

# Student or Sex Offender?

Presented by:  
Jesse Andrews  
Residential Education Director  
Washington State University

## Learning Outcomes

- Gain an understanding of recent laws and classifications regarding sex offenders
- Awareness of how WSU has worked with this unique population
  - Including various campus partners
- Understand some of the challenges faced in this process

\*Disclaimer\* I am not a lawyer, nor do I pretend to be one. This is not meant to be legal advice

## Why Am I Talking About This?

- Residential Education Director for building with Level 2 sex offender
- Worked closely with student entire year
- Advocate for student with staff, community, and institution
- Masters thesis topic

## Why Are We Talking About This?

- Our students come from very diverse backgrounds of all types
- In a 2003 study, 12,482 registered sex offenders living within 10 miles of 39 universities\*
- Of those 12,482, 485 were enrolled or employed\*
- Why not?

\*Catherine Turrentine, Director of Planning and Assessment, Virginia Tech

## Relevant Laws

- Clery Act (1990) Universities must post crime statistics
- Wetterling Act (1994) – Requires states to maintain registry of sex offenders
- Megan’s Law (1996) – Community notification
- Campus Sex Crimes Prevention Act (2000) – Notification of educational institutions

## Classification of Sex Offenders

Level One	Level Two	Level Three
■ Lowest risk to re-offend	■ Moderate risk to re-offend	■ High risk to re-offend
■ May not have to register with law enforcement	■ Must register when relocating	■ Public notification
■ Not subject to public notification	■ Relevant information shared with vulnerable populations	

\*Many U.S. states operate with a similar, if not identical classification system

## Rehabilitation/Treatment

- Time served, probation, house arrest
- Special Sex Offender Diversion Agreement (SSODA)
  - Regular counseling
  - Polygraph exams
  - Recidivism tests

A look at the experience of Washington State University in 2005



## History at WSU

- Since 2001, mix of level 1's and 2's have lived on campus
- Approximately 1 per year
- Because level 1's do not have to register, this number may be higher
- In 2005, case became very publicized

## 2005-2006 Academic Year

- "Jason"
- 18 year old student with transfer credits
- ~3.6 GPA on a 4.0 scale
- Lived in a double room
- Consistently low score on recidivism tests
- Committed sex offense at age of 13

## What Happens When a Sex Offender Wants to Live On Campus?

- Student/Law Enforcement notifies WSU of status
  - Currently referred to Director of Residence Life
  - Director of Residence Life also converses with campus partners
  - Director of Residence Life meets with student

## Campus Partners

- Attorney Generals
  - Concern over litigation, what if we make the wrong choice?
- WSU/Pullman Police Department
  - Decision to post or not in the halls
    - Positives and negatives
    - Options for student

## Campus Partners (cont.)

- Business Affairs
  - PD reports up through Business Affairs
- Student Affairs
  - Associate VP, Residence Life, Dean of Students, Director of Administrative Services

## Role of Residence Life

- Conversations with counselors and case workers
- Agreements with student
  - Limitations on where student can live and be on campus
  - Behavioral expectations
    - Not alone with children (ex. Siblings of roommate)
    - No pornographic material
    - Expectations are case by case
    - Additional considerations: UREC Family hours, CSLC

## Role of Residence Life cont.

- Disclosure of disposition
  - Dependant on student to disclose nature and details of offense
- Access to resources and support systems on campus
- Notification of the Residential Education Director (RED)

## RED Role

- Additional support
  - Accessibility and awareness of community
  - Bi-weekly check-in time
- Working with the Building Community
  - RA not initially aware
  - Notification of staff increased as situation escalated

## Discovery of Status

- County Fair
- Campus residents search registry
  - Led to notification of RA
- Roommate and many residents learn status
  - Led to notification of remainder of staff
    - *How do we balance being secretive with student privacy?*

## Possible Challenges

- Moral Issue
- Accessibility of student information
  - Online registry, including student picture and crime
  - Community response
- Media coverage
  - “Hot button issue”
- Unique, underrepresented population

## WSU's Experience

- Moral Issue
  - Sex offender who is a student, or a student who is a sex offender?
- Accessibility of student information
  - At WSU, this led to community discovery
- Media coverage
  - Newspaper articles, on campus interviews, vans camped out for several days
  - Harassment, heckling by students and professors
- Unfortunately, the student withdrew from the university because it was too difficult to focus

## Future of WSU's Policy

- Roommate notification now required
- Inclusion of Center for Fraternity and Sorority Life
- Publication of policy – where does it sit
  - *Does having a written policy open up possibility of addressing every criminal offense?*
- UREC Family hours, CSLC, Family Housing
- Others?

Thank you for taking the time to learn about this very unique population.

Questions???