

Student Recants Sexual Assault Claim

By Susanne Rockwell on December 3, 2002

The second UC Davis student to report being sexually assaulted on campus within a one-week period last month has retracted her claim but the investigation into a Nov. 19 assault of another student continues, UC Davis Police Chief Calvin Handy told reporters Monday evening (Dec. 2).

The unfounded report was made on Nov. 26, with the student asserting she was awakened in the early morning hours by a man with a knife who forced her from her off-campus residence to an upper balcony of the Social Sciences and Humanities Building where she said she was sexually assaulted.

"Our investigators as well as the UC Davis Victim Advocate, who is a member of the Campus Violence Prevention Program, were able to establish the rapport and trust necessary for this young woman to acknowledge that her report was unfounded," Handy said. "She is being provided counseling and support by UC Davis Counseling Services."

Jennifer Beeman, director of the Campus Violence Prevention Program, said she was "relieved this awful ordeal didn't happen" but concerned that this false report would make it harder for those who are victimized to come forward.

"My greatest fear is that this may affect our perception of other women reporting sexual assaults," she said. "False reporting of sexual assault is rare and this incident should in no way reflect on others who report."

Handy would not speculate on the woman's motivation for fabricating an assault but said investigators believe she had no malicious intent and will not bring charges against her.

Certain "irregularities" in the evidence prompted UC Davis and City of Davis police investigators to first question her claim, he said.

Campus police will maintain increased patrols of the Social Sciences and Humanities Building -- site of the Nov. 19 sexual assault and attempted rape that remains under investigation -- and of the campus core and residence hall areas, Handy said.

"While [the Nov. 26 sexual assault report] was an unfounded report, we want to remind everyone to take the necessary precautions for your own personal

safety," Handy said. "And we want to encourage everyone who has experienced a sexual assault to come forward."

Chancellor Larry Vanderhoef, in a [Dec. 1 letter](#) to students, faculty and staff, indicated the campus would step up its efforts to increase safety on campus, including improving lighting, addressing the architectural features of the Social Sciences and Humanities Building that present security challenges, and adding self-defense classes if demand warrants.

Those actions are still needed and appropriate, he said on Tuesday (Dec. 3).

"While this latest report of a sexual assault has proven untrue -- and I'm deeply concerned for our student who felt a need to fabricate an assault -- the fact remains that we must do all we can as a community to best ensure one another's safety," Vanderhoef said. "Our physical environment is one important part of that equation, as is helping to increase awareness of safety issues and providing appropriate support programs. We must do all we can to provide the safest environment possible for our students, staff and faculty."

At an early Monday news briefing, Handy emphasized that "safety is everybody's business. The police department is on point, but it's everybody's business. We must all care for each other, take precautions and not be lulled into a false sense of security."

<https://www.ucdavis.edu/news/student-recants-sexual-assault-claim/>