

Spring 5-10-2019

# Sexual Violence Prevention Programming for Collegiate Athletes: A Behavior Change Approach to Prevention

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## Digital USD Citation

Kame, Amy, "Sexual Violence Prevention Programming for Collegiate Athletes: A Behavior Change Approach to Prevention" (2019). *M.A. in Leadership Studies: Capstone Project Papers*. 50.  
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Sexual Violence Prevention Programming for Collegiate Athletes:

A Behavior Change Approach to Prevention

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## SEXUAL VIOLENCE PREVENTION FOR COLLEGIATE ATHLETES

### Abstract

Sexual violence is a pressing issue on college campuses. Evaluations of prevention programming on college campuses have shown to increase knowledge about sexual assault and increase the use of resources on campus, but current programming has been unsuccessful in reducing violent behavior. Male student-athletes are found to be incorporated in an extensive amount of sexual assault complaints and specialized prevention programming for this population does not exist. An examination of the literature on effective prevention strategies show that dosage, timing and sociocultural relevance has been found necessary for behavior change. Effective prevention techniques are used in accordance with specific frameworks for sexual violence prevention to develop a program curriculum for student-athletes at the University of San Diego. Additionally, the use of campus climate surveys helps to uncover addressable areas of concern while developing a data-driven approach to prevention. A comprehensive curriculum for the USD athletic department is informed by student-athlete responses from the 2019 Survey on Sexual Assault.

*Keywords:* sexual violence, prevention programming, student-athletes, college

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### Sexual Violence Prevention Programming for Collegiate Athletes: A Behavior Change Approach to Prevention

2017 University of San Diego undergraduate student-athlete:

Title IX training is a joke in my opinion, no one even pays attention to it, IT IS THE EXACT SAME LAME VIDEO EVERY YEAR. What are we supposed to learn from this? It is nice in theory but I think we can be more hands on with this. We need REAL PEOPLE sharing their experiences and we need to educate people on the fact that sexual assault is NEVER okay (2017 USD Survey on Sexual Assault).

Sexual assault is a widespread issue affecting college campuses across America, while it is reported that among undergraduate students, 23.1 percent of females and 5.4 percent of males experience rape or sexual assault through physical force, violence or incapacitation (RAINN, 2018). Collegiate institutions are scrambling to address this issue with prevention programming, but after years of sustained effort in the area of prevention, institutions have not realized a measurable reduction in violent behavior. Studies have revealed that male student-athletes are involved in a large proportion of sexual assault complaints, and yet specialized prevention programming for collegiate athletics does not exist (Van Driesen, 2016).

Student-athletes are part of the campus culture, but often operate with a set of norms and expectations that differ from their non-athlete peers. Following several high profile cases of sexual misconduct, the NCAA issued a Sexual Violence Policy in 2017. According to the policy, athletic directors, school presidents and Title IX coordinators from NCAA member institutions will be required to attest that athletes, coaches and administrators have been educated on sexual violence each year (NCAA, 2017). The policy also requires athletic departments are knowledgeable and compliant with school policies on sexual violence prevention, adjudication and resolution. The NCAA has taken steps to address the issue of sexual violence, but the NCAA's role in prevention is limited. It is up to member institutions to address educational

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techniques and adjudication of sexual violence reports on their campus. Not only is sexual violence an issue directly affecting students, but prevention programming as it currently exists on college campuses remains ineffective in changing violent behavior (Anderson, Stoelb, Duggan, Hieger, Kling & Payne, 1998; Heppner, Humphrey, Hillenbrand-Gunn & DeBord, 1995; Morrison, Hardison, Mathew & O'Neil, 2002). Current prevention programming often falls short in its attempts to change behavior; therefore, it remains imperative to implement innovative solutions driven by data in order to confront the issue of sexual violence on college campuses.

The purpose of this paper is to uncover best practices in sexual violence prevention for collegiate student-athletes, and how these practices in prevention can be applied at the University of San Diego. Program material will be developed from research on existing literature and studies of prevention programming. Additionally, the prevention program will be informed by institutional data from the 2019 USD Survey on Sexual Assault. Data retrieved from the survey will inform the approach to educational techniques based on student-athlete experiences and attitudes. The primary goal of the prevention program is to prevent sexual violence through education, and skill building sessions, creating sustained behavioral and cultural change. This study will uncover effective prevention strategies, with the use of three crucial constructs: Bystander Theory, Consent and Rape-Myth Acceptance. Grounded in research, a prevention program for student-athletes at the University of San Diego will be created in collaboration with effective training techniques and student-athlete lived experience.

### **Review of the Literature**

In order to create an effective sexual violence prevention program for student-athletes, current research must inform the approach. The following literature informs the central tenets of innovative prevention programming created for NCAA student-athletes. (1) In this paper I am

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going to review existing research and literature on sexual violence on college campuses, and more specifically, within NCAA collegiate athletics. (2) Next, I will describe the cultural factors that influence sexual misconduct within the athletic environment. The distinct factors that influence sexual violence and sexual misconduct are critical to understand when developing prevention programming for specific groups and individuals. (3) In addition, effective prevention programming techniques are discussed in order to address the gaps in prevention that currently exist on college campuses, and how improvements can be made to the existing structure of programming. (4) Finally, I will discuss prevention frameworks that are specific to sexual violence and how these frameworks can be used to further effective programming. The frameworks of bystander intervention, consent and rape-myth acceptance are discussed in accordance with effective programming strategies in order to develop a curricula framework that is focused on changing behavior within collegiate athletics.

### **Sexual Violence on College Campuses**

The pervasiveness of sexual violence is an issue directly affecting college students, and only 20 percent of female student victims, age 18-24, report to law enforcement (RAINN). Although nonstudent females aged 18-24 were 1.2 times more likely to be the victims of sexual assault, students are less likely to report the sexual assault than nonstudents (Sinozich & Langton, 2014). The American Civil Liberties Union (ACLU) estimates this figure is much higher, while they report that at least 95 percent of campus rapes in the U.S. go unreported.

The structures that currently exist in order to prevent sexual misconduct and support survivors on college campuses commonly involve prevention programming led by campus prevention specialists, publicizing policies and procedures and providing resources such as health centers, psychological services and sexual assault services. Higher education institutions

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that receive federal funds can be held legally responsible for how they address sexual misconduct, and are held accountable by the The U.S. Department of Education's Office for Civil Rights (OCR). Title IX of the Education Amendments of 1972, bans gender discrimination in schools. When a student has experienced sexual violence, it is the institution's responsibility to prevent reoccurrence and address its effects. Schools receiving federal funding must respond with proper adjudication to reports of sexual violence and harassment. In addition, an institution must provide the survivor with living or academic accommodations and the right to notify law enforcement. The existing structures are in place in order to create a safe campus community free from sexual misconduct, but they often fall short in fulfilling these requirements.

In 2014, the OCR released a list of the higher education institutions under investigation for possible violations of federal law over the handling of sexual violence and harassment complaints. Fifty-seven institutions were listed in 2014, this number grew to over 100 in 2016. As of April 2019, 305 campus Title IX sexual assault investigations remain open (Title IX). In addition, an Outside the Lines (OTL) report found that understaffed Title IX offices are prevalent. Of the 99 Title IX administrators surveyed by OTL, 75 percent of them did not have enough staff (Lavigne, 2018). Understaffed Title IX offices are problematic while addressing reports of sexual assault, and following through with effective adjudication and prevention efforts. In order to address effective sexual violence prevention programming, the structure of institutional policies and procedures must be accounted for. Sexual violence occurs in a system that allows it to persist, and prevention programming must address this issue at the system-level. Sexual violence is a prominent issue on college campuses, and the athletic community is faced with additional risks.

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### **Sexual Violence in NCAA Athletics**

Sexual violence and sexual misconduct has presented itself within athletic culture for decades, and collegiate athletics provides additional risks. NCAA athletics is not immune to the mishandling of sexual assault investigations, while highly populated institutions such as Baylor, Michigan State, Oregon and Florida State, in addition to smaller institutions such as Saint Louis, Duke and Yale, have been involved in a public mishandling of sexual misconduct allegations within their athletic department. For example, in 2012, Florida State University quarterback Jameis Winston was accused of rape, but was cleared in a student code of conduct hearing. In addition, the Department of Education investigated FSU for possible Title IX violations. The student filed a lawsuit against the school and Winston following the investigation. In 2016, Florida State settled the Title IX lawsuit for \$950,000. As part of the settlement, FSU made a five-year commitment to sexual assault awareness and prevention. Although this was a high profile case in NCAA collegiate athletics, it was not an isolated incident.

While sexual violence and sexual misconduct on college campuses is prevalent, athletic departments are at high risk. This is not a new discovery, while a 1995 study in the *Journal of Sport & Social Issues* reported data from judicial affairs departments at 10 schools, showing athletes consisted of 3.3 percent of the male population and represented 19 percent of the reported sexual assaults (Crosset, 1995). Collegiate athletic departments have a responsibility to address sexual misconduct, and follow best practices in collaboration with the Title IX Coordinator on campus, but the best prevention and adjudication strategies are often not utilized. As athletic departments engage and participate in investigations of sexual misconduct, conflicts of interest often surface. The U.S. Senate surveyed 440 institutions and found that staff or administrators sometimes discourage victims from reporting, downgrade an assault's severity,

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fail to follow up on reports, or delay proceedings while athletes finish their season or graduate.

Many recent controversies have exposed colleges and universities are not currently in compliance with the law and fail to follow the best known practices for prevention, reporting and adjudication.

In order to solve the problem of sexual violence on college campuses, institutional departments must work in collaboration. Reporting and adjudication practices must be effective in order for institutions and athletic departments to prevent instances of sexual misconduct. The factors that influence behaviors connected to sexual misconduct must also be addressed. Sexual misconduct is embedded in the culture of collegiate institutions. Addressing the circumstances, and behaviors connected to sexual violence is necessary in order to understand the scope of the problem.

### **Factors Influencing Sexual Misconduct**

Through my research, there are three major factors that contribute to collegiate athletes engaging in sexual misconduct. The combination of a hyper-masculine culture, paired with an athlete's inherent status, and alcohol consumption, provides a dangerous mixture for collegiate athletes, and those who come into contact with them. These particular factors individually contribute to the problem of sexual misconduct. Additionally, these key factors need to be addressed within prevention programming that is tailored for the collegiate athlete community. If prevention curriculum fails to address these pivotal factors, then programming will remain ineffective in changing key behavior.

**Hyper-masculinity.** Hypermasculinity is one theory which explains the prevalence of sexual misconduct in male sports. Success in male team sports is associated with control, domination, competitiveness, physical strength and aggressiveness (Caron et al. 1997; Melnick

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1992; Smith and Stewart 2003; Walker 2003). The participation in collegiate sports is presumed to help maintain traditional hegemonic masculinity on college campuses. This assumption has shown that traditional masculine norms inform both the attitudes and behavior of males who participate in the sports (McKay, Messner, & Sabo, 2000; Messner, 2002). Examples of collegiate student-athletes involved in off campus activities help to explain this assumption. Humphrey and Kahn (2000) categorized athletic teams according to the risk levels of the parties they hosted, and found that students on teams deemed high risk were perceived as more likely to be sexually aggressive and hostile toward women. In addition, Curry (2000) conducted an observational study of male athletes in college bars and found masculine ideology typically enforced in the locker room often carried over into aggressive and risky behavior in social settings. The hyper-masculine culture creates a high-risk environment for student-athletes, and those who come into contact with them.

**High-status.** College athletes are also looked at as having high status and while this can grant access to more opportunity, it also exposes athletes to more publicity. In addition, the special status of athletes at many universities might further facilitate sexual aggression (Koss & Gaines 1993). The combination of a hyper-masculine culture and one that grants high status to male student-athletes, contributes to the culture of sexual misconduct on college campuses, and increases the student-athlete's risk of engaging in sexually coercive behaviors. The high status of student-athletes, especially male athletes, contributes to the desire for their peers to have access to them. Lisa Wade set out to understand student experiences from 24 institutions, including analyzing 101 student journals and survey data summarizing 24,000 student responses. If the hookup culture in college is status-based, then high-status students such as athletes are at an advantage. Wade's student explained, "It automatically sounds better to say, "I hooked up

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with a guy on the football team,” instead of “I hooked up with a guy.” A Duke University student added, “Frat stars and athletes, those are the only ones that matter” (Wade, 2017). The status that comes along with being a collegiate athlete plays a role in how sexual activity is organized on college campuses and can influence the opportunity to engage in sexual misconduct.

**Alcohol consumption.** Alcohol consumption is also considered a major factor influencing sexual misconduct. 43 percent of the sexual victimization incidents in college involve alcohol consumption by victims while 69 percent involve alcohol consumption by the perpetrators (Hattersley-Gray, 2018). Collegiate athletes are in a unique situation when they enter college. Student-athletes are surrounded by their teammates and coaching staff for many hours each week, and often times incoming athletes assimilate to the existing culture of the program they join. Student-athletes also tend to live with other athletes and build strong relationships with their teammates and the athletic community at their institution. Alcohol can become a major factor at parties populated by athletes while 90 percent of acquaintance rapes involve alcohol (Hattersley-Gray, 2018). Addressing the relationship between alcohol and sexual misconduct is essential in order to address prevention techniques.

It is critical that student-athletes understand the problem of sexual violence and the factors that enable it to persist. Student-athletes must also understand the role they can play in order to prevent these instances as high-status individuals. Many sexual violence prevention programs are beginning to address the problem of sexual misconduct through education while attempting to change unwanted behavior. Addressing behavior change, must begin with examining the root causes of the issue. In order to change behavior, it is important to address the beliefs and attitudes of the student-athlete population, and how their embedded assumptions play a role in allowing sexual violence to persist on their campus. Prevention programming is

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constantly evolving in order to provide the best strategies to prevent sexual violence and misconduct, while creating safe campus communities. Many studies exist on effective strategies for prevention, but there is limited research on the effectiveness of programming for the student-athlete population. Current research on effective prevention programming is important when developing prevention curricula for specific groups. The following “best practices in prevention” will be considered alongside the systemic and behavioral factors that lead to occurrences of sexual misconduct within the athletic community.

### **What Works in Prevention**

While sexual violence is prominent on college campuses, the use of unique approaches to prevention programming is growing in popularity. Higher education institutions that receive federal funding are required to offer a sexual violence prevention program and best practices continue to evolve. An amendment to the Cleary Act, the Campus Sexual Violence Elimination (SaVE) Act, propelled the bystander movement by mandating institutions hold preventative sexual violence trainings for all students and faculty. Although institutions want to employ the best strategies for prevention, many are stuck with simply providing an online module once a year. Several combinations of sexual violence prevention programs currently exist. The content of the programs differs based on the outcome goals, while many prevention programs set out to provide information, change behavior, influence attitudes or provide a combination of these functions. The majority of programs offer a combination of information regarding the prevalence of sexual violence, exploration of rape myths, discussion of gender norms and tips for safer dating behavior (Sochting et al. 2004).

Not all sexual violence prevention programs prove to be effective, and while research is limited, Nation, et al. (2003) identified characteristics that were consistently associated with

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effective prevention programming. This study provided specific principles that merit consideration when constructing and implementing an effective prevention intervention. A few of the characteristics for prevention programs include sufficient dosage, appropriate timing and social-cultural relevance.

**Dosage.** Dosage is an important factor as the intensity, duration and number of sessions included in a prevention program can influence results. In addition to initial exposure, effective intervention programs generally include some type of follow-up session in order to sustain the impact (Nation, et al. 2003). Maintaining a sufficient dosage is difficult while many institutions only offer online training, or a single-session in-person facilitation. Researchers have found that changes in attitudinal scores with these types of interventions are not lasting, rebounding in to pre-program levels in three to five months (Anderson et al., 1998; Heppner et al., 1995). Extended programming with more exposure to material addressing multiple content areas within sexual assault education was found to be a more helpful way to educate and provide depth to the content (Anderson, Whiston, 2005). Providing an educational training once a year does not constitute as prevention. Continuous programming needs to be implemented in order for the system and the participants to be held accountable.

**Timing.** It is also important to ensure prevention programming is appropriately timed, while many programs are offered when the target audience already exhibits the unwanted behavior. Prevention programs should time up to focus on changeable precursor behaviors, before problem behavior is exhibited (Dryfoos, 1990). Timing is especially important for prevention programming as more than 50 percent of college sexual assaults occur in either August, September, October, or November and students are at an increased risk during the first few months of their first and second semesters in college (Kimble, Neacsiu, et. al 2007).

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Nation, et al (2003) added the need for developmental appropriateness of the program and intervention. Effective programs utilize materials that are specifically tailored to the cognitive, and social development of the target audience (Zigler, et al., 1992). This principle was found most important in studies of adolescent sexual behavior, where changing the messages of intervention according the specific developmental stages of the target audience was associated with positive outcomes (Miller & Paikoff, 1992). Sexual violence prevention programming will need to take into account the specific timing of interventions, and structure educational workshops accordingly.

**Sociocultural relevance.** Sociocultural relevance is a useful characteristic for effective prevention programs, as the concepts used must be relevant to the audience in order to create impact. Culturally tailoring programs modifies the program based on particular cultural factors, allowing for better receptiveness to the intervention. Along these lines, effective prevention programs address individual and group needs of the participants. The program must be relevant in order to retain the attention of the high-risk group. One size fits all programs are no longer effective. In a report of 59 sexual assault preventative interventions, 14 percent of the programs reported positive intervention effects at post-test or follow-up while 80 percent reported mixed results (Morrison, et. al. 2002). Most of the interventions and messages listed in the report were delivered to a population regardless of their unique risk factors. The universal approach provides a comprehensive way to provide basic information to a large population, but it has not been proven to sustain behavior change. Morrison (2002) recommended other forms of sexual assault prevention interventions that target individuals who are considered to be at risk for sexual violence. The combination of universal concepts, and use of selective interventions may advance

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the prevention of sexual violence in high risk populations. Dosage, timing and relevance must be considered while creating effective prevention programming for student-athletes.

In order for prevention programming to hold social and cultural relevance for student-athletes, their assumptions, and lived experiences should play a role in the construction of the program. Dryfoos (1990) and Janz et al. (1996) suggested the audience for whom the program is designed for, should be included in the program planning and implementation. Collaboration with the target audience is a necessary step in order to make sure the participants needs are met.

Another effective prevention strategy relating to cultural relevance has been the use of peer educators. Effective communication strategies exist with similar-aged students and student-athletes on the same team may be more influential at spreading messages and socially acceptable behavior. The peer-educator approach has been found effective with attitude change, where evaluations of prevention programs using peer educators and facilitators have found decreases in rape myth acceptance among participants (Foubert & Marriott, 1997; Lonsway et al., 1998). In order for behavior change to occur, peer support must be initiated. Future research on the effectiveness of prevention programming curricula is necessary in determining best known practices, but common positive themes have been presented in research.

When creating effective programming, it will be important to understand best practices, and how these concepts will be utilized with the target audience. Anderson and Whiston (2005) completed a meta-analysis of 69 studies that involved 102 sexual assault education programs on college campuses including over 18,000 participants. The research suggests prevention programs tend to be more effective when they include content addressing risk-reduction, provide discussion of common myths and facts about sexual assault and how gender-role socialization plays a role. Effective programs were also shown to be longer and presented by professionals.

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There was not found to be a singular effective strategy, but common themes were presented within programs that provided positive results toward education and skill development. In order for programming to remain effective, it is important to follow previous research and evaluations of prevention curricula. Along with best practices in prevention, there are key concepts that directly relate to sexual violence, and they must be used in collaboration.

### **Prevention Programming Framework**

The purpose of prevention programming is to influence a cultural shift in acceptable behavior related to sexual misconduct. The framework used to prevent sexual violence is often grounded in Bystander Theory, which equips people with the skills and confidence necessary to step in when someone needs help. It will be important to supplement Bystander Theory with the constructs of consent, rape myth acceptance and lived experience of athletes in order to create a comprehensive prevention curriculum. When developing a comprehensive program, these key concepts will be used throughout the training and educational workshops in order to supplement how Bystander Behavior can be developed and improved, specifically for the athletic community. Utilizing these concepts, in collaboration with best known practices in prevention and root causes of sexual violence, will enhance the effectiveness of the programming. Although student-athletes must receive a unique approach based on their experience as an athlete, it is also critical they grasp the concept of becoming an active bystander, and how their understanding of consent and acceptance of common rape myths will influence their ability to prevent instances of sexual misconduct.

**Bystander framework.** The bystander approach has been grounded in empirical studies and theory as a popular approach in reducing sexual violence. Bystander intervention is based on evidence that community norms play a significant role in the perpetration of violence, especially

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on college campuses (Schwartz & DeKeseredy 1997; 2000). Bystander research provides specific strategies to increase the likelihood that the trained participants will intervene when they are in the role of a bystander. The messages of prevention are packaged in a way that approaches participants as potential witnesses to sexual violence. Male participants are not approached as perpetrators and female participants are not approached as victims. Becoming an active bystander requires skill development, education and practice. Educating student-athletes about the realities of sexual assault and equipping them with tools to identify and prevent these occurrences, can help create important cultural shifts away from perpetuating and toward preventing assault and harassment.

A bystander is present in about 30 percent of cases of rape, threat of rape or unwanted sexual contact according to an Associated Press analysis of 24 years of data from the Justice Department's National Crime Victimization Survey. The survey found in just over one third of the cases, the actions of bystanders helped. Bystander intervention programs teach participants how to identify potential sexual assaults and how to intervene, prevent them from occurring or helping victims following an assault.

Becoming an active bystander involves developing the awareness, skills and courage needed to intervene in a situation when another individual needs help. Bystander intervention allows individuals to send powerful messages about what is acceptable and expected behavior in their community. The bystander approach to preventing sexual violence will allow scholar athletes as student leaders to play a key role in changing community behavior and social norms. Athletes can act as influential peer leaders on campus, as Kelly (2004) refers to as Popular Opinion Leaders. This approach to prevention includes training individuals in a community who have influence over others and who can become role models while endorsing new attitudes and

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behaviors. For example, drug prevention programs have found success using the peer-leader approach. McDonald, et. al (2011) found utilizing social networks showed monthly reductions in drug use over a one-year period. Utilizing bystander training is pivotal as prevention programming is meant to change behavior and the athletic community provides a great opportunity to build on a close-knit community of peers who can set the standard for socially acceptable behavior.

The bystander framework provides specific components about how to become an effective bystander, by training a community of people to confront an issue that affects everyone. Banyard, Moynihan, and Crossman (2009) describe how the theoretical model can be used to effectively develop bystander prevention programming by including:

- Curricula and messages that increase awareness and knowledge about sexual violence and decrease ambiguity about when and where sexual violence occurs
- Curricula needs to center on risk reduction
- Community members play a direct role in confronting and ending sexual violence and harassment
- Participants develop a range of skills and practice the ability to interrupt situations that could lead to violence, speaking out about social norms that support sexual violence, and how to be a supportive ally to survivors.
- Participants increase self-efficacy in order to confront issues of harassment and sexual violence
- Participants create plans for intervening. Respect and consider the participants physical and emotional safety, while showing the benefits of intervening outweighing the barriers.

Student-athletes have the potential to be empowered, prosocial bystanders, who can lead others toward acceptable behavior as it relates to sexual interactions. Unwanted sexual experiences on campus frequently occur in the context of social situations (Banyard, Plante, Cohn, Moorhead, Ward & Walsh, 2005). This presents an opportunity to athletes as leaders on campus to change social norms and the behavior of the athletic community. Effective bystander

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intervention training must be based in education in order to develop the necessary skills that will be effective in unique social situations.

Creating a peer-led prevention strategy with a high-status group on college campuses will enhance the effects of intervening in situations. Survey studies of college men have found rates between 4 percent and 16 percent of college men admit to committing rape (Lisak & Miller, 2002; Abbey et al., 2012; Thompson et al., 2013). The bystander framework seeks to eradicate the small group of predators on campuses by creating awareness and building skills in preventative behaviors. In order to have the ability and efficacy to speak up when something is wrong, student-athletes must develop skills in bystander behavior, and have the opportunity to practice those skills.

Although research suggests moderate effects of bystander education on both bystander efficacy and intentions to help others at risk, future longitudinal research evaluating behavioral outcomes and systemic change is needed (Katz & Moore, 2013). Teaching college students to become active bystanders is an important step in preventing sexual violence. The bystander approach to sexual violence prevention will develop peer support and create a cultural change, but it cannot be used independently. In order to find success with the bystander model, student-athletes must be educated and aware of the factors that influence sexual violence on their campus and in their community. The constructs of consent and rape myth acceptance will directly influence a student-athlete's ability to become an effective bystander.

**Consent.** In order to build skills in becoming an active bystander aimed at ending sexual violence, student-athletes must understand the concept of consent. Hickman and Muehlenhard (1999) defined sexual consent as the freely given verbal or nonverbal communication of a feeling of willingness to engage in sexual activity. Consent is a legal indicator of sexual activity and it is

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important to understand each institution's definition of consent, as students will be held to the institution's standard. Humphreys and Brousseau (2009) developed a measurement tool in order to assess the perception of sexual consent, people's attitudes toward asking and giving consent and people's actual behavior with respect to ensuring consent is communicated. Many studies have demonstrated the preferred approach to signal consent for both men and women tends to be nonverbal (Hall, 1998; Humphreys, 2004; O'Sullivan & Byers 1992). It is important to note many student definitions and understanding of consent may differ, nonverbal cues such as kissing and intimately touching could indicate consent, but it does not guarantee it. Behavioral intentions for negotiating sexual consent are important to note as intentions to perform the behavior can be predicted from subjective social norms and attitudes toward the behavior. Indirect verbal cues and nonverbal signs are more ambiguous than a clear verbal affirmation, which can lead to misperception in sexual situations. It is important for student-athletes to be educated in how to give and receive consent, as well as understand their institution's protocols around how alcohol influences consensual sexual activity. The legal standard of consent can vary, therefore student-athletes must understand the determining factors of a consensual sexual interaction, and how to navigate these on a college campus.

Both state and institutional definitions of consent are important to comprehend as it can determine the legality of sexual interactions. California was the first state to implement standards for affirmative consent, followed by New York. Most notably, Governor Jerry Brown signed a bill in October 2014 that required all universities receiving California state funding to adopt such policies. California and New York currently define consent as a voluntary, affirmative and mutual agreement. Affirmative consent, or "yes means yes," contrast past practices where the absence of "no" counted as consent. Many institutions have affirmative consent policies,

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including the University of Virginia, Texas A&M University, University of Minnesota and Indiana University (Yes Means Yes, 2018). Although there is a need for more data on a student-athlete's understanding of consent, the growing body of literature about consent shows young people's definitions of consent are not always consistent with legal definitions (Beres, et al., 2014).

The status student-athletes hold is also an important determinant for consent as status shapes who has access to sex, with whom and with what consequences (Wade, 2017). In addition, consent is a key teaching point in student-athlete prevention programming while research shows that peer networks can influence the violent behaviors of athletes (Kreager, 2007). The understanding and knowledge about consent is shaped by social norms and peer group interactions (Warren et al., 2015). Therefore, it is important to understand how student-athlete relationships influence perceptions and behaviors relating to sexual activity. Gaining specific knowledge about student-athlete attitudes and opinions toward consent is important, while sexual violence prevention programs are more effective when educators understand specific team dynamics. Educators must understand the social relationships of athletes in order to interpret peer influence on the understanding and knowledge of what constitutes as affirmative consent.

The law and definitions of consent are important, as well as understanding how specific factors influences consent, such as status and inhibitors like drugs and alcohol. When student-athletes receive training in effective consent communication, they will develop an understanding of acceptable social norms relating to sex and therefore perpetuate a healthy understanding of consensual relationships. Being able to understand and interpret consent in different social settings will add to the student-athletes' ability to become an active bystander. Additionally,

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understanding the parameters of consent will heighten awareness of acceptable behavior. Rape-myth acceptance is another construct that influences student-athlete's ability to become a prosocial bystander.

**Rape-myth acceptance.** Rape-myths are also a significant factor within sexual violence prevention programming, while they are operationalized as, "attitudes and beliefs that are generally false but are widely and persistently held, and that serve to deny and justify male sexual aggression against women" (Lonsway & Fitzgerald, 1994, p. 134). The Rape Myth Acceptance Scale (RMAS) is used to assess rape supportive attitudes within a campus climate survey. The acceptance of particular rape myths can influence attitudes and behaviors toward sex. Assessing the student-athletes' acceptance of particular rape myths will directly influence his or her ability to be an active bystander. The attitudes and beliefs of student-athletes can directly influence the language they use around their teammates and other peers, which can impact what behaviors are assumed to be acceptable. The embedded beliefs about rape myths, more specifically within the athletic community, need to be understood in order to address accepted and expected behavior.

For example, a study of 477 men from a large Division One southeastern university with strong support for athletics found that athletes agreed more with almost all rape myth statements and with several of the situations measuring sex role stereotyping and adversarial sexual beliefs (Boeringer, 1999). These findings showed rape supportive attitudes, influenced by peer norms. Other studies have found no links between student-athletes and rape supportive attitudes. First, this suggests there needs to be more research on the student-athlete community and rape myth acceptance. Second, there needs to be research on specific institutions in order to develop a tailored sexual violence prevention program addressing the acceptance of rape myths. As shown

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in the Boeringer study, some athletic communities may have a higher rape myth acceptance based on the particular school they attend and the social norms that persist.

A rape myth scale needs to be adapted into the culture of athletics, as particular myths exist that are separate from the normal student body such as recruiting norms and existing relationships in the athletic community. Understanding consent and rape-myths, influence a student-athletes' ability to become an active bystander. Without an understanding of these concepts, student-athletes will be unable to make informed decisions about reporting sexual misconduct, or influencing acceptable social norms.

In order to produce an effective prevention program, bystander efficacy and action, as well as consent and rape-myth acceptance need to be understood and fully developed. These concepts differ from campus to campus as each institution exhibits a unique culture. Data on these constructs must be accumulated in order to assess, and positively influence student-athlete attitudes and behaviors. Prevention programming will need to assess the level of understanding student-athletes have in regard to consent and rape myth acceptance in order to effectively develop programming that will engage student-athletes to become active bystanders on college campuses.

The pervasiveness of sexual violence within collegiate athletics is indisputable, and effective programming needs to be put in place in order to address this systemic issue. Utilizing the best practices in prevention in parallel with the constructs that directly affect reoccurrence of sexual misconduct, need to be utilized in order to change behavior.

### **Problem Statement**

The National Collegiate Athletic Association (NCAA) is a nonprofit organization that encompasses about 1,200 colleges and universities. Since 2010, the board of the NCAA has

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taken several steps toward addressing sexual violence prevention. There have recently been multiple national cases of sexual assault within athletics at NCAA institutions highlighted by Baylor University in 2016. In 2016, a lawsuit was filed against Baylor University, claiming at least 52 rapes by at least 31 football players had occurred from 2011 through 2014. The lawsuit describes a culture of negligence on behalf of the athletic staff as well as university leaders as it pertains to issues of sexual misconduct. Baylor has become a recent and preventative example for modern-day issues involving sexual violence in college athletics. An evaluation of prevention programming is critical in order to address the systemic problem of sexual violence within NCAA athletics and how it continues to persist.

In 2017, the NCAA Board of Governors adopted a campus sexual violence policy. The policy states that the university president, director of athletics and the Title IX Coordinator must attest annually that all student-athletes, coaches and staff have been educated each year on sexual violence prevention, intervention and response. The NCAA is uniquely positioned to positively influence the culture of campus communities. The athletic community directly influences the development of hundreds of thousands of young adults while more than 460,000 students participate in NCAA sports. This unique experience requires almost daily interaction with student-athlete peers, athletic-related staff and coaches throughout their collegiate years. It is because of these relationships and continuous interactions that student-athletes can become cohesive and committed to changing their campus culture as it relates to sexual violence.

The scope of the NCAA is limited, as their primary responsibility is to ensure fair competition and amateurism. Although the NCAA can suggest best practices, it is up to individual institutions to implement rules and programs aimed at preventing sexual violence. Current solutions are not sufficient in order to create long-term change. There are programs that

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can be utilized to help adjust attitudes and expand knowledge, but the best practices in prevention need to be directed towards sustained behavior change.

Student-athletes are at risk for being incorporated in sexual misconduct, while literature suggests that student-athletes are more likely to have attitudes that support sexual aggression (Shortway, Oganosova, & Vincent, 2018), are more likely to identify with hyper masculinity (Murnen & Kohlman, 2007), and are more likely to accept rape myths than non-athletes are (Boeringer, 1999; Murnen & Kohlman, 2007; Swope, 2012). ESPN's Outside the Lines (OTL) reported in 2018 that college athletes are three times more likely than other students to be involved in a Title IX complaint made at Power 5 conference schools (Lavigne, 2018). In order to confront the issue of sexual violence and change the culture of college athletics, student-athletes must be educated and trained in helping behaviors. Current sexual violence prevention programming is provided for student-athletes, but does not contribute to a long-term solution for collegiate institutions. In order to provide effective prevention programming, institutions must first understand the scope of sexual violence on their campus. It is necessary for athletic departments to develop programming unique to their student-athlete needs, building on the bystander framework and therefore improving the overall confidence and skillset of student-athletes as active bystanders.

### **Purpose Statement**

The problem of sexual violence on college campuses and the current gaps in prevention curriculum within NCAA collegiate athletics, presents the intention for this paper. The purpose of this paper is to develop a sexual violence prevention curriculum, tailored for NCAA student-athletes. The intention of creating a sexual violence prevention program tailored for student-athletes is to ensure the problem is addressed with a unique approach, focused on changing

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behavior. In order to create a tailored program, data must be collected to understand the cultural climate on a college campus. The scope of sexual violence on college campuses varies, therefore a tailored training and education program must be developed for individual athletic departments. Insights from student-athlete experience, attitudes and opinions will be gained from a climate survey and used for future prevention programming. In addition, a self-sustaining program must be constructed to fit the institution's unique needs. In order to create prevention program materials aimed at changing behavior within NCAA athletics, the climate survey will be composed of: The student athlete's understanding of consent and rape myth acceptance, as well as their bystander efficacy and lived experiences. A campus climate survey will enhance the NCAA's work on understanding the student-athlete cultural environment. In addition, student-athlete data will help individual athletic departments create a long-term solution-based program aimed at preventing sexual misconduct. Climate survey data have been utilized in the past in order to understand the culture of collegiate athletics. There have been interesting findings that prove to be significant when preparing prevention procedures and education materials for NCAA student-athletes.

### **Significance of the Study**

Utilizing a survey tool is important in order to understand the experiences, attitudes and behaviors of NCAA student-athletes. The NCAA took part in a Social Environment study in 2012 and 2016 in order to gain a deeper understanding of student-athlete culture. 65 percent of NCAA schools participated with 21,500 student-athlete respondents. A climate survey must gauge beliefs and experiences of the student-athlete population. The concept of campus-climate incorporates a large range of behaviors and occurrences that promote or hinder student safety and ability to learn. The White House Task Force to Protect Students from Sexual Assault endorsed

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campus climate surveys, insisting they are a means to assess experiences related to sexual violence and sexual misconduct at collegiate institutions. Administering a climate survey will significantly enhance an institution's ability to create effective prevention programming.

In the 2016 NCAA Social Environments Study, the NCAA asked student-athletes questions about their willingness to intervene in situations. 63 percent of men responded "Likely" or "Extremely Likely" when asked if they would intervene in a situation if it could lead to inappropriate sexual behavior. 87 percent of male athletes responded "Likely" or "Extremely Likely" to accompanying a teammate home if he has had too much to drink. The 24 percent difference demonstrates NCAA male student-athletes exhibit more confidence with bystander behavior relating to alcohol, as opposed to sexual misconduct. Becoming an active bystander to sexual misconduct requires education, awareness and self-efficacy developed through training programs. It is crucial to understand student-athlete experience, behaviors and attitudes as it relates to sexual misconduct, prior to creating prevention program materials.

The NCAA's Social Environment Study is an important start in order to confront athlete-specific issues involving sexual misconduct. In order to build on NCAA data, individual campuses and athletic departments must create a climate survey for their student-athletes. Climate surveys will help to create effective prevention programming aimed at providing student-athletes with the necessary skills and knowledge to prevent instances of sexual violence.

Utilizing student-athlete lived experience, attitudes and opinions will enhance future programming in order to provide a solution to the issue of sexual violence. Student-athletes will play a role in creating the prevention materials through their responses and experiences. Every institution should create a tailored program, focusing on providing a long-term solution. In addition to concepts of rape-myths and consent, the climate survey must cover athlete-focused

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concepts, such as recruiting practices, and the comfortability student athletes have in their locker room or with team members and coaches. Collegiate institutions and athletic departments have a responsibility to protect their students. Solution-based prevention strategies should be supplemented by data provided by current student-athletes. Current data will strengthen a tailored training and provide comprehensive educational and skill-building sessions aimed at preventing sexual violence.

### **Rationale**

As a former Division I basketball player at the University of San Diego, and a current Graduate Assistant for the USD Women's Basketball team, I have witnessed the cultural climate of collegiate athletics first-hand. I feel strongly about student-athlete involvement in creating a safer campus community. In order to create socially aware student-athletes who are confident in performing bystander behaviors, they need a long-term educational program geared towards positively influencing their character, and building specific skills in preventing sexual misconduct. Sexual violence occurs in a context of a society that creates space for the unwanted behavior. As popular-opinion leaders on and off campus, student-athletes often set the standard for socially acceptable behavior. Whether sexual misconduct occurs on campus, in locker rooms or at parties, student-athletes must have the confidence and preparedness to confront these instances.

Brandon Vandenburg was a Freshman tight end for the University of San Diego Toreros in 2011. Vandenburg transferred to Vanderbilt University and in 2013, he was accused of gang rape of an unconscious woman. Vandenburg carried the unconscious woman, whom he was dating at the time, back to his dorm room along with three of his teammates. He encouraged them to rape her, handing out condoms as he took photographs and videos of which he sent to

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friends in California. Vandenburg is currently serving a seventeen-year prison sentence for his crimes. A USD teammate of Vandenburg's said he was vulgar in the locker room, and spoke inappropriately about women, but no one ever confronted him or asked him to stop. When the news broke of the gang rape, although student-athletes at USD, including myself were upset, many were not surprised. NCAA student-athletes have inherent status on their respective campuses. It is important for student-athletes to become aware of the role they play in preventing sexual violence, and the cultural climate that allows it to persist on their campus.

Training and education is crucial in order to prevent occurrences of sexual violence. When I was a USD student-athlete, I did not receive comprehensive sexual violence prevention training. Currently, USD still does not offer a tailored training for its student-athletes. USD is not immune to the issue of sexual violence and misconduct. The institution must create an environment committed to educating and preventing instances of sexual violence. Collegiate athletes should be part of the solution in regard to preventing sexual violence. In order for this to happen, student-athletes must play a role in prevention as a core group of peer-influencers. A student-athlete's ability to influence others toward healthy behavior must come from effective training and education, tailored for the unique experience of a student-athlete.

### **Methodology and Methods**

#### **Critical Leadership**

In order to address the issue of sexual misconduct within college athletics, athletes, coaches and administration must play a role in creating a safe and healthy environment on their campus. The development of a sexual violence prevention program will be developed through a critical leadership perspective. Collinson (2011) describes how Critical Leadership Studies draws on what is often neglected or deficient in mainstream leadership research. A critical perspective

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also tends to draw on qualitative and interpretative research in order to address the shifting construction of leadership. By using the critical leadership lens to examine the information and research on sexual misconduct within NCAA collegiate athletics, a tailored prevention program will be constructed. The critical perspective takes into consideration the multiple identities, values and cultures of particular societies, and how leadership and followership dynamics take on different forms. Student-athletes at different institutions will play a major role in constructing the preventative efforts, as their personal experiences will directly relate to the materials used in the prevention program.

Applying a critical approach to the bystander model and the creation of a sexual violence prevention program, will ensure each campus is treated differently. A critical approach will ensure followers have autonomy and power throughout the creation and facilitation of the program. Student-athletes will be approached as active bystanders, and the program will focus on how to build skills and efficacy as to create leaders within the followership group. Followers will be proactive agents, and become leaders on campus following the training, ensuring their fellow athletes, coaches and administration adhere to the policies and procedures, as well as exhibit acceptable behavior. Effective leadership mobilizes followers to achieve a collective purpose. This program will create a community of leaders who will play a direct role in ending sexual violence.

### **The Applied Project: Athlete-Focused Program**

A tailored approach to prevention will be necessary for NCAA student-athletes in order to directly target pervasive issues involving sexual misconduct. The unique experience of a student-athlete deserves a focused approach, examining current relationships with respective coaches and athletic administrators as well as common recruiting practices. Current prevention

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curricula often utilize a universal approach which allows for consistent language, and breadth of knowledge for athletes to gain about the prevalence of sexual violence on college campuses. The intention is to create a prevention curriculum that directly targets student-athlete lived experience in order to change behavior. This solution is attainable through a tailored approach, with prevention curricula examining specific behaviors, thoughts and attitudes. Prevention programming will need to directly target constructs connected to desired behavioral outcomes, specific to the student-athlete population. Utilizing research on current effective prevention programming, in addition to leveraging data acquired from current student-athletes, will allow new prevention curriculum to form on individual campuses. Student-athletes will respond to questions gauging beliefs and attitudes about consent, and rape-myths in addition to providing critical feedback about their lived experience and confidence to preform bystander behaviors. Prevention curricula will be strengthened through climate survey data and student-athletes will play a direct role in the creation of prevention strategies through their collective perspectives, attitudes and behaviors.

Currently, The University of San Diego utilizes an online module from EverFi to educate students on sexual assault. In addition, the university has hired speakers and performers to inform all students about the issue of sexual violence. Many techniques have been implemented to confront this issue, but more research must be completed in order to find the most effective strategy in changing behavior. Research shows a comprehensive and continuous program implementation, tailored for the high-risk student-athlete population is a positive approach in order to influence attitudes and behavior as it relates to sexual violence.

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### **Procedure**

The process of creating a sexual violence prevention curriculum for NCAA student-athletes began with researching best practices in prevention. Then I decided to use a current case study of a NCAA institution in order to develop programming that would improve the landscape of sexual violence prevention within the athletic community. I decided to use the University of San Diego, and began the process of creating a program through the use of current literature and data on this issue. Additionally, I attended student-athlete workshops on sexual violence prevention that were put on in collaboration with USD's Center for Health and Wellness Promotion. I then began collaborating with USD's Associate Director of Athletics, Title IX Coordinator and the Director of Research and Planning in order to be involved with collecting data on the cultural climate of sexual misconduct at USD, and expand the possibility of effective programming techniques that could be implemented for future Toreros.

USD distributes a Sexual Assault Survey to the student body every two years, with the practice beginning in Spring 2015. The purpose of this survey is to gauge students' understanding of consent, acceptance of rape myths and their lived experience as a student at USD as it relates to sexual violence. The survey is used to more fully understand the scope of sexual misconduct at USD and to understand student perceptions and opinions on the matter. I partnered with Paula Krist, the Director of Institutional Research and Planning in December 2018 in order to discuss additional student-athlete questions to be added to the 2019 survey. Student-athlete questions would be used to understand the landscape of sexual violence within the athlete community, and develop effective programming. After months of planning, the specific athlete questions were removed due to institutional stakeholder perspectives.

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The survey on sexual assault questions were developed from MIT's 2014 Community Attitudes on Sexual Assault Survey, in addition to the core research team at USD, involving the Title IX Coordinator, Director of Institutional Research and Planning and the Assistant Vice President for Student Life. The survey was distributed via email from, USD's Title IX Coordinator, Nicole Schuessler Veloz, and from department leaders on campus.

Student-athletes were encouraged to participate with full cooperation from the athletic department and USD's Senior Associate Director of Athletics, Marcy Lanoue. All aspects of the research were conducted in compliance with USD's institutional review board for the protection of human subjects in research. Data for this project was collected in the Spring semester of 2019.

### **Participants**

For the purpose of this study, only student-athlete responses will be used for the intention of developing a program that is built from student-athlete lived experience, attitudes and behaviors. There are currently 465 student-athletes who compete in 17 sports at USD, 234 men and 231 women. Data will be collected and analyzed from those who indicate they are a 'NCAA student-athlete' on the online survey. As an incentive, participants were given the choice to enter their email in a separate portal in order to enter into a drawing for a gift card.

### **Measures**

**Basic information.** The climate survey begins by asking about participation in educational programs, in addition to perspectives and awareness of current services offered at USD.

**Consent and rape-myth acceptance scale.** This is a 17-item scale set to assess the participant's acceptance of rape-myths and their understanding of consent. Many of the items have been adapted from the Illinois Rape Myth Acceptance Scale. Participants respond to the 17

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statements by indicating their level of agreement on a 5-point Likert scale (1= strongly disagree, 5= strongly agree). For example, “Someone who is sexually assaulted or raped while they are drunk is at least somewhat responsible for putting themselves in that position.” Higher scores indicate a stronger acceptance of rape-myths.

**Bystander behavior scale.** This scale contains eight behaviors. Participants read the eight behaviors and indicate on a continuum from 0-10 how comfortable they would feel performing the listed behavior (0= not at all likely, 10= extremely likely).

**Personal experience scale.** This scale contains 16 items, and allows participants to indicate their lived experience with sexual violence and sexual harassment. Participants have six responses to choose from. Yes, in a class, lab or work setting; Yes, in a residence hall; Yes, in other settings with USD students on or off campus; Yes, off campus without USD students; No, I have not experienced this at USD.

### **Analysis**

The primary purpose of the analysis is to examine how student-athletes understand consent, their acceptance of rape myths and their confidence to engage in bystander behaviors. Specifically, the differences in male and female responses will be evaluated. In addition to student-athlete attitudes, their responses to lived experience and the insight gained from their direct comments will enhance our understanding of the athletic culture at USD as it relates to sexual violence. Comparisons to previous survey results from 2015 and 2017 will be made in order to understand the impact of previous education techniques, and views of sexual violence at USD. The direct survey results will not be transparently analyzed in this paper as USD has not decided on the best platform to publicize results from the 2019 survey. Instead, I will analyze

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student-athlete results in order to create programming workshops that directly tie back to student-athlete experience, attitudes and opinions.

### **Discussion**

The 2019 survey will be used to structure the prevention program curriculum and its main skill-building sessions. The climate survey will culminate in a series of recommendations to the USD athletic department in order to create a bystander program that is better equip to handle the issues student-athletes encounter. Greater student-athlete participation will translate into higher quality data which represents the depth of USD student-athlete experience. Recommendations will be based on actual undergraduate lived experience, attitudes and opinions.

### **Limitations**

**Response rate.** From the over 450 student-athletes who represent USD, only nineteen filled out the survey in 2015, which accounts for around four percent of the student-athletes at USD. In 2017, thirty student-athletes participated, which accounts for about seven percent of athletes. The numbers did not provide a critical mass in order to generalize the data provided.

With only forty-nine student-athlete respondents covering 2015 and 2017, it is difficult to understand the student-athlete climate. In 2019, there will need to be a drastic improvement to participation in order to create an athlete-focused program.

Adjustments to the 2019 Sexual Assault Survey were meant to include a separate link at the end of the survey for those who indicated they were an NCAA student-athlete. This section of the survey was removed by institutional stakeholders. In order to create an athlete-focused prevention program, there will need to be an understanding of the athletic program's culture as well as the student-athlete's experience with sexual misconduct during their time as a student-

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athlete at USD. This includes recruiting practices, as student-athletes must understand acceptable behavior, and have the opportunity to have their experiences heard.

**Limited scope.** Data obtained from a climate survey can be limited in scope. In order to understand the real-life environment of USD student-athletes, it will be important to undergo ethnographic research. Individual student interviews as well as interviews with administrators, coaches and those who have particular knowledge of key dimensions of student-athlete life is important to understand the culture at USD. Organizations such as the Student-Athlete Advisory Committee (SAAC), and student athlete focus groups can help supplement climate survey data. These interviews and focus groups will help the research team identify the individual, social and structural risk to student-athletes, the athletic department and the university.

### **Implications for Practice**

Data obtained from the 2019 Sexual Assault Survey will give insight to the attitudes, bystander efficacy, and lived experiences of USD student-athletes. Student-athlete answers will help to create a tailored approach for future sexual violence prevention programming.

### **Recommendations: *Athlete Initiative* Program**

*Athlete Initiative* is a program aimed toward ending sexual violence within college athletics. This solution-based prevention program is built by former NCAA athletes, for current NCAA athletes. The prevention program is formulated from the lived experience, attitudes and opinions of current NCAA athletes on their respective campuses. Through education and skill-building sessions, student-athletes will have greater influence over the culture of their program. Athletic administrations must use the NCAA Sexual Violence Policy and the NCAA Toolkit as a guide, but they must also approach education and skill building in a unique and directed way. Student-athletes must hold themselves and their teammates accountable, and become leaders on

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their respective campuses. *Athlete Initiative* allows for this change to occur over a four-year period. In addition to the curricula framework created by Banyard et. al. (2009), student-athlete bystander training will utilize messaging and skill-building that is pertinent to the specific population's lifestyle and connections on campus. In addition to Banyard's components to effective bystander training, the following are components student-athletes will require for an effective training program.

### Student-Athlete Curriculum Components:

- Long-term program: Education and skill-building sessions over a four-year period
  - Address athletic culture at specific universities & create tailored approach
  - Approach needs a continuous touchpoint of education
- Address living situations, the use of alcohol, and "athlete parties"
- Acceptable "Locker Room Talk"
- Define and understand consent
- Address athletic relationships & acceptable behavior: athlete peers, coaches and staff
- Recruiting: Sexual misconduct violations during overnight visits
- Goal Setting & Athlete Initiative Pledge
- Captain Training
- Coaches and Staff Training
  - Coaches + Captains
  - "Top, Down" Leadership Approach- Holding participants accountable
- Application: Address previous NCAA scenarios and responses from the campus survey

*Athlete Initiative's* primary goal is to help the USD athletic department create a program in order to sustain long-term behavior change as it relates to sexual misconduct. Based on the student-athlete responses to the 2019 Sexual Assault Survey, *Athlete Initiative* will develop a tailored bystander intervention program for USD student-athletes geared toward building an understanding of the unique opportunity student-athletes have to be leaders on campus and influence change as active bystanders.

### Conclusion

College students are at high risk of experiencing sexual violence. Continued research suggests the standard online or single-session sexual assault education programming shows to

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have little impact on long-term attitudes and behaviors of participants. Although current prevention programming has shown to increase knowledge of sexual assault and increase the use of resources on college campuses, it does not prevent violent behavior from occurring.

Institutions have a responsibility to understand that “awareness education” does not qualify as prevention. In order to inform lasting attitudinal affects, and sustained behavior change, curricula must be tailored for individual athletic programs, and focus on data provided by student-athletes. Enhancing prevention program effectiveness is necessary in order to create a safer campus community. The creation of a long-term prevention program for student-athletes with increased exposure to educational information and skill building sessions is a necessity in order to prevent sexual misconduct within collegiate athletics. Additionally, programming must be engrained in the culture of the institution, while coaches and administrators play a major role in the adjudication of sexual misconduct and manifesting socially acceptable behavior. Program curricula developed from student-athlete data will improve attitudes, knowledge and behaviors of student-athletes as it relates to the issue of sexual misconduct. The use of data will strengthen program effectiveness particularly focused on behavior change because curricula will align with the social, emotional and cognitive developmental capacities of student-athletes. Additionally, data will allow preventative materials to directly address areas of concern within athletic departments. Modern prevention programming needs to meet student-athletes where they are, and address the unique experience student-athletes face on a college campus. Athletic departments that conduct research on their student-athletes are better equipped to address sexual misconduct because every campus has a unique set of issues that need to be covered.

Over 450 student-athletes represent the University of San Diego. It is crucial for USD to educate its student-athletes on sexual violence and build skills as active bystanders. In order for

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student-athletes to engage in bystander behavior, it is necessary they exhibit the attitude and awareness to encourage acceptable behavior as it relates to sexual violence. In order to change violent behavior, the culture of the athletic community on college campuses must be addressed. The culture that persists within college athletics cannot be changed without continuous and comprehensive programming on individual campuses. This culture change begins with the leadership on campus. It will be essential for USD to provide a mandatory sexual violence prevention program created exclusively for student-athletes. Prevention programming must work in collaboration with major stakeholders on campus in order to provide the most effective strategy. Education must be continuous, tailored to its participants and comprehensive in order for USD to sustain an impact on the culture of their athletic program over time. Although sexual violence is a pervasive problem, it is also preventable. Without innovative and targeted programming, violent behavior will continue to persist and collegiate institutions will remain liable for failing to address the public health crisis of sexual violence.

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