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Future Teachers to Learn Violence Prevention Strategies

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COLLEGE OF EDUCATION & HUMAN DEVELOPMENT

Selected News Releases

Future Teachers to Learn Violence Prevention Strategies

(Media note - The Nov. 5 workshop on "Bias, Harassment and Violence in Schools: Understanding the Problem and Developing Tools for Prevention" is scheduled for 9 a.m.-12:30 p.m. in Wells Conference Center.)

ORONO, Maine -- University of Maine students preparing to be teachers will get some expert advice on how to recognize the clues and deal with the realities of bias, harassment and violence in today's schools. A Nov. 5 workshop for students in the College of Education and Human Development's teacher candidacy and Master of Arts in Teaching programs will focus on early detection of problems and positive intervention.

Virtually every serious incident of violence involving youth was preceded by months of harassment without the victim informing appropriate school officials, according to Steven Wessler, director of the Center for the Study and Prevention of Hate Violence at the University of Southern Maine, and former Maine Assistant Attorney General in charge of Civil Rights. Wessler will conduct the workshop, along with Betsy Sweet of Hallowell, a trainer and consultant specializing in civil rights, sexual harassment and violence prevention.

Reflecting a national trend, civil rights violations and hate violence cases brought against teenagers by the Maine Attorney General have risen from 16 percent to over 40 percent in the past seven years. The vast majority of violations escalate from verbal harassment involving racial, ethnic, religious, gender-based and homophobic slurs.

"We want our students to be prepared for all the real issues and potential situations in schools and society," says Maxine Harrow, director of educational field experiences and certification at the College of Education and Human Development. The workshop is designed to raise awareness and sensitivity, help students understand the root causes of the problem, and develop appropriate intervention skills, she explains.

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