

Andrew Connolly  
Andrewmc2401  
[AC750818@ohio.edu](mailto:AC750818@ohio.edu)  
Ohio University

Society is faced by a variety of social issues, and in order to address them, one must first recognize and address the issues at home. Without recognizing one's own faults, and the faults of the community, one cannot address the global issues at hand. Ohio University and the Athens Community are plagued by multiple issues that are intersecting in their causes and effects.

Ohio University is plagued by a high rate of sexual assaults and rapes on campus. Within the first week of school being back in session, multiple assaults were reported and there was a reported rape in a campus dormitory. These stories invoke fear in the student body at large, particularly females, minorities, and students who identify as a member of the LGBTQ+ community. Students are no longer comfortable walking alone, or at night across campus, in an environment that is relatively safe, and should be a place one should feel at home and free to explore as they please. A large quantity of female students purchased pepper spray in the following week as a form of protecting against potential assault, for they felt like they would be the next victim. The Ohio University Student Senate, Resident's Action Council, and Sexual Assault task force have been laying out measures to prevent future assaults, and are working to educate the community about the issue at hand. As a member of the Resident's Action Council I also have the ability to join in on the discussion, or attend the upcoming Ohio University Senate town hall to talk about the issues on campus and voice my opinion. Everyone has a voice, and has the right to voice their opinion.

This small scale example is a part of growing international awareness of the prevalence of sexual assault particularly towards females, powered by the #metoo movement exposing decades of hidden abuse and systematic oppression of survivors. A major societal shift in mindsets must occur in order to stop this from occurring. First, society as a whole must all come to accept the idea that the victim is never to blame. There still are a few, particularly the wealthy male elite, and the more conservative male who feel that the victim may be at fault, and this is contributing to the toxic culture that currently prevails in regards to rape and assault. Second, education must include seminars on preventing assault and bystander intervention in order to teach people at a young age how to respond to one, and how to prevent one. The issue must be tackled at its roots, uneducation. One knows not of respect and empathy, so one acts in a dangerous manner. A proper education will help prevent this.

In relation to the above issue, a new issue is facing the Ohio University Campus, unfolding in the past week. The prevalence of hazing occurring has shown a total lack of disregard for human existence and the value of life and dignity. Last week all Greek Life on Campus was suspended due to reports of hazing(15 fraternities and sororities) and today the Ohio University Marching Band was also placed under investigation and members can not meet outside of educational events for any reason as well. A task force was established, spearheaded by the dean of student affairs and the Department of Sorority and Fraternity Life in order

to investigate all of this, and a website is being created for reporting and to show the standing of all on campus organizations.

In order to help prevent future issues, I can learn more about what the task force hopes to accomplish, and how they will do this. I can see if they are looking for student input, and I can stand as a model citizen, representing all Ohio University stands for. We all have a responsibility to stand up for what is good in the world, and I must do that for those who can not.

Hazing, and the idea of forcing new members to prove their worth through demeaning tasks is an issue in social, business, political, and other institutions around the world. This is a practice rooted in preventing outsiders, and those of lesser class from joining an elite group, and serves to create a society built around pleasing the elite to gain access to their ranks. This leads to elitism ,classism, sexism, racism, and more. Society needs to realize that we all are one in the same. We all are equal on this Earth, and deserve to treat each other with the love and respect that we deserve.