PRESS RELEASE
*For Immediate Release*

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In March 2013, President Obama reauthorized the Violence Against Women Act which changed some of the reporting obligations and crime classification required under the federal Clery Act. As part of the reauthorization, all Southern Illinois University (SIU) Carbondale employees were trained on the new reporting obligations, new crime classifications, and the increased prevention and education requirements.

The SIU Department of Public Safety encourages immediate reporting of all crimes. Filing a police report will ensure that a victim receives the necessary medical treatment and evidence collection for prosecution by trained personnel. SIU police officers are trained to investigate sexual assault cases and prepare cases for prosecution. The Department collaborates with the Jackson County State’s Attorney’s Office while investigating cases involving sexual assault. The federal Clery Act and Illinois Compiled Statutes define sexual assault. These reports are forwarded to the appropriate offices, such as the State’s Attorney’s Office and the SIU Student Rights and Responsibilities, for administrative action.

The SIU Student Conduct Code defines consent as a “clear, affirmative, unambiguous and freely given agreement to engage in a specific sexual activity. Consent is demonstrated verbally or through actions that clearly indicate a willingness to engage in the specific sexual activity. Consent for a specific activity does not imply consent for any other activity. Use of alcohol, drugs, or other intoxicants does not diminish one’s responsibility to obtain consent. Consent must be knowing and voluntary.”

In 2013, there were three reported forcible fondling incidents and four sexual assaults (as defined by the federal Clery Act). The forcible fondling incidents occurred on campus, one being within a residence hall. The sexual assaults occurred on campus, two within residence halls.

With increased training, awareness, and facilitated reporting, this year (January until October 1, 2014) there have been ten sexual assaults. Five of the assaults occurred this semester (fall 2014). Two reports were made involving incidents that occurred in 2013.
Of the ten cases of sexual violence, all have occurred within the residence halls. There was one report of forcible fondling in 2014, occurring at an off-campus property.

Of the reported cases of sexual assault and forcible fondling in 2014, all suspects were known acquaintances. All suspects were identified. Alcohol consumption was involved in all of the sexual assault cases reported this semester.

SIU is committed to fostering an environment in which all members of our campus community are safe, secure, and free from sexual misconduct of any form, including but not limited to sexual assault, dating violence, domestic violence, and stalking. The University expects all interpersonal relationships and interactions be grounded upon mutual respect, open communications, and clear consent.