MILWAUKEE — On a chilly Sunday morning, a 19-year-old Marquette University student walked into the campus security office and tearfully reported being raped by an athlete just hours earlier.

She says two of the officers on duty that February day dismissed her claim, telling her they didn't know whether it was a crime because she alleged the encounter began as consensual sex and ended as an assault.

No report was taken, and Milwaukee police were not notified by the university, which insists...
the woman said she did not want authorities involved.

The university now acknowledges that failing to notify police was a violation of state law, which requires campus security departments to report any possible crimes to local authorities. School officials also did not tell police about a sexual attack allegation involving four athletes in October.

In fact, Marquette administrators told the Tribune that they have violated their reporting obligations for the past 10 years. And in at least the two most recent cases, the lapse played a role in prosecutors declining to press charges.

The admission comes amid media inquiries into the Catholic college’s handling of those two cases and serves as a backdrop for the woman’s account of what happened after she reported being raped on Feb. 27.

Breaking her public silence, the woman described a university determined to bury her allegations and eager to insulate itself from criticism once her accusations became known. She has shared the same account with law enforcement, school officials and medical professionals, according to documents and multiple Tribune interviews.

"It has pretty much become my life. I’ll never just be able to forget that it happened, because it changed everything," she told the newspaper this week. "I don’t trust anyone. I will never again trust the university. I will never again trust anyone in any position of authority because they worked their absolute hardest against me and lied to me."

Cases shed light on lapses in sexual assault reporting at Marquette - chicagotribune.com
Media attention to the Marquette cases reflects an increased scrutiny of the way administrators and law enforcement officials handle sex-crime allegations on the nation's college campuses, where nearly 1 in 5 women will be a victim of an attempted or actual sexual assault, according to the U.S. Department of Justice. For the past several months, the Obama administration has been calling attention to the issue with a series of initiatives and investigations aimed at better protecting students from sex crimes.

Last week, a Tribune analysis of several major Midwestern universities found that few students who report sexual violence see their attackers arrested and almost none see them convicted.

The survey of six schools in Illinois and Indiana found that police investigated 171 reported sex crimes since fall 2005, with 12 resulting in arrests and four in convictions. Only one of the convictions stemmed from a student-on-student attack, the most common type of assault claim.

Marquette reported 16 forcible sex offenses on campus from 2001 through 2009 to the U.S. Department of Education, according to the university. The school declined to provide the Tribune with the disposition of those cases.

**Fresh injuries**

In repeated statements to authorities, the woman in the Feb. 27 incident described accepting an invitation to the athlete's campus apartment that day. Though the two had a sexual relationship in the past, he suddenly had stopped calling or spending time with her, she said.

Once there, they began to have consensual sex, she said. However, the woman said, she tried to get off the bed and leave after he made disparaging comments to her and wouldn't explain why he had stopped contacting her.

She said she told him to stop but that he refused. She said she fought back but that he was too strong for her and held her down.
The woman agreed to speak to the Tribune on the condition that her name not be used.

Neither the athlete nor his Milwaukee-based lawyer returned calls seeking comment. The athlete, whom the Tribune is not identifying because he has not been charged with a crime, has told authorities and school administrators that the sex was consensual, according to multiple sources.

After leaving the athlete's apartment, the woman said, she returned to her dorm and tried to sleep. After a fitful few hours, she confided in a resident assistant about the previous night's events. The RA sent her directly to the security department, where, the woman says, two on-duty officers told her they were not sure that the encounter could be classified as a crime.

Still, they promised that a security officer would call her within an hour, she said.

The woman then went to the hospital at the resident assistant's urging. Medical reports from that visit show the woman had vaginal abrasions, in addition to fresh injuries on her face, hip, foot, knee and both thighs, according to documents obtained by the Tribune.

The following day, a security officer finally contacted her and asked her to come back to the department and give another statement, the woman said. She did, only to be told that police wouldn't want to investigate her case and that the university's internal discipline process would likely cause her more harm than good, she said. The officer did not take an official report, she said.

However, the officer did offer to report her allegation to the athletic department, she said. She recalled him saying her allegation would have the greatest impact this way.

After hearing little from the security department during the next month, the woman said she believed the message was clear.

"I was so mad at how I was treated by the people who were supposed to be there to protect..."
"Will not happen again"

Milwaukee County District Attorney John Chisholm told the Tribune that the woman has given authorities the same account on several occasions. Once she shared the allegation with Marquette security, the officers were legally bound to call police — regardless of their interpretation of the incident, he said.

"Once they have reason to believe that a crime like a sexual assault has occurred, they have a mandatory obligation to report that to police, and that didn't happen," Chisholm said. "Everyone acknowledges that."

Lt. Paul Mascari of the university's security department disputed the woman's account, saying officers always began their conversations with alleged victims by asking if they wanted police involved.

"I can tell you that, having talked to the officers afterward, it was never the intention of anyone in this department to discourage … victims from contacting the Milwaukee Police Department," Mascari said.

No one, however, disputes that the university broke the law when it failed to report the woman's allegation to city police.

Marquette's security department has been required under Wisconsin law to report all allegations of campus sex crimes to Milwaukee police since it was licensed by the state in 2001, but university administrators acknowledge they historically have forwarded a case only at the complainant's request. They declined to say how many cases went unreported to local law enforcement but said the majority of cases were sent to police at the women's requests.

Marquette officials also contend they did not realize that they were in violation of the law until the woman in the October case went to police on her own.
"We have had a lot of very blunt and very direct conversations about this stuff," said Stephanie Quade, the university's dean of students. "There were a lot of things I think we found that we were not proud of, as you can imagine. We have initiated a lot of conversations since then on campus as well as with local law enforcement ... to really help us learn from that. It will not happen again."

By not reporting sexual assaults to police, Marquette opened itself to accusations of trying to keep the attacks out of the public eye, even if that was not the intent, said Roger Canaff, a former prosecutor who now trains and advises military prosecutors on how to handle sex crimes.

"If you're not following that law, if you're attempting to handle sexual assault complaints internally within the university, I think the fair assumption is you're doing that because you don't want to bring outside attention onto this problem on your campus, so I can understand why people are angry about it," Canaff said. "Obviously, I can't get into what the motives of the university (administrators) are — I have no idea — but I think that would be a fair inference that people would draw."

**An emotional meeting**

Marquette officials first came under fire for their handling of sexual assault cases in late March, when a female student told Milwaukee police she had been sexually attacked by four athletes in a dorm room on Oct. 30. She reported the incident within hours to campus security officers, who informed the athletic department of the accusation but did not tell local law enforcement after she indicated she did not want police involved, officials said.

As reporters and television crews descended on the urban campus to cover that story, the woman in the February case received calls from Milwaukee police and school administrators inquiring about her allegation. It was the first she had heard from school officials in weeks.

The woman said she met with Quade, who encouraged her to focus on her schoolwork and
mental health rather than pursuing charges, the woman said. Quade also asked if she had thought about praying about the situation, the woman said. She said she left the meeting in tears.

"I felt like they were trying to get me to be quiet and disappear," she said. "I've never been made to feel so dumb, so stupid and so much like I didn't matter."

Quade said the meeting was held to offer assistance to the woman and to determine whether there was sufficient information to hold an internal disciplinary hearing for the athlete.

"I absolutely understand that the student was upset," Quade said. "Our intent in that meeting was first and foremost to offer resources."

The woman in the October case could not be reached for comment. The Tribune is not naming the athletes because they have not been charged, and the newspaper is not disclosing their sport to avoid identifying them.

The four athletes accused in the October case were subject to team discipline, Deputy Athletic Director Mike Broeker said. He declined to provide further information about any punishment.

In the February case, the woman filed an official complaint with the university in March and participated in the athlete's conduct hearing in April. She withdrew from classes shortly before the proceeding and plans to attend another college in the fall.

Marquette declined to provide the results of the internal hearing, citing student privacy laws.

The university will not be punished for failing to report the incidents because administrators cooperated with police and prosecutors once authorities became aware of the allegations, Chisholm said.

The state Department of Regulation and Licensing, which licenses the campus security
department, did not take action against the school because "there was insufficient evidence of criminal wrongdoing," a spokesman said.

The university's mea culpa, however, has done little to pacify some members of the Marquette community.

"I have been told by people that no one had bad motives in all this, that nobody was trying to cover anything up, and I find that hard to believe," said philosophy professor Nancy Snow, who recently chaired a committee to help establish a gender resource center on campus. "I find it hard to believe that trained professionals would do this. I'm very disappointed in the way the university handled this."

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