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**UNIVERSITY OF GEORGIA SCHOOL OF SOCIAL WORK, POLICE DEPARTMENT AND
NEW MEDIA INSTITUTE PARTNER FOR NEW TRAINING OPPORTUNITY**

The University of Georgia School of Social Work has partnered with the New Media Institute of Grady School of Journalism and Mass Communication to create a sexual assault response training program for the University Police Department dealing with sexual violence on campus. This new module will ensure officers to utilize trauma-informed response tactics when dealing with sexual assault victims. The curriculum was developed by Dr. Adrienne Baldwin-White and Dr. Deanna Walters. The New Media Institute students integrated a e-learning authoring tool into UGA PD's existing training management system.

"Sexual assault is extremely underreported on campus, about 15%. What affects this low reporting rate, is that students don't think they will be believed. Police play a vital role in increasing this number," stated Dr. Baldwin-White. "Police officers are trained to interrogate and question victims in a regular investigation; however when dealing with sexual assault victims, we want to ensure that they are working with them in a trauma-informed way."

UGA Police Officers and staff receive training about sexual violence but generally only about current laws, policy and procedure. This training will help police officers respond empathetically to the victim's trauma and understand their needs more clearly. The training scenarios were developed from actual accounts of UGA students to help the officers understand the victims and the appropriate trauma informed response to those victims.

"Once they have this training, UGA Police can actually reach out to the community and college population and say this is part of what we do," explains Dr. Walters. "If you have experienced an assault, you can come forward and reach out to us, and we will understand and treat you with respect, dignity, empathy, and compassion."

The University of Georgia School of Social Work prepares culturally responsive practitioners and scholars to be leaders in addressing social problems and promoting social justice, locally and globally, through teaching, research and service. For more information, visit <http://ssw.uga.edu>.

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