Rebranding & Revamping the University of Minnesota Duluth Safewalk System

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ABSTRACT

The University of Minnesota Duluth is home to the Safewalk system, which has student safety escorts walking fellow students who call in every night to their destination. Their presence on campus is not well-known and this project completed an analysis of the system processes and how they function, while making recommendations on ways they can improve student awareness of its existence. A literature review of the red zone came up inconclusive due to incomparable variables from the articles to the University of Minnesota Duluth. However, the secondary sources pointed out the importance of prevention and education efforts on college campuses since psychosocial situations can increase the likelihood of experiencing sexually violent encounters. The system suggestions made to help Safewalk grow can be categorized as rebranding and revamping. The rebranding aspect looked at marketing tactics to increase student awareness, like posters and unified logos, while revamping looked at collaborative efforts to make a unified communication system to withstand the passing of time. The Safewalk system is a fantastic resource that should be praised for its work in student involvement to create a safe atmosphere for others to receive their education.

Keywords: campus safety, safety escort, university system, safewalk, greek life, red zone

INTRODUCTION

From “put your keys between your fingers,” to “carry your pepper spray,” students are no strangers to hearing these statements on university campuses. They are also familiar with the statement “there’s safety in numbers,” but do not always have the availability of a companion to walk with them to their destination. It is during these times alone where a campus can seem a lot less safe in the dark of night. It is every student’s inherent right to feel safe on the campus where they are receiving their education. Several individual prevention methods can be implemented, like learning self-defense or putting your rape whistle on a keychain, but the fear of being isolated will still take a mental toll on that commute. College safety escort services are a great free resource that students can utilize, where they do not have to put themselves in those high stress situations of being alone and vulnerable. The University of Minnesota Duluth Safewalk System is possibly the greatest resource being underutilized, and the goal of this project is to rebrand and revamp it before the Fall of 2021.

As a feminist researcher it is important to be straightforward about my positionality and how that affects my role in the research. I am a cis-gender heterosexual female identifying student at the University of Minnesota Duluth studying Criminology, Sociology, Communication, Women, Gender & Sexuality Studies. I advocate for the Program for Aid to Victims of Sexual Assault, located in Duluth, and SOS Sexual Violence Services, located in St. Paul. Along with being a certified sexual assault advocate, I serve the campus as the Women’s Resource and Action Center intern at UMD. These positions and experiences have allowed me to study sexual violence and primary prevention methods which identify me as qualified to speak on the subject. While I am grateful for undergraduate education, I also acknowledge that there is much I do not know on the matter. I am in no means an expert on these areas, I have not received

specified education on these topics. However, with the support of professionals throughout this project, and my fantastic faculty mentor Dr. Jacqueline Buffington, I believe it can make an academic impact on my university.

The contents of this report will be broken into three separate categories. The first section of the paper will look at academic sources to define what the red zone is, which will support the mission of the Safewalk system. The second section will be an assessment of the Safewalk system prior to the project and its functionality. The third and final section will be an explanation of all the practices put into place and what future steps can be taken to benefit the system and the students it serves.

METHODOLOGY

This qualitative research project will analyze secondary sources while incorporating primary sources to evaluate the system as a whole.When looking to define the terms and applications of the “red zone,” academic peer reviewed articles will be the main sources to consult. The second section will contain secondary sources in the form of digital media, specifically online university news organization articles and televised local news stories. The overview of the system’s functions will be implemented through primary resources in the form of experiential research, since the best way to learn about a program is to participate in it. Recorded first-hand interviews with involved members will provide primary sources on the goals and growth areas of the program. The final outcomes of the project would also be categorized as primary sources that others can look to in future evaluations.

ANALYSIS OF OBSERVATION

The Red Zone

It is important to note that sexual violence does not hold preference when it comes to gender identification of the victim-survivor. I use the term victim-survivor because that is the terminology I was trained with as a sexual assault advocate. The Ramey County SOS Sexual Violence Services advocate manual explains the difference in definitions where "the term 'victim' is often associated with the early phase of trauma immediately following victimization and is used to convey that a crime has been committed. The term 'survivor' is often used at a later phase of recovery to convey the continual process of healing. Because the terms indicate different stages of harm and recovery and, therefore, are interpreted differently by different people at different times in their healing process, you may find it helpful to use victim-survivor" (SOS Sexual Violence Services, n.d.). Unfortunately, no one is immune to being impacted by sexual violence either first or second hand. There are male, female, non-binary, heterosexual, LGBTQIA+, etc. identifying victim-survivors of sexual violence. In a heteronormative world, society neglects to acknowledge the voices that often do not speak up due to these oppressive social constructs that make it unsafe to do so. For that reason, there is little research on university campus sexual violence of a population that does not identify as cis-gender female. Due to these reasons, the majority of research found on the red zone will refer to most victim-survivors as female identifying.

The red zone, this uncommon term has come to define the period where a student in post-secondary education would be most vulnerable and at risk to sexually violent encounters (Cranney, 2015; Flack, 2008). Research has shown substantial evidence of a red zone presence, but is still incomplete on the specific parameters (Kimble, 2008). Several studies have been

conducted at universities with mixed results. Instead of showing a heightened increase of sexually violent encounters at the beginning of their academic career, some have found the risk level is fairly constant throughout undergrad (Flack, 2008). Others have measured the phenomenon by the amount of reporting done by the students during their first year (Wible, 2013), which can be problematic in the sense of underreporting not being an accurate representation. Then there is research that disproves the red zone all together and instead says the time of heightened assaults is due to psychosocial factors that are not yet identified (Flack, 2008).

The research lists some of these sexual encounter provoking situations, the major ones being an increase of party participation and the presence of Greek Life housing events (Flack, 2008; Kimble, 2015). There are the greater factors at play that cannot be fully recognized due to the lack of data identifying them, like the newfound freedom a first year student feels, the absence of parental supervision, peer pressure to conform, and new social standards in an unfamiliar environment (Cranney, 2015; Flack, 2008; Wible, 2013). Instead of the academic calendar determining the rates of encounters, it would be the events taking place within those time frames, like rush for Greek Life, that increase the risk of victimization.

The issue with these findings in respect to UMD is the contradiction of policies or complete absence of the trigger. There are five different sororities and four fraternities in the UMD Greek Life system (Greek Life, n.d.). However, the university panhellenic council does not allow Greek letter designated houses in the city of Duluth (G. Lyke, snapchat messages, May 3, 2021). The other major factor is the stricter alcohol policies UMD has compared to other colleges in the nation and even the twin ports area. Compared to the neighboring school of St. Scholastica, UMD prohibits any alcohol on the property, despite the legal age of the consumer

(Taggert, 2018). Since the two major social factors listed in the already limited research do not apply to the University of Minnesota Duluth, the results must be viewed with caution when it comes to comparisons. Further research is recommended for universities that do not have Greek affiliated housing and stricter alcohol policies to see what new contributing factors for the red zone might instead be applied.

The research on the red zone and the effect of college safety escort programs is so limited, and the resources that are available do not apply to the University of Minnesota Duluth. The issue with some of these academic articles is that the scope of their research is too small, so the results cannot be applied to a university like UMD with an undergraduate population of around 9,000 (About UMD, n.d.). Additionally, most of the research is conducted at individual small liberal arts colleges with a non-diverse student population (Kimble, 2008). There is no broader comparison to larger school populations or even analyzing several schools at once to note differences.

While the research is inconclusive on red zone definitions, the relevance of the matter still suggests that university students are at a higher risk of experiencing sexually violent encounters than those not enrolled in college (Carey, 2015). It is not a requirement at UMD for freshmen to live on campus, but the majority still choose to do so. According to data compiled from which students received financial aid, including loans, around 88.8-90.1% of freshmen at the University of Minnesota Duluth decide to live on campus their first year (College Factual, 2021). Since these numbers were collected from an outside source they should be viewed with caution and the possibility of calculation error should be acknowledged. Despite the questionability of the data, it is generally known that the majority of freshmen do decide to live on campus, and the percentage range is simply a statistical representation to show the decision of

first year living arrangements. Safewalk will continue marketing to the student body with an increased focus on freshmen as a result of the red zone research. Since the majority do live on campus their first year, we want to introduce the resource as early as possible so they are more likely to use it during their time at UMD. Safewalk has a limited range of walking from the university campus and the statistics used to analyze the crime rates of the school come from UMDPD, which only accounts for students or offenses that occurred on campus property.

The University of Minnesota Duluth is one of three universities in the state that has its own on campus police department. Even with the quick reaction times and undivided attention UMDPD has for the campus, sexual violence and assaults do occur. Within the past 5 years there have been influxes in rapes, fondling cases, aggravated assaults, and robberies. There are other criminal offenses in the reports, but these four are ones where the perpetrator comes into direct contact with the victim-survivor and is an offense that the Safewalk system could potentially prevent. Within the last five years, 2017 had the highest number of fondling cases with 12, seven happening in the on-campus residential areas and two robbery offenses. The year 2016 had the highest amount of rape cases with nine, five happening in the on-campus residential areas. Finally, 2019, 2017 and 2016 all tied for each having one case of aggravated assault (University of Minnesota Duluth, 2020).

It is important to recognize that annual reports by the University of Minnesota Duluth Police should be viewed with caution since they are not clear representatives of the actual amount of assault, harassment, etc. that happens on campus. There are a few different types of reporting that can be done on campus involving law enforcement, but the main source of the statistics in these annual reports are from the Clery Act. The Clery Act was passed in 1990 and "mandates that colleges and universities that receive federal aid should inform students and

employees about crime statistics as well as policies and procedures that are in place to prevent crimes, including sexual offenses" (Vladutiu, 2011; Leigh, 2018). So even if the student goes to a confidential advocate, like in the Women's Resource & Action Center, that employee still has to legally submit a form saying what kind of crime occurred and whether or not it was on campus. There are students who will not approach anyone about the incident, which would account for the lack of reporting and falsely appearing decrease in criminal offenses occurring.

Assessment of System Prior to Project

Before giving an assessment of sexual violence on UMD as a campus and how the Safewalk system responded, a brief historical overview of the system is required. The Safewalk program was started by the Greek Life Office here at the University of Minnesota Duluth, the exact date is unknown, but it has certainly been present since 2013 (T. Seymour, zoom meeting, December 13, 2020). Later on, the program began a partnership with the Office of Transportation & Parking Services and they divided the days of the week on who would respond to calls. Greek Life agreed to respond to week night calls from Sunday to Thursday, and Transportation would be responsible for the Friday/Saturday weekend nights. During a typical year the program runs everyday from 8pm to midnight, but in compliance with the Maroon & Gold University of Minnesota Sunrise Plan the COVID-19 hours were shortened from 8-10pm (Housing & Residence Life, 2021). The Greek Life safety escorts are specifically from the sorority Gamma Sigma Sigma and the fraternity Alpha Delta. Part of the letter's national requirements of these chapters is to have their members perform a certain amount of volunteer hours, which these students fulfill through the Safewalk program (O. Schultz, snapchat messages, March 17, 2021).

Safewalk has their own phone line which is connected to the Greek Life Office, with the calls being transferred to the Transportation Office on weekends. When someone would like a

safety escort they would simply call the number, say where they are located and the destination they want to be walked to. On Greek Life nights, there are going to be four on-call volunteers, two from Gamma Sigma Sigma and two from Alpha Delta. One from each organization will walk with the student, having the presence of both a male identifying and female identifying student (T. Seymour, zoom meeting, December 13, 2020). That way, when a pair is escorting a student, the other two will be at the office in case someone else calls. The reason for having a male and female identifying safety escort respond is to make sure the student caller does not feel uncomfortable in the situation alone with an individual safety escort. Depending on the distance of the location, safety escorts will arrive within 15 minutes to meet the caller.

The Transportation & Parking Services Office operates a little differently than their collaborative partners simply due to the sizing of their department. There are seven student employees who work the weekend nights in pairs of two, operating outside of the bus hub in Kiry Plaza (L. Norr, zoom meeting, December 16, 2020). When a call comes the two would don their safety vests and respond just like Greek Life. The main differences are the gender identification representation of the safety escorts, not having a pair stay behind in case another phone call comes in, and the Transportation responders are paid for their time as student employees. Due to the limited staffing, Transportation does not have the luxury of there being two different gender identifying individuals and instead have mostly female identifying escorts outnumbering the males 5 to 2 (A. Beeker, in-person interview, May 1, 2021). The other factor of quantity comes into play where if they received a call, no one would be able to pick it up since both safety escorts would be out responding. One service that Transportation offered Safewalk callers prior to COVID-19, were rides in official Transportation & Parking Services vehicles to their destination. This was especially appreciated during the colder months or for the longer

distances; unfortunately that has been temporarily discontinued for sanitation purposes. While both programs have differing functionality aspects, they share the same mission of creating a safe atmosphere for UMD students.

As a primary source in the form of experiential research, I both called the line in need of a safety escort and shadowed a typical shift to see the full picture of how the program functions. Since research is so limited on the red zone and college safety escort programs, these primary sources will create a more valid image of the project. Qualitative research in the form of stories and alternative methodologies carry power in the areas where quantitative research lacks and can fill those informational holes while continually proving its importance in the scholarly world. On January 25th, 2021 around 9pm, I called the Safewalk phone line and asked the safety escorts to walk me from the Women's Resource and Action Center Office, located in the Multicultural Center on the 2nd floor of Kirby Student Center, to my on-campus apartment in Goldfine A. The safety escort replied that they will be there shortly to walk me from my location to the destination. Two people soon appeared in bright reflective safety vests carrying flashlights. We held a conversation en route to my destination, I thanked them for their time, and they went back to the office. Something that seems so simple can be a life saving resource. I think a common misperception about the Safewalk system is that they only function on University properties, when in reality they will walk up to two miles off of campus! ([**Figure 1**]L. Norr, email, April 14, 2021). I made sure that all of the new advertisements for Safewalk highlighted this important feature so students would become aware and potentially utilize it more.

On May 1st, 2021 at 8pm, I walked to the bus hub located in Kirby Plaza, where the Transportation & Parking Services Office is located, to shadow a typical shift. I was greeted by Alexandra Becker and Jennifer Velazquez who let me into the office where we set up for the

shift. Jennifer had just begun working at the office this past semester and Alexandra is the marketing and communications assistant who was pulled into the office due to the hiring freeze during COVID-19. Both stated how they did not know much about the Safewalk program or personally responded to a call, but expressed interest in assisting with the program development. Due to the shortened hours in compliance with University safety guidelines, the amount of incoming calls has decreased exponentially and the night was quiet. During the shadow shift we brainstormed ideas for marketing and ways to increase student awareness; while there were no calls, it was a productive evening in other ways. By interacting with the safety escorts I was able to build those valued connections in feminist research where I constantly am giving respect to the population I am working with and making sure I do not overstep my boundaries.

The other common misperception is that Safewalk operates under UMDPD and will penalize students for underage drinking or drug consumption. There is no direct affiliation between the organizations, safety escorts do not have the authority to make those judgments. Even though Safewalk is not affiliated with UMDPD, this does not mean they do not collaborate. In an interview with Fox 21 News, safety escort Jacob Boor states how Safewalk "[has] a good relationship with the police department so if anything happens while we're doing a Safewalk that we feel uncomfortable with the people that we're walking we also have that," (Leigh, 2018). There is major mutual respect between the two systems. UMDPD Lieutenant Tim LeGarde states how "Safewalk has added an extra layer of civilian enforcement, strengthening our presence on campus while not taking any resources away from UMDPD" (Shea, 2017). Further events between Safewalk and UMDPD would be organizing and participating in self defense training hosted by UMDPD Officer Chris Shovein. These collaborative efforts create one system and ensure students that the university, as a singular entity, stands in solidarity for student safety.

One thing the safety escorts would like to emphasize in future marketing campaigns to dismantle the misconception around alcohol is that the program is run by the students, for the students. The limited research on the red zone states that freshman women were more likely to experience assaults involving alcohol (Flack, 2008; Kimble, 2015; Carey, 2015). This again is most likely orchestrated through psychosocial situations that cannot be fully determined, but nevertheless stresses the risk of alcohol consumption and safety. In 2009, the University of Minnesota Duluth adopted the "Alcohol-Related Emergency Policy" where students drinking underage will not be penalized if they require emergency assistance like police involvement if sexual violence occurs or if they require immediate medical care (Hollingsworth, 2009). Student safety is a top priority and this policy is to protect those who want to report, but most are confused at what situations would qualify and do not believe their uncomfortable feelings would be validated under the policy. However, since Safewalk is not directly affiliated with UMDPD, the caller should not have their lack of sobriety prevent them from calling the safe line. Safety escort Alexandra Becker even goes further to say how inebriation is all the more reason students should utilize this free resource in this judgment free safe space (A. Beeker, in-person interview, May 1, 2021).

Results of the Project

After I knew that I wanted to interact somehow with the Safewalk program for my senior capstone project, I immediately reached out to both supervisors of the program, Tori Seymour and Lisa Norr. My intentions from the very beginning were only to assist and I in no way wanted to intrude. The goal was to make this a collaborative project. Instead of making changes as an outsider, I would collectively work with the students from each organization to make sure they were included in the processes and felt like their voices were heard. Tori Seymour is the Program

Developments Coordinator for the Kirby Student Center, which encompasses being the Greek Life Advisor and the Bulldog Beginnings Coordinator (T. Seymour, zoom meeting, December 13, 2020). For clarification purposes, Bulldog Beginnings hosts welcome week and welcome back week activities for students both during the fall and spring semesters (Kirby Student Center, n.d.). Lisa Norr is the Associate Director of Student Life Operations for Transportation and Parking Services (L. Norr, zoom meeting, December 16, 2020). Both supervisors have incredibly busy workloads, and since Safewalk is only a small portion of their position, it has not received the attention it truly deserves. This is no way the fault of Seymour or Norr, if anything it should show how hard working and productive they are. Instead it is the fault of the system and university as an institution for not prioritizing such a remarkable student resource, and not recognizing it's full potential.

When I entered the conversation, the foundation of the program was already built and the main items that needed to be done were staging. The program existed, there were people to run it, there was an understanding of their responsibilities, etc., they had the basic necessities needed to function. My intentions were to observe and note what could be improved, create plans on how they can do so, and present all of the information so it is ready at their disposal for implementation.

Rebranding & Marketing

The first step when rebranding a system is to create one unified look that will define its values across both coordinating organizations. The initial idea was to connect with UMD faculty who would potentially reach out to their student graphic designers and have them create the new logo and look for the program. Unfortunately, after contacting several faculty members and professors one explained that asking for a design from students without offering commission was

against university policy. I completely understand why this policy is set in place to protect the student body from exploitation of outside organizations for their hard work and creativity. After reaching out further, a UMD alumni Graphic Design & Marketing major offered to create a logo pro-bono. Benjamin Wedel, a 2020 graduate who now works for Kris Lindahl Real Estate, drafted three separate mock designs (**Figure 2**) after learning about the values of the program. The mocks were sent to all safety escorts from both organizations and voted upon in a meeting. They came to a consensus on the new look of the organization and Wedel created six png variations for them to use (**Figure 3**).

These new logos will make marketing attempts easier to design and identification from the student body clearer, as one universal logo will represent the system rather than multiple. Since there was no unified 'look' for the system prior to the project, it was difficult for students to recognize advertisements as coming from the same organization. One could also say there was more pressure on the student designing the poster since they had to create a new look every single time. The biggest issue according to Seymour is "students not even realizing that the program exists" (T. Seymour, zoom meeting, December 13, 2020). This quote made it clear that marketing should be a focal point of the project, and with the new logo design, the strategies were plentiful. The idea was to have the information be everywhere so students couldn't not see it, media exposure was the goal.

The biggest marketing strategy for the system are posters in both digital and physical form. Around campus one can find several televisions that will display events and important information like application deadlines or the menu for dinner. The pdf form of the design can be uploaded into the rotation of announcements on the screens around campus and the same designs can be printed in physical form as well. I created three different starting designs to show

examples of the information posters would contain while sporting the new logo (**Figure 4**). There are designated posting bulletins all throughout the university where approved posters can hang as long as a month in areas with heavy foot traffic. Every three years the Women's Resource & Action Center designs a new poster that is hung in all of the individual restrooms, promoting the resources they have for victim-survivors of sexual violence and students. As a student member of the "Sexual Misconduct Prevention Committee," I was able to have WRAC include the information and logo of Safewalk for the first time on the posters which will hang for the next three years (**Figure 5**). One poster alone might not seem powerful, but between the bulletin boards, the television screens, and all of the campus restrooms, it will be hard for students not to read about Safewalk.

When a student moves into on campus housing at UMD, they will find several magnets on their fridge containing important information for them to know. There is a magnet with the symptoms of alcohol poisoning, one for mental health resources, sexual violence victim-survivor resources, and others. These magnets are a great reminder to students and are an effective way of marketing the system to those who live within the two mile radius of campus. The Director of Housing Jeremy Leifferman explained how they used an online company called "ProPrint" digital who offer affordable priced items to print the magnets (J. Leifferman, email, May 3, 2020). There are five residence halls and four apartment buildings which create a total of 1,250 fridges on campus. He suggests always over-ordering and then saving the unused ones for the next academic school year. Every summer, facilities management employees clean every resident hall room and apartment on campus. After cleaning, they put new magnets on the fridges that do not have them. The fridges that still have the magnets do not receive new ones unless they are in poor condition. Since our magnet design would be new, facilities management would have to

distribute them to every single room. “ProPrint” needs three weeks to process the orders, print them, and deliver them to the campus which does not give employees enough time to distribute them in every room. This means they would have to be completed before May 2022 which gives more time to get the design approved, printed, and ready for the fall semester.

The final marketing step would be manufacturing and distributing Safewalk business cards containing all of the important information at different events. The Women’s Resource & Action Center hosts a multitude of events and even has a table full of community and university resources located in their office. If Safewalk makes a bunch of business cards, they can be handed out at these events to the student body. The design for the magnets can be the same as the business cards, creating that familiar universal look that students can easily recognize and associate with Safewalk (**Figure 6**). We are hopeful that these marketing techniques will be enough to grab the student’s attention and increase the likelihood of them using the system.

Revamping

After setting up an individual meeting with both Seymour and Norr, I created a large document of ideas we could implement that would help revamp the program based on what they said. The biggest thing for Norr was creating a universal communication system where safety escorts from both organizations could be logging similar information (L. Norr, zoom meeting, December 16, 2020). Prior to this project the system was running as two separate structures across both coordinating organizations. There was a lack of communication on system functions which led to discrepancies on policies and procedures between the two offices. When it came to logging a documented call, Transportation had a digital spreadsheet that tracked information like date, time, destination, and notes, while Greek Life had a physical sheet of paper that was passed

around. Neither program had one universal communication platform or data system where they could log their calls or communicate with each other.

Since the university's main online platform is Google, I knew that would be the most efficient way to share documents with current safety escorts and those to come. I created a digital binder using google spreadsheets that had three different tabs: activity log, notes, and directory. The activity log will ask for data on call time, date, who responded, pick-up location, destination, caller name, and caller phone number. This is similar to the sheet Transportation was using, but has a few more categories that can be later analyzed. If they continue using the digital binder, over the semesters they will be able to take note of trends in the calls. Seeing if there is a certain time where they might need to increase volunteers or if there is one location in particular that is making students uncomfortable. In this way the program can go from reactive to proactive measures on campus safety. Ideally, instead of responding to triggers it would be better to eliminate them all together which would be possible if calls are tracked.

The notes tab is equally important when it comes to merging the two programs into one system. Originally, there was going to be a binder and a google groups chat where emails could be exchanged to all the safety escorts. Google groups require an administrator to add and remove emails from the access list, which would add one more unnecessary responsibility for the system supervisor. Instead, the notes section will allow them to communicate if they need to across shifts and organizations. The final directory tab has the email contact information of all forty-six Greek Life volunteers, seven transportation staff, and three supervisors (T. Seymour, zoom meeting, December 13, 2020; L. Norr, zoom meeting, December 16, 2020). If needed, they can use this information to connect, or if they have a follow up question on a specific call they can check the activity log to see who the safety escort was and contact them using the directory. The

digital binder is an eco-friendly solution to creating a platform where students can track data, see trends, communicate, and get in touch with each other.

The issue with running an operation like this on an undergraduate campus is that the safety escorts will eventually graduate, so we want to make sure that the transition period between old and new ones is as smooth as possible. I have seen this issue in the past when it comes to our Safewalk program on campus. There will be a handful of students who feel super passionately about the program and promote it like crazy. For example, there was even news coverage of our Safewalk on Fox 21 Local News (Leigh, 2018). Once those students graduate, things quiet down until the next driven student picks it up. This is not to say that safety escorts are not highly motivated, they are just extremely involved like their supervisors. Greek Life national chapters have other requirements that the fraternities and sororities need to fulfill and most transportation employees hold other positions. This increases the frustration of not having a universal system, it can change across both running organizations as students transition. The goal of creating this communication platform is to create uniformity in policy and practices when it comes to responding to calls.

My biggest concern when coming into this project was the preparedness of the safety escorts. As an advocate, I see the importance of this system and want to make sure they are prepared for anything they might encounter when responding to a call. For that reason, I contacted several offices around the university asking if they could donate supplies so I could create kits for the safety escorts when they are on call. All of them replied that they would be happy to provide the resources and support Safewalk. Jenni Eltink from the Kirby Student Center donated drawstring bags, Lauretta Perry from Health Services donated bandages of various sizes, the Women's Resource & Action Center donated pens with their contact information, and the

Program for Aid to Victims of Sexual Assault donated 250 of their pamphlets. Along with some water bottles and their flashlight, the kits were assembled and ready to go! Since there was no budget, I am entirely grateful to the different staff and faculty members of the university and greater Duluth community for donating their time and resources toward this project. The best thing about these kits is that it increased awareness and truly showed how much of a collaborative system effort Safewalk will be with the new connections it has made thus far.

After speaking with several individuals, it has come to my attention that both supervisors and students would see it as beneficial to host a conjoined training session with all safety escorts from both organizations at the beginning of the academic year (L. Norr, zoom meeting, December 16, 2020; T. Seymour, zoom meeting, December 13, 2020; A. Beeker, in-person interview, May 1, 2021). Going over different procedures and making sure everyone is on the same page will strengthen that universal system bond. The supervisors will also be encouraging safety escort participation in other related events, like bystander intervention training hosted by the Women's Resource & Action Center during consent week in the Fall semester. The more educated and prepared the students are, the more they can understand their role in the bigger prevention picture on campus.

Program Advancements

Even with the unclear definitions of a red zone, and more specifically if it exists at UMD, we want to advertise this resource to freshmen when they first enter the university so they would be more likely to utilize it throughout their undergraduate career. For this reason we have made further collaborative efforts that will specifically target the incoming freshman class and hopefully increase their awareness. Mentioned previously, Bulldog Beginnings is a program that hosts events for incoming students in the Fall and Spring semesters (Kirby Student Center, n.d.).

These events allow them to socialize, get to know campus, and adapt to their newfound surroundings. There are events constantly happening that they can choose to attend, some during irregular school hours like 6am hikes or “soda-pong” until 1am. A major system advancement we would like to make is offering Safewalk at these events, that way students learn about the system while also feeling comfortable in an unfamiliar environment.

The other major advancement towards the incoming freshman audience would be guest speaking at the mandatory UST 1000 Freshman Seminar course about the program. I have created a short powerpoint presentation that will get the main ideas across and highlight those important factors mentioned previously like “by students for students” and where the two mile radius is located for reference. UMD Seminar Coordinator Sam Shanks agreed to safety escorts presenting this information as a way to familiarize incoming freshmen with the resource so they will be more likely to use it throughout their time as an undergraduate student (Sam Shanks, email, April 28, 2021). Between these two efforts targeted at freshmen, we are hoping they will learn about the resource at the beginning of their years at UMD and utilize it for the remainder of them.

LIMITATIONS & FURTHER EXPANSIONS

Research wise, there is so much about the red zone that is unknown; even it’s very existence is disputable among scholars. In order for the research to be applicable to UMD, a study of a comparative population must be conducted. Even then there are possibilities of misinterpretations so the only true way to know if the red zone exists at the University of Minnesota Duluth is to conduct research here. Within that research there are limitations when it comes to victim-survivor identification. Stated in the beginning, there is a severe lack of reporting when it comes to victim-survivors who do not identify as cis-gender females, or the

numbers are so small that nothing can be properly concluded. This is a much larger issue that expands beyond the red zone and into society's response to allegations of sexual violence and victim blaming. It is not that we do not think research in that area is important, contradictory, we believe it has great value but due to research ethics the population is not large enough to confidently state any possible relationships found within the data.

The other limitations are those psychosocial situations that do not apply to the UMD campus due to our specific policies like Greek Life housing and campus alcohol presence. One of the dangers of prohibiting alcoholic beverages on campus means that students are more likely to hide and drink in private. This greatly hinders the research since we truly will not know the effect alcohol has on campus sexual violence if we do not even know the full extent of alcohol's presence at UMD. Further research should be conducted on what factors specific to the Duluth campus have an impacting role on the red zone, if one exists.

For program expansion, I can only do so much to prepare the system for future safety escorts, inevitably it is up to the students to continue advocating for this system. My biggest fear is that this work right now will slowly fade with the passing of time and students until the next person gives it the attention it truly deserves. That is out of my control, and I must trust in the younger generation to continue the good fight towards social justice. The project can grow by creating a training manual for all of the safety escorts that would contain much of the information discussed in this paper. This will continue the uniformity of future safety escorts and ensure that they will function as a universal system, ideally avoiding any more dramatic spikes of student involvement in the activity. Further research should also be conducted by collecting data from student's on how we can improve the Safewalk program and become flexible to fit the needs of the population.

This project in no way replaces one form of prevention or brings an end to sexual violence on college campusses. Instead, the goal of this project is for the system to become another preventative tool that students can utilize to increase their sense of safety. Students can use a single tool, or several together, like learning self-defense techniques, carrying pepper spray, having a safety whistle, and/or calling the Safewalk system. There is always more to be done when it comes to social justice, but the best way to support the cause is increasing presence and contributing to the university by taking proactive and preventative measures to protect it's student population.

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APPENDIX

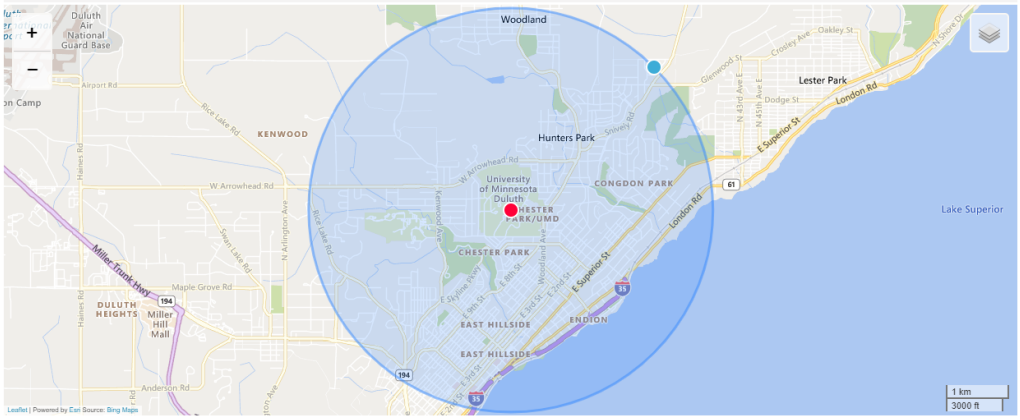

Figure 1 displays a map of the two mile radius from the University of Minnesota Duluth campus

Figure 2 displays the three original mock designs by Benjamin Wedel

Figure 3 displays the final logo variation designs by Benjamin Wedel in png form against a dark grey background

Figure 4 displays three different mock poster designs for the system created by Heidi Wedel

Figure 5 displays the final poster design for the Women's Resource & Action Center to use in all on-campus restrooms featuring the UMD Safewalk

Figure 6 displays the business card/magnet design created by Heidi Wedel