

## The Big Issue: Sexual assault on campus

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Students from Tulane and other universities participate in the annual Take Back the Night candlelight march to bring awareness to sexual violence. (Photo by Cheryl Gerber)

Area policy makers, activists and students gathered at [Tulane Hillel](#) on Nov. 12 for the latest edition of The Big Issue lecture series, "Rape 101: How do we end sexual assault on campus?"

Of 500 students at Loyola and Tulane universities polled by Loyola sociology professor Marcus Kondkar, 37 percent reported at least one act of unwanted sexual coercion in the past year. Eighteen percent experienced at least one incident that

could be classified as “legal rape.” Yet, only four percent of those victims reported the incidents to someone empowered to take action.

“It's always this sense of feeling partly responsible that came up over and over again ? having a role in what happened,” Kondkar said.

Along with Kondkar, serving on the experts panel were Louisiana state Sen. J. P. Morrell; Scott Schneider, Tulane associate general counsel; Julia Broussard of Tulane Violence Prevention and Support Services; and Tulane student activist Tara Wilson. Moderating the discussion was Tania Tetlow, associate professor of law and director of the [Domestic Violence Clinic](#) at Tulane Law School.

“There's peer pressure to define a sexual assault as a “bad hookup,”” Broussard said.

Viewpoints varied greatly ? Schneider decried Greek life while Wilson, president-elect of the Panhellenic Council, defended it. Yet, all speakers agreed that colleges' best course of action is to create frameworks for reporting incidents and educating students.

In New Orleans' party culture, intoxication can be a trigger for sex crimes. “The connection, in my opinion, is undeniable,” Schneider said.

But students may not realize that sexual contact with an intoxicated individual is technically classified as “simple rape,” the experts said.

Morrell applauded the level of resources that Tulane has directed towards this issue. In addition to Broussard's organization, Tulane funds the [Sexual Aggression Peer Hotline & Education](#), of which Wilson is a member.

Awareness events throughout the year include [Take Back the Night](#) and [Project Clothesline](#).

“We're helping one another learn how to take care of one another,” Broussard said.

*Johanna Gretschel holds bachelor's and master's degrees from Tulane University. She is a freelance writer living in New Orleans.*

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