li>▪ Food</li> </ul> </li> </ul>	 \$100 \$500 \$750 \$200
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Greendot Fall Institute for Colleges (November 3-6, 2014)           <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Gas to and from Springfield, VA</li> <li>▪ Registration</li> </ul> </li> </ul>	 \$200
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Focus Groups           <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Food (pizza, drinks, etc.)</li> <li>○ Incentives (gift cards, vouchers, etc.)</li> </ul> </li> </ul>	 \$200 \$200
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Interest Meetings           <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Food (pizza, drinks, etc.)</li> <li>○ Incentives (gift cards, vouchers, etc.)</li> </ul> </li> </ul>	 \$200 \$200
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Travel           <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Trip to UNCW               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Gas</li> <li>▪ Hotel if necessary to stay overnight</li> <li>▪ Food</li> </ul> </li> <li>○ Trip to UNC Chapel Hill               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Gas</li> <li>▪ Hotel if necessary to stay overnight</li> <li>▪ Food</li> </ul> </li> <li>○ Miscellaneous</li> </ul> </li> </ul>	  \$100 \$200 \$100  \$100 \$200 \$100

- Speaker knowledgeable of active bystander programs \$1200
- Printing costs \$200
- Tentative total: \$5,730

### Timeline

The following is a tentative timeline of major steps in completing the project, and will most likely need to be adjusted as time goes on:

Fall 2014	Proposal, attend various conferences
Spring 2015	Research leadership theories and what makes current bystander intervention programs successful
February 2015	Research relevant leadership theories
March 2015	Research what makes current programs successful
April 2015	Visit UNC Wilmington
May 2015	Visit UNC Chapel Hill
Summer 2015	Internship
Fall 2015	Engage interested parties in focus groups, surveys, etc. Get an idea of current feelings on campus toward the problem
September 2015	Conduct surveys about current feelings on campus toward the problem
October 2015	Hold first interest meeting
November 2015	Research effective branding strategies
December 2015	Hold second interest meeting
Spring 2016	Reach out to previously interested parties, research and create recognizable brand for program in PWR Senior Seminar
February 2016	Research effective branding strategies

March 2016	Synthesize gathered information
April 2016	Present completed Senior Seminar project

### **Part V: List of sources**

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- "Facts and Figures: Ending Violence Against Women." *UN Women*. UN Women, n.d. Web. 14 Sept. 2014.
- "Green Dot." *CALCASA: California Coalition Against Sexual Assault*. CALCASA, n.d. Web. 16 Sept. 2014.
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