

Carmen G. Warren, R.N. to be first speaker in the San Diego Rape Prevention Education Program

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Carmen G. Warren, R.N., health consultant to the San Diego City Advisory Board on the status of Women and co-author of the recently published book on protocols for dealing with rape victims, will be the first speaker sponsored by the newly funded University of California, San Diego Rape Prevention Education Program.

Ms. Warren, chairperson of the Subcommittee on Sexual Assault and Inter-Family Violence, will present a program and answer questions based on the 127-page text entitled "San Diego County Protocol for the Treatment of Rape and Victims of Sexual Assault" at 2 p.m. Thursday, April 20, in the International Center at UC San Diego. The program is free and open to the public. Copies of the book will be available.

The UC San Diego rape prevention and education program is an outgrowth of a student Rape Task Force organized last year and is similar to a program at UC Berkeley. A Rape Prevention Education Program originated by UC Berkeley and supported by the nine UC campuses has been submitted for funding to the state Criminal Justice Planning Office. If approved, it would be put into operation during fall quarter 1978.

In the interim, a small-scale centralized campuswide effort has been launched at UC San Diego with funding until June 30 from the Chancellor's Discretionary Opportunity funds. According to spokespersons in the office of the Vice Chancellor for Student Affairs, even if the systemwide UC rape prevention and education program is not funded, the San Diego effort will continue and expand.

The local task force is in the process of surveying the UC San Diego campus to assess its safety and the adequacy of its nighttime lighting and seeking any "dangerous spots" which ought to be improved. This nightly campus tour, it is emphasized, is not a "Patrol," but a safety committee project.

Other committees which have been organized include outreach and education groups which include representatives of every contingent of the campus community -- faculty and staff, as well as students.

"One myth that has to be dispelled is that rape concerns only students," wrote the Student Affirmative Action Committee to UC San Diego Chancellor William D. McElroy in December 1977.

"The Women's Center receives enough calls from staff people to prove that the problem concerns every woman on campus," emphasized the students, urging the chancellor to centralize efforts which at the time were scattered and diffuse.

"Rape is not now an acute problem at UCSD," explains Maria Del Drago, a member of the Vice Chancellor for Student Affairs staff. "But what we're saying by organizing this task force -this education effort- is that we don't want it ever to be allowed to become one. As educators our duty is to look after and protect the students, take preventive measures. Maybe if we do that, UCSD will never be a significant factor in rape statistics."

The task force is in the process of developing a "confidential rape report" as a "rumor control device," according to Del Drago.

"If we educate victims and the people who deal with them to utilize this report, we'll have some way of ascertaining their veracity. There are just too many false impressions about rape and it's important for us to be absolutely precise if we want to confront and combat the problem."

The report is designed for both victims and witnesses of rapes as well as those in whom victims confide and, in its preliminary form, emphasizes the necessity of being supportive toward victims. A secondary purpose of the report is to gather information which will be utilized in improving the campus community's preventive education program.

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