

# Grant to help stop violence against women

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For the second time since 2003, the U.S. Department of Justice's Office on Violence Against Women has awarded the College a two-year grant - totaling \$181,575 - to help combat violence against women on campus. The money, received from the Department of Justice's Grants to Reduce Violent Crimes Against Women on Campus program, will be given to the office of Anti-Violence Initiatives (OAVI).

"This is a tremendous accomplishment," Jackie Deitch-Stackhouse, coordinator of OAVI, said to TCNJ Update. "Most schools only get this grant once, and we competed against the largest pool of applicants since the grant's inception in 1999."

Out of the 166 schools that applied for the grant this year, the College is among 30 institutions nationwide that were selected as recipients. Only about 120 grants have been awarded since 1999, according to Deitch-Stackhouse.

Among OAVI's plans for the grant, Deitch-Stackhouse is most excited about holding an Intimate Partner Summit with the Inter-Greek Council (IGC) and a program to have Campus Police shadow members of the Mercer County Prosecutor's Office Sexual Assault Unit.

According to OAVI, the Intimate Partner Summit would "provide a forum to offer educational programming and to actively engage this high-risk population in a dialogue around issues of sexual assault, domestic/dating violence and stalking." The office wants to use last fall's Alcohol Summit, which involved a similar dialogue with the campus Greek organizations concerning alcohol use and abuse, as a model.

OAVI plans to have about 60 leaders from campus fraternal organizations take part in the two-day summit educating both males and females on violence against women. The organizations will then be expected to implement a plan to help spread what they took out of the summit, Deitch-Stackhouse said.

The fraternities will decide what plan they want to enact.

OAVI also plans to get training for Campus Police officers from the Mercer County Prosecutor's Office Sexual Assault Unit. One officer from each of the four shifts would shadow a special agent for three days, learning techniques to properly question alleged victims and perpetrators and support the work of the prosecutor's office.

Deitch-Stackhouse also said she hopes to improve the reputation of the officers to make them more accessible and trustworthy to those in need of help. She expressed concern that the bad press the officers seem to get almost weekly could lead victims to feeling

uncomfortable contacting Campus Police.

"When I've talked to victims who went to Campus Police, the response has always been outstanding," she said. "When the Campus Police get a bad rep or get portrayed as incompetent, people aren't going to be as willing to go to them if they need help."

OAVI also plans to use the grant money to train incoming students, make OAVI more accessible to students with differing abilities, and enhance training for the College Judiciary Board, peer educators, professional and student staff.

The grant money that was received in 2003 was used to create OAVI, as well as the Initial Contact Advocacy Network and White Ribbon Campaign.