

Department Of Justice Awards GU \$300,000 Grant Focused On Sexual Assault Prevention

by Sarah Thomack
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GREENVILLE - The U.S. Department of Justice's Office on Violence Against Women (OVW) awarded Greenville University a three-year \$300,000 grant. The grant is specifically awarded to colleges to focus on reducing sexual assault, domestic violence, dating violence, and stalking.

The program was created by Congress to address the unique issues and challenges that colleges and universities face in preventing and responding to gender-based violence.



Kennedy Shuffett serves as Greenville University's OVW project director in the Office of Community Life. She previously served as the program coordinator for Eden's Glory—a residential treatment program serving survivors of human trafficking. Shuffett says one of the goals of the grant program is to create an environment where students feel safe to report any incidences of sexual assault.

"I am looking forward to the opportunity to bring more awareness about sexual assault to students, faculty, and staff, and to help inform policy and procedure," Shuffett says. "Ultimately, I want to help create an environment where the focus is respect of one another and when sexual assault does happen, students are given support to the fullest and we operate from a place of restorative justice when it comes to offenders."

GU is part of a cohort of several other small universities that received the same grant. Along with the Department of Justice and the OVW, project directors like Shuffett work with the Victim Rights Law Center and mentors from other universities.

During the first year of the grant, Shuffett will work with internal and external partners to develop training and create a Coordinated Community Response Team (CCRT). The team will include representatives from campus safety, the culture and diversity office, the Greenville Student Government Association (GSGA), human resources, athletics, international student success, and community life. Shuffett also will seek input from students, faculty, and staff to discover areas where improvement is needed, why students don't report sexual assault, and how best to develop training.

In the second and third years of the grant program, Shuffett will facilitate sexual assault prevention and education training for students, faculty, and staff. Those training sessions will include consent and respect training, bystander intervention training, trauma-informed care training, and other training, as needed, based on input and research during the first year.

GU Campus Safety and Community Standards Director Shawn Foles says the grant program is important for GU as it provides an office specifically focused on education and prevention around a topic that is a growing issue on college campuses across the country.

“It allows the University to expand our law enforcement resources beyond the local or state level by having the education, training, and resources of OVW and the DOJ at our disposal,” Foles says. “The grant also provides an amazing chance to expand our partnership with both the Greenville Police Department and SAFE (Sexual Assault and Family Emergencies).”

For more information about the Department of Justice grant, visit www.justice.gov/ovw/grant-programs.

About Greenville University

Greenville University is an accredited Christian liberal arts university with more than 1,000 students, including traditional undergraduate, graduate, and adult degree completion students. Founded in 1892 and affiliated with the Free Methodist Church, the University is located in Greenville, Illinois, 45 miles east of St. Louis, Missouri. Visit www.greenville.edu.