The Varying Views of Sexual Assault from Cal Poly’s Campus Community

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Table of Contents

1. Research Proposal .................................................................................................................. 2
2. Annotated Bibliography ......................................................................................................... 4
3. Outline ..................................................................................................................................... 10
4. Introduction ............................................................................................................................ 12
5. Literature Review .................................................................................................................. 16
6. Methodology .......................................................................................................................... 23
7. Results .................................................................................................................................... 30
8. Discussion of Results ............................................................................................................. 45
9. Works Cited ............................................................................................................................ 56
10. Appendix A ........................................................................................................................... 58
11. Appendix B ........................................................................................................................... 61
12. Appendix C ........................................................................................................................... 70
Research Proposal

Significance

Sexual assault has become a major problem on college campuses and despite programs and policies to increase awareness and protection, no solutions have been found. There is already a large body of research surrounding this topic, but more data is needed to document the problem of sexual assault specifically on the campus of California Polytechnic State University.

Purpose

This project has one primary research objective: to compare and contrast the opinions of various members of Cal Poly’s community about sexual assault. The focus is only on Cal Poly’s campus, because I am interested in seeing how different groups of people on Cal Poly’s campus truly feel about sexual assault, despite what previous classes or outside sources have said.

The benefits of this project include understanding a topic that may seem personal or has been stigmatized, with an open mind. I believe that my subjects will bring a variety of opinions and advice about all aspects of sexual assault on Cal Poly’s campus. Stereotypes concerning sexual assault will be brought to light, while other stereotypes will be torn apart. By putting various opinions and attitudes together, I will be able to see how they relate and how these different attitudes can work together to bring a change to Cal Poly’s community.

Methods

This project will be accomplished through participant observation at various field sites located on Cal Poly’s campus, and through formal interviews. The research at the field sites will pertain solely to sexual assault, giving and presenting information to Cal Poly’s community. The subjects for the interviews will range from various types of students, housing administration
personnel, and campus resource providers. All interviews will feature similar questions to acquire the varying opinions and attitudes from the whole sample of participants. Some individuals were sought out for their position in campus life, and they will have extra questions added to their interview specifically concerning how their position influences their opinions.

Connections

This project is connected to my discipline because sociologists are dedicated to researching different facets of society and learning what makes individuals react to certain stimuli. In this case, I am the sociologist who is interested in finding out what various members of Cal Poly’s community truly think about sexual assault. Sociologists have created multiple theories in their attempts to explain everything they can about society. My study will be an addition to research that will hopefully help other sociologists understand the research areas of college communities and sexual assault.

I aspire to a career as an attorney. This project will help me move toward my career goals, by allowing me to experience what attorneys must do. This includes listening to all sides of a story and comparing all given evidence. Attorneys often face challenges with societal values and must look to research when dealing with specific cases. There are various types of law for attorneys to specialize in, ranging from corporate law, to real estate law, to family law. Family law is known to be the emotional law because it deals with divorces, adoption, and violence. This project will enable me to envision a career in the family law field that handles cases including sexual assault. It may be a difficult law field to pursue, but I believe it will be the most rewarding.
Annotated Bibliography


This article reviews the effect of alcohol on college students’ sexual assault experiences. Sexual assault has been linked to alcohol consumption by the victim, perpetrator, or both. The author uses two outside literature sources about sexual assault and one that examines alcohol’s effects on aggressive and sexual behavior, to compare and contrast. The article uses statistics about the prevalence of sexual assault among college students reported by both males and females, the prevalence of alcohol-related sexual assault, and then states factors of how alcohol can contribute to sexual assault, including stereotypes, peer pressure, social expectations, and more. The author concluded that alcohol increases the chances of sexual assault during social interactions through multiple connected factors. Further research suggested in the article includes an understanding of the difficulty in studying sexual assault in controlled settings, and an imperative need for in-depth research about alcohol’s effects in sexual situations. The preventative solution of informing students on the misuse of alcohol is important to my study, because my study includes students who attend parties where alcohol flows. This study provides further research that shows how much of an effect alcohol has on college campuses, students, and especially in social interactions. This article could have been stronger if it mentioned alcohol in fraternity and sorority party settings. (213 words)


This article compares the interactions of men and women at fraternities defined as dangerous for women versus fraternities defined as safe for women. The methods used for this study included observations and interactions between both sexes at fraternity parties and bars, informal conversations, and formal interviews. One of the authors of the study was a former student and collected the data, using her trust with the undergraduate students she had built during her teacher assistant career at the school. The results showed that high risk parties had a bigger sex ratio difference compared to the low risk house. The high risk house was generally less friendly and men there treated women in a disrespectful manner, unlike the low risk houses. Students at the bars behaved like they would at low risk houses, including equal conversation between men and women. The study also found that the “hook up” culture defined relations between the sexes, although the definition of hook up is different for the sexes. Not all men held traditional ideas about the rape culture, while some did or frowned upon the double standard of rape culture. This paper is important to my senior project because Cal Poly has a stereotype about fraternity parties being linked to sexual assaults. This article could have been
stronger if the deciding factor of who decided which houses were high risk or low risk were told. (231 words)


This article explores men’s views of sexually aggressive behavior and situations in college separately from women’s. Many sexual assault studies have focused on the female side of the discussion, but the male side is rarely discussed, unless it is in blaming the men. This research study proposed the question of identifying the reliability and validity of a measurement instrument made of statements thought to be rape supportive and typically linked to sexual aggression seen in college men. Students were given a packet that was introduced as an assessment on dating, sexual relationships, mixing alcohol and sex, sex roles, and so on. Students could complete this packet during class, outside class, or for class credit in a general psychology course. The findings highlight five factors about male conceptualizations including: justifications for having sex with women with no consent, men feeling victimized and under the control of women’s sexual actions, tactics related to using alcohol in sexual relationships, college men who behaved in traditional gender roles usually avoided feminine things, and sexual aggression is contributed to status. This paper is important to my senior project because it provides the men’s perspective on sexual assault compared to most studies that feature the perspective of women only. The article could have been stronger if the study had included a wider variety of male students. (220 words)


This article reviewed an experiment including fraternity men participating in two versions of a rape prevention program or participating in a control group in a small university. Fraternity men were used because the authors considered them a group with a high for perpetration of sexual violence. The research question for this article was: What impact do two versions of The Men’s Program have on program participants relative to each other and to a control group on four dependent variables? These measures included likelihood of raping, likelihood of committing sexual assault, rape myth acceptance, and rape survivor empathy. The Men’s Program is only an all-male workshop because previous research has shown that all-male audiences are more likely to change behaviors and attitudes about rape compared to female and male audiences. The results showed a general difference between the program participants and those in the control group, including an increase in empathy for rape survivors and a decline in rape myth
acceptance from the program participants. This article is important to my senior project because I ask all of my subjects about prevention ideas and it was interesting to get an idea of how prevention programs specifically help fraternity members, who are usually linked to sexual violence. This article could have stronger if it was performed at a big university. (218 words)


This article explores the topic of a hook up culture. The purpose of this article is to investigate how popular culture showcases actual sexual behavior, simultaneously “giving” a sexual manual to young adults. The author takes the interesting approach by going into the history of dating and how that history has continuously changed throughout time. The definition of hooking up for many people is illusive, because of its ambiguity. The author embraces this phenomenon and interweaves it with modern ideas such as friends with benefits and casual sex. The author takes on a cultural and biopsychosocial approach to researching the hook up culture, wanting to emphasize the connection among personal experience, biological factors, social interaction, and culture that shape the attitudes of young adults and their participation in hooking up. The results from this article indicated that the hook up culture is a part of history but the origins are still a mystery. While researching this topic may be difficult and filled with bias, it is necessary to continue researching in the young adult stage to protect their sexual life decisions. This article is important to my senior project because sexual assault can be seen as a branch off of the hook up culture, so while the two may be related, I hope to diminish any positive qualities people may see from the sexual assault branch. This article could have been stronger if specific examples of how studies for this topic should be conducted vs how studies shouldn’t be conducted. (250 words)


This article examines the prevalence and acceptance of rape associated with sexual assaults. The author’s purpose for this paper was to understand what cultural norms or perceptual attitudes of college students add to or decrease acceptance of rape myths. The author provides a broad overview of rape myths and show how they have influenced society. The article is built around well-known papers and studies, most notably a paper written in 1980 that was the first to define rape myths. The article features common perceptions concerning sexual assault and rape myths and the author uses contrasting studies or even the same study to show different sides of the perceptions. The author found that there has been an alarming increase in the amount of sexual assaults on college campuses in recent years, and that rape prevention programs and workshops have varying
effects on both genders. Both males and females respond more to these workshops if they are presented in different manners specific to each gender, including workshops held in educational settings. This all leads to the authors final point, continued research, which is why my senior project is important. The multitude of studies and examples contained within this paper will allow me to link more outside sources to my findings, allowing this concerning topic to be discussed. The article could have been stronger if it had included definitive statistics acquired in the various studies it cited. (234 words)


This article examined the occurrence of different types of sexual assault, the context, and the reporting of different types of sexual assault at university. Additional goals for this study were to educate students about sexual assault and their safety, and to give students information about campus resources. The student participants were asked to complete a web-based survey. The results of this study found that factors such as the number of sexual partners, having been humiliated by a dating partner, race, and years in college influenced the amount of women who experienced the different “types” of sexual assault while in college. The factors of where the assault happened, how the assault happened, who the perpetrator was, who the victims reported the assault to, and what the victims did after the assault contributed to the percentage of women the study acquired for the varying results of the study. The authors of this study believed this study shows that women who experience one type of sexual assault in the past are only at risk for experiencing that same type of assault, but not any other type. This article is important to my senior project because I am curious as to how students define sexual assault, and this study wanted to give information about campus resources to students, which is something I hope to do as well. This article could have been stronger if it included more responses from male students. (237 words)


This article explores how university personnel respond to sexual assaults on campus. This study focused on answering these four questions: How do senior campus personnel understand the disparity between high prevalence rates and low rates of reporting; What are the challenges of inter-organizational collaboration when responding to acquaintance rape; What are the specific roles of on-campus supportive resources; and What are successful elements of a coordinated approach to on-campus acquaintance rape? The research method used was semi-structured interviews that were conducted face to face. University personnel were chosen based on their leadership and participation in responding to on-campus sexual assault. The findings included overlapping opinions
about gender inequality, alcohol, and stages of social and emotional growth. Some of the respondents believed sexual assault to be linked to power and control, while others believed developmental characteristics of college students made them more vulnerable to become victims or offenders of sexual assault. This article is important to my senior project because while my paper focuses on the perspective of the student, it will be interesting to compare the perspective of the student to that of the university personnel. This article could have been stronger if the data was not biased because of the researcher’s position and if the focus was not solely on male to female victimization. 


This source compares the variation between rape-prone versus rape-free campus societies. The purpose of this paper is to delve into fraternity cultures on college campuses, identify information about rape-prone fraternity cultures, and compare that information with a rape-free fraternity culture. The length of the article suggests that the author didn’t want to provide a depth of information, but wanted to provide readers with a broad overview of data that encourages the comparison of different studies. The studies used in this article are previous studies done by the author and provide a background for the author to provide statistics, definitions, and new information. This study was interesting because the author provided information about how rape is seen in different cultures and different college societies, with respect to ceremonial and respect factors. The author concluded that rape-free campuses are easy to imagine, but are hard to find. The article indicates that more research on both kinds of campuses are necessary to provide contrasting evidence with previously recorded data. This article is important to my senior project because rape is a factor in sexual assault and college campuses have a tendency to link fraternities to sexual assaults. This article provided a different view of sexual assault, that I can use to enhance my data. This article could have been stronger if it had provided information about different kinds of fraternities and the sexuality of different fraternity members. (235 words)


This article focused on what kind of sexual assault prevention program works best for college students. The author asked the following questions. Would students in a class that included a sexual assault education component be more likely to demonstrate a change in degree of rape myth acceptance than students who were not in a class that included sexual assault education? Within the treatment group, would males demonstrate a larger change in rape myth acceptance than females? The students were first asked to fill out a
set of questions concerning demographic items and their religious beliefs. Participants were then asked to complete a Rape Supportive Attitude Scale (RSAS), which measures the degree to which students agree with beliefs that promote sexual assault. The results of this article showed that the treatment group greatly reduced their acceptance of the rape myth, but there was not a significant difference between the genders of the rape myth acceptance. The article believed that sexual assault education and prevention programs can help reduce college students’ support of rape myths. This article is important to my senior project because I am interested in what different prevention programs or classes students believe would work best. I am comparing these results between males and females similarly to this article. This article could have been stronger if participants were chosen from a variety of classes and not just a human sexuality class and psychology class. There were also more female students who participated compared to male students. (247 words)
Outline

I. Introduction
   A. Significance
   B. Definition of Sexual Assault
   C. Data
   D. Findings

II. Literature Review
   a. Fraternity Parties
   b. Men and Sexual Assault
   c. Different Types of Sexual Assault
   d. Alcohol
   e. Rape Myth
   f. Peer Influence
   g. University Personnel
   h. Summary

III. Methodology
   A. Research Question
   B. Research Design
   C. Sample
   D. Technique
      1. Field Sites
         a. Field Site #1
         b. Field Site #2
         c. Field Site #3
         d. Field Site #4
      2. Interviews
   E. Data Collection and Analysis
   F. Human Subject Approval

IV. Results
   A. Information from Field Sites
      1. Reaction to LGBTQ Queer Presentation
      2. Reaction to the Clothesline Project
      3. Reaction to Survivor Stories
      4. Reaction to the Take Back the Night march
   B. Participant Demographics
   C. Themes Acknowledged in the Interviews
      1. Stereotypes
      2. Stigma
      3. Programs
      4. Student Awareness
      5. Reporting
      6. Haven
7. Vulnerable Freshmen
8. Cliché Safety Procedures
9. Weeknight vs. Weekend Safety
10. Student Views
11. SAFER and University Police Department Views
12. Freshmen
13. Upper Class Students

V. Discussion of Results
   A. Safety Tips from Campus Resources
      a. UPD
      b. SAFER
   B. Conclusion
      a. Programs
      b. Reporting
      c. Haven
      d. Vulnerable Freshmen
      e. SAFER and University Police Department Views
      f. Freshmen
      g. Upper Class Students

VI. Works Cited
VII. Appendix A
    a. Interview Questions
VIII. Appendix B
     a. Human Subject Approval Forms
IX. Appendix C
   a. Table 1: Demographic Data
**Introduction**

The goal of this project is to compare and contrast the opinions of various members of Cal Poly’s community about sexual assault. My research question is: How do various community members feel about sexual assault on Cal Poly’s campus? The focus of this project is only on Cal Poly’s campus, because I am a student at Cal Poly and sexual assault is a topic that has been talked about increasingly in the past three years that I have been a student here. In previous classes I’ve read material that covered how college campuses are supposed to handle sexual assaults. In the media, I’ve seen examples of colleges who have failed to comply with the rules, but that wasn’t what interested me. I was more interested in seeing how different groups of people on Cal Poly’s campus truly felt about sexual assault. Sexual assault has created a significant impact on college campuses, not only on the multitude of students, but housing administration personnel, campus resource providers, and the community that surrounds Cal Poly. The people I will be interviewing are different facets of Cal Poly’s community who may have strong opinions about sexual assault and prevention ideas, who can help contribute to the ideas created by the campus administration.

**Significance**

The topic of sexual assault is important to myself, society, and research for multiple reasons, including: sexual assault being a national problem that is often perpetuated through hate or racism, sexual assault being a common occurrence at parties which are held by groups who have affiliations with colleges, students often have friends who have been sexually assaulted and do not know what to do or say, wanting new policies or updates to present policies to assist colleges in preventing sexual assaults, and the belief that both genders deserve to feel safe in any community, especially in college communities where students contribute to the main population.
These reasons are the influencing factors behind this research project. Recently the media has broadcasted more cases of sexual assault on college campuses and in other public places, making the public increasingly aware of its occurrence. The public needs to be informed about how to help survivors of sexual assault. The public also needs to displace their stereotypes behind the perpetrators of sexual assault. Sexual assault cases on college campuses have shown that the most survivors knew their perpetrators, so while many people may think of perpetrators as only strangers, in the case of college assaults this belief is wrong.

**Definition of Sexual Assault**

Sexual assault can be interpreted in different ways, and for the purpose of this paper I chose not to narrowly define the topic. I hope that the openness and lack of definition would allow people to feel more comfortable while talking and thus they would be more willing to share their thoughts and definitions about what sexual assault means to them. Indeed, I found that my subjects had differing opinions about the definition of sexual assault. The female sorority student I interviewed believed that sexual assault is any unwanted advance “which can be verbal or physical contact” (Student A, 2016). Some of the participants in the study believed that sexual assault was usually not defined in the physical sense by most people. The sorority student I interviewed stated that, “I just don’t think that people normally think about the verbal or mental parts of it” (Student A, 2016). Other participants believed that sexual assault was any “unwanted physical touching in a sexual way.” (Student B, 2016) Student C believed that sexual assault was any type of harassment of “someone against their will.” This raises an interesting point and is related to the opinion of the community advisor who was interviewed. The community advisor believed that sexual assault is when at least one member of a couple does not consent to any sexual advances. They agreed that sexual assault is unwanted attention, but they disagreed with it
being anything but physical or being included with harassment. “It’s not verbal or anything else because then it brings up the case of assault versus harassment” (CA, 2016).

**Data**

The research literature which I reviewed described many varying topics which were thought provoking and provided possible questions for the interviews. The studies that I researched can be broken up into three categories; the studies about rape culture on college campuses and its many facets, the studies about sexual assault, and the studies about prevention ideas.

The rape culture studies covered topics such as explaining acquaintance rape, the acceptance of the rape myth by college students, debating between a rape-prone and rape-free campus, describing rape supportive attitudes in college men, and explaining if fraternities are dangerous to women due to the increased possibility of rape at fraternities. The studies about sexual assault focused on how alcohol effects sexual assault and how the combination of the two are a problem for college students. These studies also described the different types of sexual assault and provided statistics about where sexual assaults occur, as well as explaining the sexual hookup culture that is prevalent in today’s society. The studies about prevention ideas highlighted rape prevention programs for men in fraternities, and also the need for sexual assault education for all college students. Data concerning how men and university personnel think about sexual assault, are also reported in these studies.

**Findings**

I hypothesized that the research literature would provide various opinions and advice about sexual assault and that by looking at my data, I would be able to see how these ideas might
relate to our campus community. I also hoped to learn some methods by which our community can work together to bring a change to Cal Poly’s campus. Throughout the participant interviews and my research observations at field sites, my hypothesis was proven correct. I found that there are various ideas about the stigma, student attitude and awareness, definition, programs, fraternities, student safety procedures, reporting, advice for students, and the stereotypes that surround sexual attitude. Students were aware of the stereotypes surrounding sexual assault, and while some didn’t want to question these stereotypes, other students did. The housing administration personnel and campus resource providers proved very insightful and gave information about the rate of sexual assaults on Cal Poly’s campus, prevention programs that the university has created, advice on how to help survivors of sexual assault, and safety procedures. While some opinions that were acquired were very similar, others were different and show that an open mind to this topic is necessary on Cal Poly’s campus.
Literature Review

Fraternity Parties

Previous literature focused on sexual assault has often looked at campus sexual assaults. A growing concern in campus sexual assaults is the Greek life and the impact it has on students. A prominent research study about this particular subject is the Fraternity and College Rape Culture Study conducted by Boswell and Spade in 1996. Boswell and Spade studied the interactions of men and women at fraternities defined as dangerous for women versus fraternities defined as safe for women. The authors of the Fraternity and College Rape Culture Study found that high risk parties had a bigger sex ratio difference compared to the low risk parties, “sometimes involving more men and other times involving more women” (Boswell and Spade, 1996, p. 13). The high risk houses were generally less friendly and men there treated women in a disrespectful manner, unlike the low risk houses.

Boswell and Spade’s study results are similar to the result of Sanday’s 1996 Fraternity Gang Rape Study, which found that some of the brothers in the fraternity she studied did not find anything wrong with forcing a woman to have sex, even if the woman was drunk. She suggests that “rape-prone attitudes are heavier on American campuses and are adopted by insecure young men who bond through homophobia and getting sex” (Sanday, 1996, p. 30). Sanday’s findings on fraternity brothers’ opinions of forcing sex on a woman even if a woman is drunk can be seen as a contributing factor to the Campus Sexual Assault Study (2007) finding that “The frequency with which women attended fraternity parties since entering college was positively associated with being a victim of incapacitated sexual assault” (NCJRS et al, 2007, p. 20).
The Fraternity and College Rape Culture Study also found that the “hook up” culture defined relations between the sexes, although the definition of hook up was different for the sexes. These types of differences in opinion between the sexes are common in various studies. One man in the study defined hooking up as “when you are really drunk and meet up with a woman you sort of know, or possibly don't know at all and don't care about. You go home with her with the intention of getting as much sexual, physical pleasure as she'll give you, which can range anywhere from kissing to intercourse, without any strings attached” (Boswell and Spade, 1996, p. 16). Garcia and coauthors (2013) found that over the past 60 years, “the prioritization of traditional forms of courting and pursuing romantic relationships has shifted to more casual hookups” (Garcia, Reiber, Massey, and Merriweather, 2013, p. 5).

While there have been previous studies focused on the influence of fraternities on college campuses, most of the those studies only delved into the aspects of alcohol and drugs at fraternity parties or described programs for fraternity members which were intended to change their thoughts about sexual assault and help prevent sexual assault at fraternity parties. More studies are needed to examine if fraternity brothers all have the same thoughts on sexual assault and if their thoughts or actions about sexual assault change with the location of the fraternity and college.

**Men and Sexual Assault**

Boswell and Spade (1996) also found that not all men held traditional ideas about the rape culture, while some did or frowned upon the double standard of rape culture. This finding correlates to an experiment completed by Foubert and Newberry (2013), which included fraternity men participating in two versions of a rape prevention program or participating in a control group in a small university. Fraternity men were used because the authors considered
them a group with a high risk for perpetration of sexual violence. The program focused on four factors: likelihood of committing rape, likelihood of committing sexual assault, rape myth acceptance, and rape survivor empathy. The participants in the study reported increases in empathy toward rape survivors and declines in the likelihood of committing rape, likelihood of committing sexual assault, and rape myth acceptance. (Foubert and Newberry, 2013, p. 23)

Society has long held the belief that men are the perpetrators of sexual assaults and women are the victims. Whether society has chosen to overlook the fact that both sexes are at risk of becoming sexual assault perpetrators and victims or has decided to ignore evidence that is contradictory to their long held beliefs, more research studies need to be conducted on both sexes. Future studies could focus on men being the victims of sexual assault, perhaps because of their socioeconomic status, or location.

**Different Types of Sexual Assault**

Previous studies about sexual assault have often had a focus on either studying the scope of the problem, or trying to find new information that will help students. The Campus Sexual Assault Study (NCJRS et al, 2007) is perhaps the best study that covered both of these goals. The legal definition the study provided for sexual assault factors in the ability to provide consent, and specifies that individuals who are incapacitated because of the effects of alcohol or drugs are unable to consent. The Campus Sexual Assault Study had the goal of examining the occurrence of different types of sexual assault, the context, and the reporting of different types of sexual assault. Different “types” are defined as how the assault was achieved. The “types” of sexual assault discussed in this article included assaults occurring as a result of physical force (or threats of physical force) and incapacitation of the victim or “any unwanted sexual contact occurring when a victim is unable to provide consent or stop what is happening because she is passed out,
drugged, drunk, incapacitated, or asleep…” (NCJRS et al, 2007, p. ix) Incapacitation of the victim is further broken down into four categories:

DFSA (drug-facilitated sexual assault) - The victim is unable to give consent for unwanted sexual contact after being given a drug without her knowledge. Victims are certain they have been drugged in DFSA cases.

SDFSA (suspected drug-facilitated sexual assault) – The victim is unable to respond to a sexual assault after thinking they were given a drug without their consent.

AOD– (alcohol and/or other drug enabled sexual assault) - The victim is unable to consent to unwanted sexual contact after voluntarily consuming alcohol or drugs.

Other incapacitated sexual assaults – The remaining cases where a victim can be incapacitated, such as being asleep or being unconscious. (NCJRS et al, 2007, p. ix)

The Campus Sexual Assault Study also had other goals including; educating students about sexual assault and their safety, and giving students information about campus resources. The authors of the CSA study found that college women are a group that are the most targeted for sexual victimization, and found that “the risk was greater for freshmen and sophomores than for juniors and seniors” (NCJRS et al, 2007, p. 5).

Alcohol

Most of the research studies concerning sexual assault also focus on alcohol related problems. The Campus Sexual Assault Study found that “at least 50% of their sexual assaults involving the use of alcohol or other drugs by the perpetrator, victim, or both” (NCJRS, 2007, p. 10). Further evidence in the study found that 7.8% of these women were assaulted while
incapacitated (alcohol and/or other drug), and 0.6% were assaulted when they were incapacitated after unknowingly being given a drug. (NCJRS et al, 2007, p. 12)

Abbey (2015) demonstrated that alcohol increases the likelihood of sexual assault occurring among friends during social interactions. Abbey claimed that this happens through various pathways including: “beliefs about alcohol, deficits in higher order cognitive processing and motor impairments induced by alcohol and peer group norms that encourage heavy drinking and forced sex” (Abbey, 2015, p. 61).

Rape Myth

Sexual assaults have continued to exist on college campuses in part due to the rape myth. Iconis (2008) defined rape myth as “prejudicial, stereotyped, or false beliefs about rape, rape victims, and rapists.” Examples of these myths include “women ask for it” and “rapists are sex-starved, insane, or both.” Iconis found that rape myth acceptance was higher among freshman and sophomore male student athletes compared to juniors and seniors who were not athletes (Iconis, 2008, p. 217). Ueland (2011) found that college students' rape myth acceptance can be decreased if they “perceive that their peers expect them to take action if they are aware of someone being sexually assaulted or hear a joke about sexual violence” (Ueland, 2011, p. 11).

Peer Influence

Peer influence is another other factor involved in the occurrence of sexual assaults, along with the consumption of alcohol and the rape myth. Ueland (2011) found that peer acceptance or disapproval “can influence whether or not people take action to prevent harm to another, such as in a situation when someone observes a woman being taken advantage of or attacked” (Ueland, 2011, p. 17). These findings indicate that if rape prevention programs can increase peer
disapproval of sexual assaults then, cultural attitudes that support sexual assault may change leading to a reduction in sexual assault. More programs such as Foubert and Newberry’s rape prevention program (2013) need to be conducted with a larger portion of the student population on college campuses in order to prove or disprove this concept in the future.

**University Personnel**

While many previous campus sexual assault studies focused on the students, O’Neil (2012) studied how sexual assaults on college campuses affect the response by senior university personnel. This is a challenging topic for personnel because they are the decision makers and they have the power to “affect the entire student community and influence community safety” (O’Neil, 2012, p. 61). All of the participants in the College Campus Acquaintance Rape study from the University of Pennsylvania, accepted that there was a link between alcohol and the frequency of on-campus assaults. Respondents also believed sexual assault to be linked to power and control, while others believed developmental characteristics of college students made them more vulnerable to become victims or offenders of sexual assault. Future studies could focus on what university personnel across the country or even the world believe about sexual assault and what they are doing to prevent sexual assaults on their campuses.

**Summary**

This condensed review of the literature focused on sexual assault shows that previous research on the topic is varied and more research needs to be completed to gain more knowledge and provide contrasting evidence with previously recorded data. Fraternity houses and parties can be dangerous places for women because of the attitudes of fraternity brothers and the prevalence of the hookup culture. Men who may or may not be in fraternities have varying views
of sexual assault and although they are often blamed for being the perpetrators of sexual assaults, programs have been conducted with men to show that men can change their stance on sexual assaults. There are many types of sexual assaults that range from physical force assaults to assaults on an incapacitated victim. Factors in the prevalence of sexual assaults include alcohol, rape myth, and peer influence. Possible areas for future study include more in-depth studies on fraternity brothers, men, programs, and university personnel.
Methodology

Research Question

This research study surveyed the opinions of various members of California Polytechnic State University’s campus community about the topic of sexual assault. The predominant research question was: to compare and contrast the opinions of various members of Cal Poly’s community about sexual assault. The following sections will explain the research design, sample, technique, data analysis, and human subject approval process.

Research Design

This study was conducted by using participant observation in various field sites located throughout Cal Poly’s campus and through formal interviews. I observed student participation in sexual assault awareness events that were organized by the sexual assault campus organization; SAFER. California Polytechnic State University has roughly 20,944 students, and I was interested in seeing how many of those students would spend time at the SAFER events. (Anon, 2012) By using participant observation and interviews, I hoped to obtain a better understanding of how Cal Poly’s campus community relates to sexual assault, both verbally through interviews and physically through attendance at the SAFER events.

There were three possible limitations of this study. The first limitation was the small sample size. The next two limitations were my gender as a researcher and that my sample recruitment process may have created a gender imbalance toward female participants. The total sample size was sixteen people. Given this sample size the results may not be generalizable. Because I am a female student researching this topic, I understood that some participant answers might be biased. This bias might occur due to male students being reluctant to discuss sexual
issues openly with me or with administrators possibly not being open with a student. I attempted to address this bias by urging people to be open with their thoughts and asking them if they are censoring their replies or leaving things out. With regard to the sample size, I attempted to create an equal balance of participants of both genders in the sample, however, most of the participants were females. This was because more females agreed to answer my questions, whereas males refused to answer when I approached them.

During the research there was also the possible psychological risk of emotional distress if I asked a question that was triggering for a subject. I attempted to overcome the problems of being a female researcher receiving biased information by looking reflexively at myself as a researcher. This study has taught me that society needs to question stereotypes, to not ignore new information about subjects people have never heard of before, and to not be afraid to talk to people about sensitive subjects.

**Sample**

My subjects included both students and the campus authorities. The students were chosen at random in order to try to create a varied representative sample. I approached the students randomly in locations such as the library and the recreation center and I asked them to participate in a thirty minute interview. In contrast, the campus authorities were specifically emailed because they were persons of authority on campus who had a role in addressing the issue of sexual assault, such as an officer from the University Police, a Community Advisor from University Housing, and a member of SAFER. Most of the participants were young adults, but there were some older adults as well. I did not choose my subjects based on their ethnicity, but I did try to interview an even amount of males and females, especially because I wanted to
question males and females from every grade level from first years to fourth years. I also interviewed students from a sorority and a fraternity.

**Technique**

My data was collected through field sites, including participant observation, and through formal interviews. The information about the events came from Cal Poly’s newspaper; the Mustang News, and the webpage for SAFER which is part of the Cal Poly online homepage. Both sources described events that would be occurring throughout the month of April, 2016 which was Sexual Assault Awareness Month. For example, the Mustang News edition for March gave a brief description of events happening during the first week of April. This is when I identified my first field site, a presentation entitled Queer 201: Sexual Assault and Domestic Violence in the LGBTQ community.

**Field Sites**

**Field Site #1.**

As stated above, I learned of my first field site while reading the Mustang News, and it was a presentation entitled Queer 201: Sexual Assault and Domestic Violence in the LGBTQ community. This field site allowed me to gain more information about a community I didn’t know much about previously and it allowed me to compare and contrast this community with other communities. The rest of my field sites came from information displayed on SAFER’s webpage.
Field Site #2.

The second field site was called the Clothesline Project. This field site featured student made shirts with empowering messages to survivors of sexual assault. It was located on Dexter Lawn, a popular place for students to pass by or hang out. The shirts that were made were placed on a clothesline in an area of Dexter Lawn, where they were easily seen by pedestrians. Students wrote a multitude of messages, but participation was quite low.

Field Site # 3.

The third field site involved attending an event entitled Survivor Stories. This event was located near the University Union, a busy part of the Cal Poly campus which many students frequent during their breaks from class. This event included a table displaying stories from survivors of sexual assault. Also included were posters with supporting messages for survivors, and other sexual assault information for students to read.

Field Site # 4.

The fourth field site was a Take Back the Night march, which occurred on campus. This event had the most student attendance, although this may have been because of students getting class credit for their attendance. Throughout all of these field sites I took note of the interactions between students and volunteers from SAFER and interactions between students at the event, student attendance, and student response to the events.

Interviews

In addition to observing at the field sites, 16 individuals were interviewed including students from various years in school, a Resident Advisor from on-campus housing, a member of
the SAFER organization, a member of the Cal Poly University Police Department, a female student in a sorority, and a male student in a fraternity. The interviews were organized by email or random selection on campus and were then conducted face-to-face. The interview questions included opinion questions and open-ended questions about common stereotypes about sexual assault and how those stereotypes pertain to Cal Poly. Questions also included definitions of different aspects of sexual assault, attitudes about sexual assault, parties and Greek life, campus safety, and options for students to protect themselves from sexual assault. All participants were asked the same questions, but some interviews involved more questions based on the interviewee and their position on campus. Probes were used throughout the interview to acquire more details on certain aspects. See appendix for a list of the questions and follow up probes.

Data Collection and Analysis

Data collection consisted of notes in my notebook and recorded interviews on my cellphone. The recordings of the interviews were kept under password protection on my phone and were only kept for the duration of this study. The notebook used to record my notes was either with me or was stored in a secure locked drawer in my bedroom. The interview material that I recorded on my cellphone, were transcribed and the transcripts were kept private by being locked in the same drawer with my notebook. The data in the notes that I acquired will be kept only for the duration of this study and will then be disposed of in a secure manner by shredding and recordings will be deleted.

The coding scheme used to analyze the data included a process of: open coding, focused coding, axial coding, comparative analysis, and theory building. The data from the field interviews and the participant interviews was triangulated together using grounded theory methodology. This technique was utilized to develop a coherent picture of the over-all campus environment by combining the ample amount of data from the field sites and observations, and
the participant interviews. The data collected contrasted, but also had varying degrees of similarity. The grounded theory allowed me to see emerging patterns among the data, and identified specific areas and questions within my study that could be pursued in the future to gain more insight into this topic.

**Human Subject Approval**

Since this research study involved human subjects, permission was needed from the Human Subjects Committee at Cal Poly. The process included filling out a Human Subjects Protocol Approval Form, creating an Informed Consent Form, Research Protocol, and listing the Interview Questions that would be used. The Human Subjects Protocol Approval entailed briefly describing who the researcher was, the risks, incentives, and the fact that no deceptions would be used throughout the study. The Informed Consent Form is the document given to the individuals who were interviewed for review before their interview. The Research Protocol included the name of the study, the researcher and the advisor, and brief descriptions of the purpose behind the project and the methods used. See Appendix B for examples of these forms.

The process in gaining permission was straightforward and was conducted over email. All of the files were sent to one member of the committee, who then shared them with the other committee members to get another opinion for the approval. After the initial review, two of my documents were sent back in need of revision. Once these documents were revised and resubmitted, the approval was swiftly given on September 13, 2016.

The Human Subjects approval was needed because during the research there was the possible psychological risk of emotional distress if I asked a question that was triggering for a subject. As part of the Human Subjects approval request process warnings and phone numbers
were given to protect participants. Participants were told that they could withdraw from the interview at any time without penalty and that they could omit any items they would prefer not to answer. If participants were triggered by any questions, they were given the number of Cal Poly’s Health Center and the number of my advisor Dr. Liz Johnston. For the participants that weren’t students at Cal Poly, they were requested to contact their personal physician if they were triggered. Participants who were interested in the results at the end of the study were given the emails of the Chair of Cal Poly Human Subjects Committee, the Dean of Research, and my own email.
Information from Field Sites

Reaction to the LGBTQ Queer Presentation

The first field site was a presentation entitled Queer 201: Sexual Assault and Domestic Violence in the LGBTQ community. This presentation interested me because it provided information about a community I did not know much about. I was able to compare and contrast this community to other communities on campus, which I was more familiar with. This process showed me that while communities may seem different on the outside, they actually all share similarities. Walking into the presentation, I thought I would feel uncomfortable because of the topic and my inexperience with it. Being a good researcher involves keeping an open mind about all subjects to help understand everything that can be observed. It was interesting to note that the other students who attended the presentation only attended to get credit for class and while most of the attendees paid attention, there were a few who showed their boredom by playing on their phones for most of the presentation. The presenters were both students and made the audience feel comfortable throughout the presentation by making the occasional joke and answering all of the questions honestly. By the end of the presentation I felt comfortable enough to ask questions about certain topics from the presentation and I left feeling informed and ready to learn more about sexual assault.

Reaction to the Clothesline Project

The second field site was called the Clothesline Project, which was put on by the sexual assault awareness group called SAFER. This project featured student-made shirts with empowering messages to survivors of sexual assault. These shirts were then placed on a
clothesline located in a popular location on campus where students went to relax between classes; Dexter Lawn. The clothesline was put in such a popular place in the hopes that students would notice the shirts. It was interesting to see what students wrote for their messages, including messages such as “Yes means Yes,” and “No means No.”

During my observation period, I only saw seven males and four females come up to the table to make a shirt. Most of those people who showed interest in the event were alone instead of walking with friends. The ratio of guys to girls was interesting as well. I believed that more girls would be more willing to support the cause and make shirts. The males who came up to the table seemed genuinely interested in what the cause was about, and there were many males who wanted to learn about the cause but didn’t stop to make shirts. One of the males replied to a volunteer asking him to make a shirt with “no thanks but it sounds pretty awesome.”

Although shirts were available to students, few students actually created shirts. Most of the students who walked by, chose to ignore the event. Almost everyone made some excuse as to why they couldn’t. Excuses ranged from “I have to go to class” or “I don’t have a pen” or “I’ll come back later.” This option seemed popular because many students were most likely on their way to class. My attendance at this event was only due to me being a researcher, if I hadn’t been researching I probably wouldn’t have stopped. People also might not have chosen to walk up to the table because the topic can be a bit intimidating for people or be slightly uncomfortable. A common sight to see during my observation period was for people to look curiously at the table when they were at a short distance from the table. Once they got closer, they averted their eyes and didn’t walk too close to the table in fear of getting called out to by the volunteers.
Reaction to Survivor Stories

The third field site involved attending an event entitled Survivor Stories, also put on by SAFER. This field site was located near the University Union, a busy part of the Cal Poly campus where many students frequent during their breaks from class. This event included a table displaying stories from survivors of sexual assault and other sexual assault information for students to read. It was interesting to note that more girls observed the information presented compared to boys, but not many students went up to the table overall. Perhaps this was because of what information was being displayed. I was shocked by some of the stories that were written, because of how much detail was put in and also that fact that some incidents had actually happened. It is different hearing about such events in the news compared to knowing such an event actually happened to a student on campus. I was glad such shocking stories were put on display, because they were real and the public needed to read them to be made aware that sexual assault was happening to students on campus.

Reaction to the Take Back the Night March

The last field site was a Take Back the Night march, which occurred on campus. This event acquired the most student attendance, although this may have been because of students getting class credit for their attendance. I had never been in a march before, so I wasn’t sure what to expect. Before the march, I noticed people had signs with various sayings. Throughout the march, the leaders would continuously shout out random chants that the group would repeat. I felt uncomfortable at first because of the frank language being used in the chants, and having strangers focusing their attention on the marchers. That uncomfortable feeling dwindled as the march went on because I realized that the frank language was grabbing the attention of students watching the march. The march was short in duration and did not make a complete tour of the
school as I had originally thought it would. I think the march would have been more beneficial if it walked around the entire campus so that more people could have been made aware that the event was taking place. Throughout all of these field sites I took note of the interactions between students and volunteers from SAFER and interactions between students at the event, student attendance, and student response to the events.

**Participant Demographics**

Table 1 shows the demographic data for the sample. There were sixteen interview participants, all of whom were a part of the Cal Poly campus community. Interview participants were not chosen for any specific factor such as race, however, most of the participants were White due to Cal Poly’s demographics. Of the sixteen participants, there were nine females and seven males. The classification of the participants ranged from students to administrators, with most of the participants being students. There were thirteen students and three administrators. Of the students, there were two freshmen, four sophomores, four juniors, four seniors. Two of the juniors in the sample were members of the Greek system, there was one sorority member, and one fraternity member. For the administration, there was one member from SAFER, one officer from the University Police Department (UPD), and one Community Advisor (CA).

**Themes acknowledged in the Interviews**

The participants in this sample acknowledged the themes of “stereotypes,” “stigma,” and “programs.” When participants were questioned specifically about students, the themes of “awareness,” “reporting,” “Haven,” and “vulnerable freshmen,” were introduced. Participants were also asked about fraternities and they identified the themes of “student views,” and “SAFER and University Police Department views.” The themes of “freshmen,” and “upper class students,” will similarly be explained in the next section.
Stereotypes

The participants described stereotypes about students created by the public and stereotypes created by the media. The stereotypes that were identified were: all college students are alcoholics, when college students party they get drunk and drunk college students do stupid things, and stereotypes that are created by the media influence the thoughts of students. There were important differences in which type of stereotype the student participants talked about versus which stereotypes the administrators focused on. More students talked about how they felt about stereotypes and how their opinion of stereotypes about sexual assault has changed since attending Cal Poly. More males described their feelings on stereotypes about students, while more females described how their opinions of sexual assault have changed.

Student J claimed they did not like the stereotypes that are put on college students, because “not all college students are the same and everyone does something different” (Student J). Student F stated that they “used to think that it was mainly women who are assaulted, but I discovered at Cal Poly that a portion of men do get assaulted” (Student F). Student I was the only student to consider the reasoning behind the stereotype linking fraternity parties and sexual assaults, stating that they saw fraternity houses as places “where a bunch of guys live and this might facilitate the stereotype about fraternity parties and sexual assaults” (Student I).

All of the administrators had thoughts about the stereotypes surrounding sexual assault in regards to Cal Poly’s campus community. In comparison to the students, the administrators talked more about the role of the stereotypes created by the media and their opinion of these stereotypes. UPD claimed that, “there’s the stereotype for frats that alcoholic college kids go there to party and get drunk. These are just stereotypes” (UPD). UPD also described how criminals saw college towns. According to UPD, college towns are “magnets for criminals
because there are a lot more opportunities for them here compared to in the city” (UPD). UPD further reported that criminals see college towns as “Disneylands for criminal,” and students need to “be wary of strangers” (UPD).

**Stigma**

All of the participants were concerned that sexual assault was not being talked about enough and that the stigma surrounding sexual assault needs to be reduced. Ten of the students reported being afraid of talking about sexual assault, because they were afraid they might say something offensive or what they say might have a negative impact on the survivors of sexual assault. Student D stated that they were “afraid of saying the wrong thing to people who have been sexually assaulted, because I don’t want to bring up bad memories or anything” (Student D). All of the male students reported being afraid to talk about sexual assault in general because of how men are usually perceived in sexual assault situations. Student H explained that men are often targeted as the perpetrators of the attack, “most men don’t feel comfortable explaining their views on sexual assault in fear of getting attacked because men are usually the perpetrators. That’s actually kind of sexist if you think about it” (Student H). This was also shown in the low amount of males who attended the sexual assault presentations and events.

The administrators on the other hand, were not afraid of speaking about sexual assault and its stigma, and wanted more people to get involved in the conversation. The CA participant stated “I think it’s good to talk about sexual assault actually. I just wish more people were more open to talking about it” (CA). The SAFER participant reported wanting “more discussion about sexual assault, including behaviors that are acceptable at parties and acceptable behaviors towards women” (SAFER).
Programs

Although Cal Poly already has programs and policies that have been implemented to raise student awareness about sexual assault, all of the participants in the study had opinions on existing programs and thought of new programs that could help students. Most of the students could not think of new programs that could benefit students, other than increasing the number of posters on campus and posting more information on social media. All of the participants had an opinion about having a self-defense class as an option. More female students agreed that having a voluntary self-defense class would be beneficial in comparison to the male students.

The administrators had different opinions to that of the students. While the CA participant liked the idea of having a self-defense class, the other two administrators did not suggest a self-defense class as a good option for students. Both SAFER and UPD reported that Cal Poly has offered self-defense classes in the past, but they were stopped in 2015, because not enough people were showing up despite advertisements. The SAFER participant also described programs that are already in place such as the Greeks against Sexual Assault and suggested a new program entitled Cultural Inclusions, “we have a lot of privileged students here, who aren’t aware of the dangers that college presents. Students need to be taught about college life, but we’re not teaching in a method that’s going to create long term results” (SAFER).

The UPD participant suggested reaching out to incoming freshmen at events such as SOAR and WOW. Both of those programs provide opportunities for incoming freshmen to become better acquainted with campus life. The UPD officer claimed, “Usually I’ll work during move-in days in the dorms to talk to students to educate them, but we need to talk to the students sooner. I think SOAR and WOW are the best options, because at open house you don’t know if they’re coming or not, but with SOAR, you know they are for sure coming” (UPD).
Student Awareness

When it comes to student awareness, the student participants tended to show either a sympathetic or apathetic attitude towards sexual assault information presented on Cal Poly’s campus, especially seen at the events hosted by SAFER. More female students reported paying attention to information presented on campus in comparison to male students. Students were made aware of information about sexual assault through events, presentations in classes, and training (if their job requires it). The administrators were in charge of presenting this information and were aware of the low student attendance at presentations and events. SAFER is in charge of putting on the events and stated that “we also hold presentations in classes that want us, but some teachers know what to talk about, so they talk to their classes instead of having us come” (SAFER, 2016).

All of the administrators reported that they often work with each other in regards to sexual assault situations. UPD often partners with SAFER in presentations and they also hold their own classes. CA’s are trained “on how to handle the situation with the roommates and basically just containing it. We get trained on the behind the scenes so we know what to say and how to assist the situation” (CA). Once the situation is contained, the CA’s transfer the case over to either SAFER or UPD.

Along with undergoing training, the CA participant reported that all Community Advisors and Resident Advisors attend meetings throughout the school to update their knowledge and to remind them about procedures. These meetings have a range of topics, including talking about Title IX. Title IX “is a comprehensive federal law that prohibits discrimination on the basis of sex in any federally funded education program or activity” (U.S Department of Justice, 2015, p. 1). To help inform their residents, The CA participant reported
that residence halls are decorated with informational posters or posters about events, although “there is not really high attendance for them” (CA).

**Reporting**

This section was intended for the administrators, not the students. The question of “What do you do when handling a sexual assault case,” was only asked in the interviews with the administrators. All of the administrators reported that they followed a process when it came to handling a sexual assault situation. “Whether it’s on or off campus, we create a rapport with the victim, so they feel comfortable with talking with us so we can get the most information, so we don’t have to re-victimize them later” (UPD). UPD handles cases regarding students even if the incident occurred off campus. The UPD officer reported being unaware of how many sexual assault cases Cal Poly has had, because “it depends on if the survivor wants to report the assault, or if they keep the charges” (UPD). SAFER also follows a process similar to UPD when it comes to the reporting of a sexual assault, but they act as another option for students to report their case to. Students come into the SAFER headquarters as a walk in, through an appointment by email, or by asking for an appointment at the front desk. “When we talk, everything is confidential, unless they are talking about self-violence or if a sexual assault happened to an under 18-year-old” (SAFER). The CA participant also described the confidentiality of information about sexual assaults and their residents, “other CA’s aren’t even supposed to know about it unless it involves one of their residents, really it depends on where and how it happens and we have different steps depending on the situation” (CA). All of these administrators work together to ensure cases are properly handled.
While both students and the administrators were aware of the program called Haven, this section was intended to capture the views of the student participants in this sample. Haven is a computer program that teaches students about sexual assault through videos and quizzes. All of the student participants reported that the program was beneficial, but only for first year students. Both males and females showed an equal amount of agreement that older students should not be required to take this program. Student M claimed the reason for this is that “most of the older students don’t pay much attention while doing it they just click through it and take the test” (Student M).

Vulnerable Freshmen

Of the sixteen participants, all thirteen students and all three administrators agreed that freshmen are the most vulnerable class level when it comes to sexual assault. The student responses for this theme will be featured in another section. The administrators reported that they believed the freshmen class to be the most vulnerable because of their independence and pride. The UPD officer reported that “freshmen are testing their new-found independence and are less aware of the dangers that are present on Cal Poly’s campus, which makes them more susceptible to sexual assaults, because they will do things like drinking and partying, just to fit in” (UPD). The Community Advisor participant believed that freshmen are more vulnerable because of their new independence and their confusion on what to do with it. “They don’t realize the power of that independence, or at least they’re unconsciously aware of it. It isn’t until they’re sophomore year that they realize what’s up” (CA). Both students and administrators agreed that older students are not as vulnerable to attacks because they know the risks and have seen or heard of the assaults on campus.
Cliché Safety Procedures

The students all reported that when thinking of their safety at college, they think back to the cliché sayings their parents use to tell them when they were kids. Student M stated that, “I think it’s kind of engrained to check in with friends or look at their surroundings. People don’t really think about an attack happening. But I do think that students think about what their parents taught them” (Student M). More females reported that they unconsciously used the saying “use the buddy system,” and “always be aware of your surroundings,” in comparison to males. Student M also believed that students should be thinking of the cliché safety procedures such as “don’t walk alone, be aware of your surroundings, and don’t listen to music through both of your headphones” (Student M). Student L believed that safety procedures change because of the party culture seen in college. “I think people should surround themselves with others and don’t inebriate yourself to the point that you can’t function like especially if you’re walking home” (Student L).

The administrators all agreed that using those cliché safety procedures engrained into children’s heads by their parents are useful when it comes to protecting themselves in college. All three administrators thought the best cliché safety procedure was “use the buddy system,” especially when it comes to drinking alcohol. The UPD officer used the phrase “use the buddy system” in almost every answer in their interview whenever they spoke of student protection.

Weeknight vs Weekend Safety

Seven of the thirteen student participants reported that their safety measures change when comparing weeknights to weekends. More females said that they were more aware of their safety on weekends because of the parties that occur, although they reported still being aware of their
safety during the week when walking home from classes. Student F reported that “there aren’t a lot of people walking around at night on weeknights. Although, even on weekends the later it gets the less safe it is” (Student F). Student G believed that students feel scared to walk at night, but this feeling changes when comparing weeknights to weekends. They also felt that students especially feel nervous or scared when they have night classes and live off campus, “because of how dark it gets” (Student G).

While Student A reported, “since I live off campus, I usually take a short cut but it’s kind of sketchy so I usually call my roommate. If she’s not home I’ll call another friend or a friend from home and just talk with them until I get home” (Student A). Males did not report a difference in their safety measures. When students were questioned if females had a rational fear of going out alone, both males and females agreed that this fear was rational. Student C reported “I think women have a rational fear mindset of going out alone around here, there are lots of instances of sexual assault which rationalizes the fear” (Student C).

The administrators were in agreement with the students and believed that students needed to be more aware of their safety when it comes to the weekends. This was because more people are out which can lead to more dangerous situations. The Community Advisor reported that they felt safe most of the time, but “the walk back to Poly Canyon Village on campus, at night with the lights is kind of sketchy” (CA). This finding is similar to what Student G said about walking in the dark.

**Student Views**

While all of the students had heard of fraternity parties, there were only four students who reported actually having been to a fraternity party. Two of those students were members of
a fraternity and sorority. The sorority participant reported the differences in fraternity parties and house parties, “house parties are parties held by people not associated with fraternities. They are just parties put on by random people mostly for friends. House parties are known to be more of a social party, and people there know each other more than people at fraternity parties do” (Student A).

Student B was the fraternity member participant, who described the rules of fraternity members bringing non-fraternity friends to parties. Student B reported that fraternities “don’t let random guys in. The only guys let in are if they’re part of the frat, or if they pay, but all the girls can come in” (Student B). The reason for this is “because the frat is accountable for all the guys and we want to lessen the risk of a sexual assault happening” (Student B). This shows that fraternities are aware of the stereotype placed on them and they care about the safety of party goers. Sometimes members of the fraternity can bring their non-fraternity male friends but the fraternity member is in charge of their friends’ actions. “If the friend does anything, the guy in the frat will get into trouble” (Student B).

One male student reported that the atmosphere of fraternity parties perpetuates the hook up culture. They described fraternity parties as “grungy and dirty and people go to mainly hook up or just to get drunk. And there are just random people, just strangers, so that’s why you have to go with friends so you know people” (Student E). One female student reported the linking between fraternity parties and sexual assault cases on Cal Poly’s campus is not true, “sexual assault happens a lot when people are impaired. But I don’t think frats are really responsible because sometimes people just blame frats” (Student K). Cal Poly students are emailed when a sexual assault occurs on campus, but is this information always correct? “In the most recent email concerning sexual assault and the Delta Chi frat, the sexual assault actually happened at a
satellite house which isn’t the frats main house. It’s really just a random house that belongs to one of the guys in the frats, it doesn’t mean that its part of the frat” (Student K). The response of the administrators is seen in the next section.

**SAFER and University Police Department Views**

Being administrators who work closely with students, both SAFER and UPD know that fraternities have a certain reputation, but they reported not basing their opinions on that reputation. Both administrators reported knowing that fraternity parties could be dangerous because of alcohol. The SAFER participant described fraternity parties as dangerous because of how males are expected to behave towards females, “women typically have a harder time of staying safe at parties because men tend to push alcohol at them” (SAFER, 2016).

**Freshmen**

While all of the participants agreed that the freshmen class are the most vulnerable class in college, the freshmen participants themselves reported their idea of sexual assault changed within their first year at Cal Poly. The freshmen participants were two girls, there no male freshmen participants in this sample. Both of the female participants in this sample reported understanding sexual assault differently after attending events on campus. Student F said that their idea of sexual assault has changed just within their first year at college “thanks to all of the programs like Haven and the presentations during WOW week” (Student F). Student F also said that they have gotten to learn more from people who were assaulted, “and it has allowed me to be more cautious in my surroundings and knowing what to do if I were to be sexually assaulted” (Student F). Student G stated, “I’ve become very cautious just this year because everything I knew from high school and now college has been proven true” (Student G).
Upper Class Students

Of the eleven upper class students, all eleven participants in the study reported feeling a greater sense of change in their idea of what sexual assault was and how to prevent it. Student C stated that they had first thought of sexual assault as “only physical but through classes and other peoples’ experiences I realized that it was everything.” More female students reported more of a change in their definition of sexual assault and remembered the difference in parties before college, since attending Cal Poly. Student D reported that “in high school you don’t really go to parties unless they’re planned in advance, but in college there are more chances to go to parties, even random peoples’ parties so there is more danger,” (Student D, 2016). The male students focused more on the increased use of alcohol and their safety in a college town. Student H reported that they had always been aware of their safety, but they became more aware of it since living in a college town can be “a little sketchy at times” (Student H).
Discussion of Results

Safety Tips from Campus Resources

**UPD**

Advice about sexual assault can come from different sources, especially online, but the best sources actually come from people who deal with sexual assaults on a daily basis. Campus resources such as UPD and SAFER, have a tremendous amount of advice for students to protect themselves against sexual assault. The UPD officer understood that Cal Poly is a safe campus, but students always need to use common sense whenever they go out. “Make sure to lock your doors and windows at night, it’s an open campus no gates or anything that prevent knuckleheads from getting in here” (UPD). Students should only go out with friends they trust, and they should go out in bigger groups, because “bigger groups are better for having more people watching out for you, and to scare off perpetrators” (UPD). Students in every college become fast friends with people which leads to a false sense of security. The UPD officer suggested that students make people earn their trust, “so they can become friends you can go out with and drink” (UPD, 2016).

When students are out drinking, they need to remember not to accept drinks from strangers and to not leave their cups unattended because it’s easy for people to slip drugs into drinks. UPD’s favorite acronym is CARE, “C is for creating a distraction for you, so you’re not alone with perpetrator. A is for asking directly. R is for referring to authority, if you don’t want to talk to the victim, talk to someone in charge. E is for enlisting others, get other to help intervene or help you” (UPD). As for the cliché safety procedures, the buddy system is always the answer, whether students are at parties or are just walking at night. It’s important for students to “let their friends know where they’re going and to have a backup plan whenever they’re out”
(UPD). Something students may not think of is how they’re social media accounts can affect them, “Be careful with social media and your geotag, because it can show your location” (UPD).

SAFER

SAFER provides advice for students and their safety and advice for what to say and what not to say to survivors of sexual assaults. As for the student safety, the SAFER participant understood that students (especially freshmen) are new and can get lost in San Luis Obispo, so it’s important to “memorize phone numbers, know your location, stick with a set plan, and to have a sober driver take responsibility for getting everyone home” (SAFER). The SAFER participant agreed with the UPD officer that people get drugged at parties, “so watch what you’re drinking and how much you are drinking, don’t drink on an empty stomach, and take accountability of your own body” (SAFER).

When talking to survivors of sexual assault, it’s important to call them survivors and not victims because “survivors promotes a positive feeling” (SAFER). As for what is acceptable to say to survivors, the SAFER participant suggested that people thank the survivors for willing to talk about what happened, “but people should never promise the survivors anything, such as promising to find the perpetrator. People shouldn’t ask investigatory questions, but always offer help” (SAFER). “Research shows that anyone who has had a traumatic event occur, will get better sooner the quicker they get treatment” (SAFER). The SAFER organization wants survivors to report their sexual assault because reporting it is empowering, but they believe that survivors should not be reporting just to get their perpetrator in trouble. This is because that goal doesn’t usually happen on college campuses. The SAFER participant also says that, “survivors need to report when it is their idea and not someone else” (SAFER).
Conclusion

Programs

Although Cal Poly’s campus already had programs and policies that had been implemented to raise student awareness about sexual assault, participants had good ideas for improvements in the campus education about assault, such as SAFER’s Cultural Inclusions program, UPD’s outreach to incoming freshmen, and a self-defense class. The SAFER participant suggested a mandatory Cultural Inclusions program that would be held during fall quarter for freshmen, and would focus on sexual assault, class, culture, race, and sex. Long term change comes from having time to process, and then coming back to discuss the information and how people have processed it. The information that is presented is new and many students can’t handle getting lots of information thrown at them in one meeting. This program would also include information on how to apply this information to their lives, along with sexual harassment training, and how to work with people who are different from them in preparation for their future jobs. Students would be automatically enrolled in this class during their first quarter as a freshman, because that is when it would be the most effective. The SAFER participant reported wanting a program such as their Cultural Inclusions program to break the incoming students out of their protective shells. “High school students seem to live in a bubble that is popped when they come to college” (SAFER).

The University Police Department had the idea to reach out to incoming freshmen during the programs entitled SOAR and WOW. SOAR is where new students have the opportunity to learn more information about the campus and campus life for the first time, and WOW is where new students or transfer students move onto campus a week before the school year begins in order to meet new people and experience life on campus. During these programs freshmen would
be educated on what to expect at school, the do’s and don’ts, and what to do to keep safe on
campus instead of waiting until school starts to gain this knowledge, or not at all. SOAR features
different panels for each college within Cal Poly, where students have the opportunity to ask any
question they might have. The teachers and students on these panels may not be able to answer
all of the questions students have, but “at least with having an officer there to answer questions,
students might also feel more comfortable with the questions they might have” (UPD).

All of the participants had an opinion on having a self-defense class as another option to
help protect students. According to SAFER and UPD, Cal Poly has offered self-defense classes
in the past, but they were stopped in 2015, because not enough people were showing up despite
advertisements. “We organized the classes along with the ASI student government, but we’ve
stopped them and are now thinking of holding them on a case-by-case basis, like if a group of
people want to have a class” (SAFER). The UPD officer held an accepting opinion of these self-
defense classes but “unless you practice it on a regular basis, just doing it for thirty minutes to an
hour won’t help you. You need to build on what you’ve learned and add in new things” (UPD).
Student E believed that all students should be able to take a self-defense class that is an option
but not mandatory, but thought the class would end up being more female based. “It would be
nice to see it because it shows steps to help” (Student E). Another participant, Student A, is in a
sorority and reported that her sorority has self-defense lessons occasionally on Sundays for free
“because a sorority alum teaches a class downtown” (Student A). The Community Advisor
reported that Poly Canyon Village, where she lives and advises, once had a self-defense class
that “was a great experience for everyone” (CA).
Reporting

This study supports the idea that the reporting of sexual assault by survivors is low as found in the previous literature. The Campus Sexual Assault Study reported that “70% of physically forced victims and 64% of incapacitated sexual assault victims reported that they told someone such as a family member, friend, roommate, or intimate partner” (NCJRS et al, 2007, p. 13). Surprisingly, the Campus Sexual Assault Study found only a small percentage of survivors reported their assault to a health center or law enforcement. Those who didn’t report the assault to law enforcement did so because they “did not think it was serious enough to report (56% of physically forced sexual assault victims and 67% of incapacitated sexual assault victims), that it was unclear that a crime was committed or that harm was intended (just over 35% of both types of victims), and that they did not want anyone to know about the incident (42% of physically forced sexual assault victims and 29% of incapacitated sexual assault victims)” (NCJRS et al, 2007, p. 13).

The results of this study were similar to the Campus Sexual Assault Study findings. Reporting a sexual assault is understandably a difficult process to go through and students might be put off from reporting their attack because of the emotional difficulty they might face. Campus resources want students to know that they have different options in reporting a sexual assault and that students can choose whatever method makes them feel more comfortable. UPD is the law enforcement on campus and their process of handling a sexual assault case involves getting the information on where it happened, finding the crime scene, and preserving the crime scene for evidence that can be tested for DNA. When talking with the survivors, officers never stand up, “they always sit down so they are at the survivor’s level” (UPD). UPD understands that assaults are scary and embarrassing and because of this, survivors may find it easier to talk with
someone of the same sex. UPD officers also ask if the survivors want to call a friend or family member which can help relax them.

All law enforcement are mandated reporters, and anyone with authority on campus reports to UPD, including the Community and Resident Advisors. Unfortunately, sexual assault reporting is hit and miss because it depends on if the survivor wants to report the assault, or if they keep the charges. Some survivors “file a report initially but later drop the charge because they don’t want to relive their assault in court in front of strangers” (UPD). Sadly, assaults could be happening that UPD does not know about, and it is hard to tell which gender is more likely to be a victim of a sexual assault, “although most of the reports come from females” (UPD). On Cal Poly’s campus, “we get multiple reports on sexual assault, they still don’t outweigh the other crimes on campus, and we get a lot of property crimes” (UPD). Lots of survivors report their assault with SAFER who later report to UPD, because they feel more comfortable with that method. Survivors can also report to the Dean of Students if that is more comfortable for them. The University Police understands that sexual assault can happen anywhere and is not confined to just one place on or off campus. “A majority start at bars with female victims having too much to drink and getting friendly with guys who take advantage of girls and then lead them to a house” (UPD).

The reporting process with SAFER involves a major role from the students. The SAFER organization welcomes survivors to come and talk on their own volition, and SAFER makes sure to never force anyone to talk if they are not comfortable. When the appointment ends, SAFER will ask the survivor if they want to create a follow up appointment. This is highly encouraged so “the survivor can continue talking with someone who understands what they are going through and to make sure the survivor is okay” (SAFER).
UPD and SAFER may handle most of the reporting and hear about most of the cases on campus, but Community and Resident Advisors also have to handle sexual assault cases. Community Advisors are mandated reporters, which means once a student tells them something or someone on campus says something questionable, they tell UPD who handles the situation from there. Community Advisors are meant to have very good connections with both UPD and SAFER “especially for sexual assault cases” (CA).

Haven

A new idea emerged from this small study which was having a computer program such as Cal Poly’s Haven, teach students about the dangers of sexual assault. This concept needs to be further investigated by future studies to test the benefits of having such a program and testing how long this program should be considered a requirement for students. Haven is a two-part computer program that teaches students about sexual assault through videos and quizzes. Students are given a time frame on when to finish each segment and if they fail to complete both segments, students will face challenges in registering for classes. This program was originally just for incoming freshmen and was paired with Alcohol Edu, a similar program to Haven but about alcohol and drugs.

Haven has now been extended to all grade levels and there has been much opposition to this. The program has been described as beneficial for first year students “to have them become knowledgeable about sexual assault” (Student F). On the other hand, many students don’t believe Haven is beneficial for older students, “because most of the older students don’t pay much attention while doing it they just click through it and take the test” (Student M). Many students have learned the method of how to quickly get through the various quizzes and videos, while still getting full participation for all of the questions and quizzes spread out through the program.
Suggestions for a better program include having it set up better, making it more interesting, and “not forcing older students to constantly re-take the program” (Student K, 2016).

**Vulnerable Freshmen**

My study supports the concept of freshmen being the most vulnerable to sexual assault as found in the previous literature. When asked who they thought was the most vulnerable to sexual assault, the student participants did not hesitate in responding with freshmen. The UPD officer agreed that freshmen are more vulnerable because of their newly acquired independence, but they added that freshmen are also willing to do anything to fit in, which usually involves alcohol. “Alcohol is out there and even though they are not legally able to drink, they do to prove a point and to fit in. The result is them getting toasted which can lead to something bad” (UPD). These opinions correlate to the Campus Sexual Assault Study findings that “the risk was greater for freshmen and sophomores than for juniors and seniors” (NCJRS et al, 2007, p. 5).

**SAFER and University Police Department Views**

As we can see, the literature has found that fraternity parties are dangerous and can lead to victimization. While this study agreed with these findings, this study also found that the campus administrators (SAFER and UPD) did not focus on the dangerousness of fraternity parties. They instead focused on giving advice for intimate situations, which they as previous literature shows, often happens at fraternity parties.

The SAFER and UPD participants both know that fraternities have a certain reputation and that there are frustrations on both sides. “The linking of frats and sexual assault is touchy, but people shouldn’t believe all stereotypes” (UPD). The SAFER participant had strong opinions on the “expected” behaviors for people at parties and especially for intimate situations. My
finding that women typically have a harder time of staying safe at parties because men push alcohol at them, is supported by the Campus Sexual Assault Study. The CSA Study found that “the vast majority of incapacitated sexual assault victims (89%) reported drinking alcohol, and being drunk (82%), prior to their victimization” (NCJRS et al, 2007, p. 14).

Boswell and Spade (1996) found that the women who are typically targeted at fraternity parties are women the fraternity members don’t “know or knew but did not respect, or faceless victims” (Boswell and Spade, 1996, p. 13). The SAFER participant agreed that women are not respected, and stated that “men need to learn to be more respectful, they should think of their mom or their sister and how they would want their family to be treated, or if their family would be happy with what the men are doing to girls at parties” (SAFER). Women don’t usually use their power to call out men on their behaviors, but they can and they need to start doing so. Men also call out other men on their behavior, but they need to do so more often, “because otherwise behaviors might become normalized when they shouldn’t” (SAFER).

The SAFER participant also reported that “men often feel forced to behave in a certain way because of normal society roles and are scared to voice any problems with these roles, in fear of people thinking they’re dumb or something” (SAFER). In intimate relationships, men are expected to have condoms but females should also have condoms. “Women should take measures to prepare themselves for anything that could happen, because they need to be responsible for their own body as well” (SAFER). The SAFER participant also reported that “straight males are fascinated when women tell them what is considered respectful or what is okay to do in bed. These straight men eat up that advice” (SAFER).
Freshmen

This study also supports the concept of rape myth acceptance found in the previous literature. I found that many freshmen students had unconsciously accepted the rape myth, which is defined by Iconis (2008) as “prejudicial, stereotyped, or false beliefs about rape, rape victims, and rapists” (Iconis, 2008, p. 217). Unfortunately, some freshmen experience sexual assaults within their first year at college. Student G stated “my friend in my residence hall was sexually assaulted earlier this year, and I had no idea how to help her. I didn’t think something like this would ever happen to someone I knew” (Student G).

Another research study done by Ueland (2011), shows that rape myth acceptance can be decreased if students “perceive that their peers expect them to take action if they are aware of someone being sexually assaulted or hear a joke about sexual violence” (Ueland, 2011, p.11). Although making sexual jokes was something to laugh at in high school, these new college students have learned that what they once believed to be “just stories” are actually real experiences that can happen to them.

Upper Class Students

This study supports the concept of the hook up culture found in previous literature. Garcia and coauthors (2013) define hooking up as “brief uncommitted sexual encounters among individuals who are not romantic partners or dating each other” (Garcia, Reiber, Massey, Merryweather, 2013, p. 4). When upper class students were questioned about how their idea of sexual assault has changed since they have attended Cal Poly, all of the student participants mentioned alcohol. Eight of the eleven student participants reported that they were more aware
of the role alcohol plays in social experiences. Student L reported that alcohol plays a “major role in hook ups” (Student L).

Future research should focus on comparing the strengths and weaknesses of programs for all students, whether in the Greek system or not, from universities across the world. This area of interest does not have a lot of research as of yet, because universities are too focused on linking sexual assaults to fraternities, when there may not even be a correlation between the two. Another topic that should be explored in future studies are freshmen in college. This study found that freshmen were the most vulnerable grade level, and more studies should explore the factors that contribute to that idea. If more studies were conducted on a large scale and acquired a large amount of public interest, universities might have an easier time in raising awareness of sexual assaults to protect their students.


Appendix A

Interview Questions

Campus Police

What classes do you teach as part of crime prevention?
What are the protocols officers must follow when they hear about a sexual assault?
As a mandated reporter, do you report to anyone?
Are sexual assault cases treated differently than other cases? If so, how?
In your opinion, which grade level do you think are more vulnerable to sexual assault? Why?
How common are sexual assault cases compared to other cases on campus?
Which gender do you think is more likely to go through a sexual assault? Why?
What is the most common place sexual assaults happen on or near campus?
What is your opinion on the linking of fraternities and sexual assaults?
Can you think of any self-help classes that would benefit students?
What programs or policies do you think should be implemented to help raise awareness?
What are your best pieces of advice you have for students to avoid sexual assaults?

SAFER

What are the protocols for helping students?
Do many students attend the presentations held by SAFER?
Can you give me a brief description of Title IX?
How is SAFER’s relationship with Greek Life?
Do you have programs for frats or sororities?
What is the most popular sexual assault awareness event? Why?
Do you think more students should be made more aware of the Red Handprint program?
What new programs or policies do you think students would benefit from?
How do you help a friend who has told you about their sexual assault experience?
What are your best pieces of advice to students who live on or off campus?
**Student/Sorority member**

Do you feel scared going out alone at night around campus? Why or why not?

Does this feeling change when comparing weeknights to weekends?

Do you think women have an irrational fear of going out alone?

How do you define sexual assault?

Do you think students plan for their safety when they go to parties?

Do you go to parties? If so, what kind? (house, kickback, frat) By yourself?

Do you go to parties with a big group of female friends or just a couple female friends?

Do you walk with guys to parties? Why or why not?

What is your opinion on the linking of fraternities and sexual assaults?

Is there anything students should do to protect themselves when they go out at night, either on weeknights or on weekends to party?

Do you think a self-defense class would be a good option for students to take? Why or why not?

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**Student/Fraternity member**

Do you feel scared going out alone at night around campus? Why or why not?

Does this feeling change when comparing weeknights to weekends?

Do you think women have an irrational fear of going out alone? Why or why not?

Do you think men have a fear of going out alone? Why or Why not?

How do you define sexual assault?

Do you think students plan for their safety when they go to parties?

Do you go to parties that aren’t held by your frat? If so, what kind?

What is the process of getting into a frat party?

What reputation do you think fraternities have earned on college campuses?

Is there anything students should do to protect themselves when they go out at night, either on weeknights or on weekends to party?

Do you think a self-defense class would be a good option for students to take?
**Community Advisor**

How do you define sexual assault?

Have you ever dealt with a sexual assault situation as a Community Advisor?

How in depth is the training you get for sexual assault as a Community Advisor?

Are there certain policies you must follow if a sexual assault happens in your building?

Are you a mandated reporter?

Do you feel safe on Cal Poly’s campus?

Do you have good connections with SAFER and UPD?

Which grade level do you think is more vulnerable to sexual assault? Why?

As a Community Advisor, do you plan events or write informational posters to promote sexual assault awareness?

What are things that residents could do to protect themselves on campus?

Do you think a self-defense class would be a good option for students to take?

**Students**

Do you feel scared going out alone at night around campus?

Does this feeling change when comparing weeknights to weekends?

Do you think women have an irrational fear of going out alone? Why or why not?

How do you define sexual assault?

Has your definition of sexual assault changed since you’ve been at Cal Poly?

Do you think students plan for their safety when they go to parties?

Has your idea of student safety changed since you’ve been at Cal Poly? If yes, how so?

Do you think your time at Cal Poly has changed your opinions about stereotypes associated with sexual assault? How?

Do you think the program Haven is beneficial for students? Why or why not?

Do you think a self-defense class would be a good option for students to take?
Appendix B

Human Subject Approval Forms

Informed Consent Form

INFORMED CONSENT TO PARTICIPATE IN A RESEARCH PROJECT, “The Varying Views of Sexual Assault from Cal Poly’s Campus Community”

A research project on sexual assault is being conducted by Kristen Tabone a student in the Department of Social Sciences at Cal Poly, San Luis Obispo, under the supervision of Dr. Liz Johnston. The purpose of the study is to compare and contrast the opinions of various groups on Cal Poly’s campus regarding sexual assault. By putting various opinions and attitudes, I will be able to see how they relate and how these different attitudes can work together to bring a change to Cal Poly’s community.

You are being asked to take part in this study by answering some interview questions. The questions you will be asked include your opinions about common stereotypes about sexual assault and how those stereotypes pertain to Cal Poly. Questions will also include your definition of different aspects of sexual assault, questions about parties and Greek life, and questions about your idea of options for students to protect themselves from sexual assault. Your participation will take approximately thirty minutes for one meeting. Please be aware that you are not required to participate in this research and you may discontinue your participation at any time without penalty. You may omit any items you prefer not to answer. Your answers will only be used for this study and will be kept in a notebook, which will be either with me or in a secure drawer in my bedroom when not being used. If your answers are transcribed, the recordings will be shared with nobody. I will only be keeping your answers for the duration of this project, which will end in March 2017. All of the information I collected from you will be disposed of in a secure manner with a paper shredder and recordings will be deleted.

There are minimal risks anticipated in this study; however, the risks include psychological risks such as emotional distress. If Cal Poly students should experience emotional distress, please be aware that you may contact Cal Poly’s Health Center at (805) 756-1211 in Building 27. Both Cal Poly students and non-Cal Poly students may also contact my advisor Dr. Liz Johnston, at (805) 471-8102, dr.lizjohnston@gmail.com. If you are not a Cal Poly student and you become distressed, please contact your personal physician; you will be responsible for any costs related to your medical care.

Your confidentiality will be protected by using a code name in place of your real name in the final product. Your answers will also not be shown to any other person, with your permission your interviews may be recorded. The recordings will be transcribed and erased. Potential benefits associated with the study include understanding a topic that may seem personal or has been stigmatized, with an open mind.

If you have questions regarding this study or would like to be informed of the results when the study is completed, please feel free to contact Kristen Tabone at ktabone@calpoly.edu. If you have concerns regarding the manner in which the study is conducted, you may contact Dr. Michael Black,
Chair of the Cal Poly Human Subjects Committee, at (805) 756-2894, mblack@calpoly.edu, or Dr. Dean Wendt, Dean of Research, at (805) 756-1508, dwendt@calpoly.edu.

If you agree to voluntarily participate in this research project as described, please indicate your agreement by signing below. Please keep one copy of this form for your reference, and thank you for your participation in this research.

☐ I agree to have my interview recorded
☐ I do not agree to have my interview recorded

_________________________   ________________
Signature of Volunteer                              Date

_________________________   ________________
Signature of Researcher                              Date
HUMAN SUBJECTS PROTOCOL APPROVAL FORM
Cal Poly, San Luis Obispo

All Cal Poly faculty, staff, and student research with human subjects, as well as other research involving human subjects that is conducted at Cal Poly, must be reviewed by the Cal Poly Human Subjects Committee for the protection of human subjects, the researchers, and the University. Human subjects research is defined as any systematic investigation of living human subjects that is designed to develop or contribute to generalizable knowledge. While the ethical guidelines for research are applicable to classroom activities, demonstrations, and assignments, the Human Subjects Committee does not review classroom activities unless data will be collected and used in a systematic investigation.

Researchers should complete all items on this approval form and submit it, along with a research protocol (containing the information detailed in Guidelines for Human Subjects Research Protocol), to the Office of Research and Economic Development (Debbie Hart, Bldg. 38, Room 154). Please feel free to attach an additional page if your responses to any of the items require more space. Your answers to the items on this form, as well as the research protocol, should be typed. The Committee will make every effort to respond to your submission within two to four weeks. Committee approval should be received prior to contacting prospective subjects and collecting data. Please read carefully Cal Poly's Policy for the Use of Human Subjects in Research prior to completing this application.

*If you require assistance in completing this form,*

contact the Office of Research and Economic Development at (805) 756-1508.

1. Date: 8/23/16

2. Title of Research Project:
   Effect of Sexual Assault on Cal Poly’s Campus Climate

3. Type of Research:
   - [x] Senior project
   - [ ] Master’s thesis
   - [ ] Faculty research
   - [ ] Other: please explain

4. Name(s) of Researcher(s)
Any additional researchers involved in the project should be listed with the descriptive information requested above on a separate sheet.

5. Faculty Advisor (if applicable)

Name: Liz Johnston  
Email: Dr.lizjohnston@gmail.com

Department or other affiliation: Social Sciences  
Phone: (805) 471-8102
6. Is there an *external* funding source for the project:

- [ ] Yes, and the source is: 
- [x] No 

7. Is this a modification of a project previously reviewed by Cal Poly’s Human Subjects Committee?

- [ ] Yes, and the approximate date of the last review was: 
- [x] No 

8. Estimated duration of the project:

Starting date: September 22, 2016  Completion date: March 17, 2016

9. Describe any risks (physical, psychological, social, or economic) that may be involved.

*See Specific Ethical Criterion #1 in Policy for the Use of Human Subjects in Research for a description of the types of risks.*

The only risks that my subjects face are psychological. My subjects may not want to talk about particular facets of my topic or may become emotionally distressed about particular facets.

10. Indicate what measures will be taken to minimize risks. *See Specific Ethical Criterion #1 in Policy for the Use of Human Subjects in Research for a discussion of strategies for minimizing risks.*
I will minimize any risks by stopping my subjects from talking about particular subjects if they are stressed by them. I won’t force my subjects to talk about anything they don’t feel comfortable talking about.

11. Explain how subjects’ confidentiality will be protected. See Specific Ethical Criterion #5 in Policy for the Use of Human Subjects in Research for a discussion of strategies for minimizing risks.

My subjects’ confidentiality will be protected by not allowing anyone but myself to see the subjects’ answers. In my final written project, the subjects will be referred to by code names or numbers.

12. Describe any incentives for participation that will be used. See Specific Ethical Criterion #2 in Policy for the Use of Human Subjects in Research for a discussion of the use of incentives in research.

There will be no incentives for participation other than giving me answers to my questions for research purposes. Hopefully my subjects’ answers will broaden my understanding and awareness of sexual assault.

13. Will deception of subjects be involved in the research procedures?

☐ Yes*  x No

*If so, explain the deception and how it will be handled. See Specific Ethical Criterion #3 in Policy for the Use of Human Subjects in Research for a discussion of the use of deception in research:

14. Type of review requested:

x Exempt from further review*  ☐ Expedited review  ☐ Full review
See *Types of Review* in *Policy for the Use of Human Subjects in Research* for a discussion of the criteria for exempt, expedited, and full reviews.

*The research protocol submitted for a project presumed to be exempt may be abbreviated but should contain sufficient information to support the conclusion that the project meets the criteria for exemption.*

15. **Signatures:**

Your signature below indicates that the information presented in this application (the approval form and research protocol) is accurate and that you have read, understand, and agree to follow the *Policy for the Use of Human Subjects in Research*.

Name of Primary Researcher: 

______________________________

________________________________________

**Cal Poly Faculty Advisor's Signature (Required if this is student research)**

I have reviewed this research proposal which has been prepared by my advisee(s) in accordance with the Guidelines for Obtaining Human Subjects Approval.

Name of Faculty Advisor:  

______________________________

________________________________________
Research Protocol

Title of the research: The Varying Views of Sexual Assault from Cal Poly’s Campus Community

Name and department/affiliation of the primary investigator(s) and faculty advisor:
Kristen Tabone - Social Sciences Department - Sociology major, Dr. Liz Johnston - Social Sciences Department

Statement of purpose, benefits, and hypotheses:

The purpose of this project is to compare and contrast the attitudes from various members of Cal Poly’s community about sexual assault. The focus is only on Cal Poly’s campus, because I am interested in seeing how different groups of people on Cal Poly’s campus truly feel about sexual assault. The benefits of this project include understanding a topic that may seem personal or has been stigmatized, with an open mind. I believe that my subjects will bring a variety of opinions and advice about all aspects of sexual assault on Cal Poly’s campus. I think that some stereotypes concerning sexual assault will be brought to light, while other stereotypes will be torn apart. I think that it will be helpful to compare different opinions and attitudes of sexual assault side-by-side, and to see how they all relate and how different attitudes can work together to bring a change.

Methods:

Subjects:
My subjects will be students I choose at random around campus, so that my sample is varied. My sample will also include a member from Campus Police and a member of SAFER. The age range includes mostly young adults, but there will be older adults as well. I will not be choosing my subjects based on their ethnicity, but I will try to interview an even amount of males and females, especially because I want to question males and females from every grade level from being a first year to being a fourth year. I will also be interviewing a students from a sorority and a fraternity. I will also be interviewing a Community Advisor from University Housing.

Experimenter:
The only researcher for this project is myself, Kristen Tabone. I am a third year Sociology major at Cal Poly. I have done multiple projects involving acquiring data, including a research class.

Materials and Procedures:
All of my data will be collected and conducted on Cal Poly’s campus, through field sites (various locations on campus), including participant observation, and through formal interviews. The interviews will be organized by email and then conducted face-to-face. The interviews will
include opinion questions and open-ended questions about campus safety, stereotypes about sexual assault, and attitudes about sexual assault. While there might be overlapping questions for all interviews, differing questions will be constructed specifically to each individual. Probes will be used throughout the interviews to acquire more details on certain aspects. Data collection will be contained in a notebook and on my cellphone. The coding scheme used to analyze the data included a process of: open coding, focused coding, axial coding, comparative analysis, and theory building.
Appendix C

Table 1: Demographic Data

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<th>Classification</th>
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<th>Greek Member</th>
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<tr>
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<tr>
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<td>Student- Senior</td>
<td>Male</td>
<td>No</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>K</td>
<td>Student- Senior</td>
<td>Female</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>L</td>
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<td>Male</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>M</td>
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<tr>
<td>Community Advisor (CA)</td>
<td>Administrator</td>
<td>Female</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>SAFER</td>
<td>Administrator</td>
<td>Female</td>
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<tr>
<td>University Police Department (UPD)</td>
<td>Administrator</td>
<td>Male</td>
<td>No</td>
</tr>
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