

Project Title: Sexual Assault Awareness Initiative

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Overview: The purpose of this project is to increase the Skidmore community awareness of the resources available to them regarding sexual assault and sexual/gender- based misconduct. This initiative will highlight the resources and figures available to students both on and off campus, as well as the policies regarding reporting and further steps which may be taken. I was motivated to work on this project because working as a Peer Health Educator has opened my eyes to the severity and confusion on campus surrounding this topic. I don't feel Skidmore students know the extent of the valuable resources they have available to them and the specific policies and reporting requirements held by each resource. This is a topic which I am very passionate about and hope that I can use the Honors Forum as my platform to make a substantial change across campus.

Timeline: I am hoping to execute this initiative throughout the month of April, which is recognized as Sexual Assault Awareness Month. Throughout the month I am hoping to create a poster campaign across campus which highlights the resources and faces of people on and off campus who are available to aid students; these resources will include the following: Counseling Center, Health Services, Peer Health Educators, Health Promotions Office, Campus Safety, Title IX, Wellspring, and Planned Parenthood. This campaign will also have an online presence so a larger audience of students can be reached. I am hoping to collaborate with both SGA and the PHEs and use their Instagram/Facebook pages to highlight the same messages and information that the posters do. In addition to highlighting resources, I will also analyze data previously collected by the school and Peer Health Educators to show the impact this pressing issue has on our campus and the importance of knowledge about resources.

Goals: Overall I am hoping that this campaign will increase the Skidmore community knowledge about all the amazing resources they have available to them and help students feel supported. I believe this project will spread awareness about the severity of the issue by sharing data gathered from Skidmore students. The goal would be for this to become an initiative which continues during April every year and is led by either a Peer Health Educator or Honors Forum member. I think this campaign will greatly benefit our community through education about a topic which greatly affects students on our campus and can additionally decrease the stigma surrounding the issue.

Academic Quality: This project is academically rigorous in that it will involve a significant amount of research to fully inform Skidmore students about their resources and will include the analysis of data and creation of graphics and posters. I will also be visiting each resource I highlight to conduct an interview with the leader of the organization to collect further information. For example, I have already been in contact and had several meetings with the director of Wellspring, which is a Saratoga Springs community resource for victims and survivors of sexual assault. I have also been in contact with the director of the Saratoga Springs Planned Parenthood, as well as several on campus resources. I feel this project furthers the life of the mind for all Skidmore students, because it is impossible to be academically successful when one doesn't feel supported as a member of the community. The National Sexual Violence Resource Center reports that approximately 22% of college students have experienced some kind of unwanted sexual encounter and that more than 90% of sexual assault victims on a college campus do not report the incident. If I can do anything to change these discouraging statistics I feel that would be a great benefit to the Skidmore community. (<https://www.nsvrc.org/statistics>)

Additional Comments: I think this could be a really significant project that is not only academically rigorous for myself, but also extremely beneficial to Skidmore. This idea originated from my work as a Peer Health Educator, but I feel that it would work well as an Honors Project because of its importance and scale. I am very open to additional ideas on how to spread the message and increase the outreach for the project, and hope this can be a successful campaign which continues in years to come!