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## UMaine Grant to Build Coordinated Response to Crime, Prevention

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## COLLEGE OF EDUCATION & HUMAN DEVELOPMENT

### *Selected News Releases*

## **UMaine Grant to Build Coordinated Response to Crime, Prevention**

ORONO, Maine -- A grant from the U.S. Department of Justice will enable the University of Maine to better coordinate its response to crimes against women on campus and strengthen awareness and prevention programs. Funded by a two-year \$302,256 grant from the Justice Department's Violence Against Women Office, the Safe Campus Project will work to develop stronger collaboration among campus and community resources to improve the efficiency of continuing education and prevention, as well as advocacy for victims of sexual assault, domestic violence and stalking.

“The goal is to provide the best possible services and continuing education we can,” says Renate Klein, assistant professor of human development who wrote the successful proposal and will serve as project director. UMaine is in a good position to further integrate services because of its commitment to providing a safe learning environment and the existing high level of cooperation among campus units, from law enforcement and judicial affairs to counseling and peer education, according to Klein. She notes that UMaine's proposal was one of 18 funded in a national pool of 120 applications in the FY 2000 grant award program.

The broad-based Safe Campus Task Force will bring together representatives of all relevant UMaine services and constituents, including faculty and students, and community agencies. Its work will focus on the collaborative development of expertise and resources appropriate for and sensitive to nontraditional, international and distance education students, according to Klein. “We want to link all resources so there will be fewer and fewer loopholes,” she says.

The project has three major components –victim advocacy, offender accountability and prevention. Primary outside collaborators providing coordination, expertise and resources will be Rape Response Service and Spruce Run Association, both based in Bangor, and Men Can End Rape, a Washington, D.C. consultant group. Grant implementation is under way, and the external agencies are preparing targeted curriculum and training materials, says Klein.

In addition, the Department of Justice provides extensive technical assistance and support to grantees nationwide, such as training institutes and workshops, field visits and telephone consultation.

Specific objectives of UMaine's grant are to:

- strengthen victim advocacy
- enhance offender accountability

- upgrade and disseminate advocacy information
- provide education on gender and violence dynamics
- prepare student leaders and volunteers to address gender and violence issues
- develop resources and disseminate information to nontraditional, international and distance learning students

The improved service and educational opportunities provided by the grant are generating interest and excitement campuswide, according to Klein. “It is powerful to sit in the same room with representatives of a community working toward a common goal and to see how all the pieces fit together,” she says.

The grant also funds four graduate student assistantships. These students will sit on the task force and work as liaisons between the different activities.

Creating a culture in which victims are not blamed, that quickly and efficiently provides the best services and educates everyone about prevention, as well as where to go for safety, service and support requires a great deal of awareness raising and community building, Klein explains. “That's why we're bringing in as many players as possible,” she says.

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