

# Sex Offenders on Campus: University-based Sex Offender Registries and the Collateral Consequences of Registration

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**SEX OFFENDERS HAVE** long been considered among the most despised and feared criminals in Western culture. Despite the varying circumstances and offenses that may be included by lawmaking bodies as "sex offenses," the mere mention of the phrase "sex offender" typically conjures up images of sadistic rapists and child predators. Accordingly, prevention of these types of crimes has been a concern of policymakers at all levels of government for many years. Correctional programming for sex offenders and other types of "violent" or "heinous" criminals has traditionally included either simply incarcerating such offenders for purposes of incapacitation, or at times providing treatment in pursuit of rehabilitation for incarcerated offenders. Convicted offenders in community corrections programs have also been subjected to a variety of mandatory treatment programs, medical interventions and strict conditions of probation and parole.

Quinn, Forsyth, and Mullen-Quinn (2004) point out that of the particularly loathed segments of the criminal population, sex offenders rank among the most repulsive, as evidenced by historically harsh sentencing trends and poor treatment by society. A popular practice in the criminal justice response to sex offenders has been the creation of publicly-accessible, Internet-based sex offender registries, currently operating in most states in the U.S. These registries are often coupled with the recent trend of community notification programs that are intended to make citizens explicitly aware of registered sex offenders within communities. Such programs are described by Quinn et al.

(2004) as a shaming or "branding" device, a practice that has been used on similar populations throughout history. The ideology behind these mechanisms is essentially to generate a boundary between the targeted group and society, a philosophy that Presser and Gunnison (1999) caution may not be appropriate for dealing with a sensitive population such as sex offenders.

The expressed goals of sex offender registries are to reduce recidivism and promote public safety. It is anticipated that such registries will increase community awareness, making sex offenders feel more susceptible to the risks associated with offending. This line of thinking has led to the growth of not only the traditional state-wide sex offender registries, but also new, more specialized forms of offender registries. One of the most recent innovations is the creation of sex offender registries on college and university campuses across the U.S., allowing members of campus communities to better protect themselves from potential offenders. The outcomes of such registries, however, including the effects of such specialized registries on offenders, have yet to be studied. As a result, policymakers and society as a whole are unaware of the potential consequences and considerations that may be associated with such specialized forms of sex offender registries.

This study is intended to promote a better understanding of college and university-based sex offender registries, allowing for the transfer of important practical and ideological knowledge about such entities to policymakers and the public. The data, to be discussed later

in greater detail, is gathered via surveys with a sample of offenders listed on university-based registries. Analysis of their experiences and perceptions provides one way of assessing the utility of sex offender registries—both in general and in this specialized form—as a tool for effectively enhancing public safety and promoting community awareness. The present study also adds to the literature that suggests that offenders' perceptions of sanctions can provide valuable contributions to the structural and procedural implementation of a sanction. Finally, it is anticipated that the insight gained from the research will help determine if collateral consequences gained through the supplementary listing on a university-based registry are different in form and severity than research has suggested for the listing of individuals on state-wide registries.

## Review of the Literature

### *History of Sex Offender Registries*

Sex offender registration became a national phenomenon following the 1994 passage of the Jacob Wetterling Crimes against Children and Sexually Violent Offender Registration Program. This federal statute (42 U.S.C. 14071) requires states to maintain registries that include addresses of those convicted of a "sexually violent" offense (defined to include a "range of offenses specified by state law," typically referring to sexual abuse and "physical contact with another person with intent to commit" such crimes). Registries born out of this law contain a wide range of information, and most often include place of

residence, general demographic information and offense details. Further, offenders are required to be listed on these registries for at least ten years, with lifetime registration mandatory for "particularly serious offenses." Failure of a state to comply with the statute results in a ten percent reduction in state Byrne grants funding.

Sex offender registries became available to the public in 1996, following Congressional approval of an amendment to the Violent Crime Control and Law Enforcement Act of 1994 (more commonly known as "Megan's Law"). The Wetterling Act was also amended in 1996 by the passage of the Pam Lyncher Sex Offender Tracking and Identification Act that allows the FBI to maintain a national database of released sex offenders. Additionally, the Lyncher amendment requires lifetime registration for re-offenders. Tewksbury and Higgins (2005) report that as of 2004 there were 40 states with publicly accessible sex offender registries, with some containing minimal information and other registries including up to 18 pieces of identifying personal data.

States may also gain compliance with these federal laws through the use of community notification programs. According to Finn (1997), community notification programs differ depending on the specific characteristics and needs of a community and the extent of the criminal activity of each offender. Goodman (1996) explains the three forms of community notification that may exist, with each form varying in the extent of information that is released to the public. The most invasive form of notification for offenders is active notification. Typically reserved for offenders considered to be the greatest danger to society, this type of notification involves the unsolicited dissemination of information to community members, often via flyers, newspaper ads and personal visits from police. Limited disclosure is most often used for medium-risk offenders and usually involves informing certain public or private community groups such as schools and churches. And, least invasive for offenders, passive notification requires inquiry from an individual citizen, meaning that no information will be dispersed without the initiation of an interested party.

#### *College/University Sex Offender Registries*

The Campus Sex Crimes Prevention Act (Section 1601 of PL 106-386) became law

on October 28, 2000, amending three former pieces of federal legislation. This act has served as the primary catalyst for the recent implementation of university-based sex offender registries on campuses across the U.S. These amendments took effect exactly two years later, with each amendment requiring various aspects of college and university compliance with regards to sex offenders (see [www.securityoncampus.org](http://www.securityoncampus.org)). First, the Campus Sex Crimes Prevention Act amends the Wetterling Act by requiring every state-registered sex offender to notify any college or university where he or she is an employee, student or carries out a vocation. The amendment to the Jeanne Clery Disclosure of Campus Security Policy and Campus Crime Statistics Act requires institutions of higher learning to issue a statement in their federally mandated annual security report that advises the "campus community" where to obtain information on registered sex offenders. Finally, the amendment to the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act of 1974 explicitly informs institutions that disclosure of information regarding registered sex offenders is permitted and the amendment also charges the Secretary of Education with the duty of notifying institutions of the legality of such disclosures (see [www.securityoncampus.org](http://www.securityoncampus.org)).

Compliance with this legislation generally includes a statement on a college/university security report that explains procedures for gaining information on registered sex offenders. Some institutions direct inquiries directly to the police department maintaining the state-wide registry. Institutions generally make available a list of employees, students and contracted workers registered as sex offenders upon personal inquiry at the campus police department. However, compliance with the Campus Sex Crimes Prevention Act may also be achieved by an institution creating and maintaining a campus-specific sex offender registry. (Typically such registries contain the same information as state registries, and may simply provide a link to the publicly-accessible state-wide registry page of listed registrants.) The difference in these university-maintained registries is that they specifically identify the state-registered offenders who also have an affiliation with the school, and therefore contain a much smaller number of registrants. This form of registration further publicizes sex offenders by exposing a segment of personal life to an

interested population (campus community) which is also likely to be much smaller than the audience for state registries. To date, no research on the effects of university-based registration has been conducted, although the effects of this type of registration may be much different from those of traditional sex offender registration. Essentially, with the creation of publicly-accessible sex offender registries born out of the Campus Sex Crimes Prevention Act, a significant gap in the literature on sex offender registration has been created. Research is needed to assess the consequences that may accompany such a sanction.

#### *Research on Sex Offender Registries*

Existing research on sex offender registries can be categorized into five major areas of focus: 1) statistical profiles of registrants, 2) assessments of recidivism, 3) evaluations of the accuracy of registry information, 4) examinations of collateral consequences that accompany registration, and 5) identification of residential locations of registrants. Literature emanating from the first three categories is generally used to determine the overall utility of registries and is the literature most commonly employed by policymakers when addressing programmatic concerns involving sex offender registration. The latter two categories of literature include a deeper examination into theoretical and social issues that may result from the registration process.

Overviews and statistical profiles of registrants have revealed a rapidly growing population of offenders as a result of both new additions to existing registries and the creation of additional registries. Adams (2002) reports approximately 386,000 registrants in 49 states and Washington, D.C., as of February, 2001. The report shows that registries are typically maintained by a variety of jurisdictions ranging from state police to Offices of the Attorney General, and noted a 46.2 percent increase in registrants from 1998 to 2001. The most detailed evaluation of a state registry was done in Hawaii by Szymkowiak and Fraser (2002), who determined an average offender was a male in his 40s with one to five prior felony convictions and residing in an urban area. Finally, in a study of Arkansas female registrants, Vandiver and Walker (2002) report the average female registrant to be 31 years old, Caucasian and having no prior felony convictions.

Available assessments of sex offender recidivism have generally given little, if any credit to sex offender registries for reductions in recidivism. Berliner, Schram, Miller, and Milloy (1995) examined the impact of a special sex offender sentencing alternative in Washington, finding no statistically significant differences in sex offense recidivism as a result of the program. Similarly, Lieb (1996) found no significant differences in recidivism among Washington sex offenders subject to community notification when compared to a control group not subjected to community notification. Adkins, Huff, and Stageberg (2000) utilized a natural experiment by comparing recidivism rates of sex offenders before the creation of the Iowa Sex Offender Registry to a group subjected to state registration, again concluding no significant differences in re-offending rates. Pawson (2002) was unable to reach a definitive conclusion in his examination of the effectiveness of Megan's Law across America. Finally, Welchans (2005) reviewed 12 evaluations of Megan's Law, and specifically reports that, "Goal-oriented evaluations are not supportive of the policy's effectiveness" (p.123).

Additionally, the literature addressing the accuracy of sex offender registry information may cause some to question the utility of registries in their current form. Curtis (2003) reports that the state of California actually "lost" over 33,000 registered sex offenders in its tracking system. Levenson and Cotter (2005) report that in their study of almost 200 Florida registrants, more than one-half reported inaccurate information posted about them online. Tewksbury (2002) determined that enough information was incorrect on the Kentucky Sex Offender Registry that it could not be regarded as a legitimate tool for promoting public safety or increasing community awareness.

The fourth focus of research, that concerning collateral consequences of sex offender registration, reports results consistent with other research addressing the collateral consequences of any felony conviction. Legal consequences accompanying a felony conviction often include legally imposed restrictions such as disenfranchisement, employment restrictions, and loss of certain rights such as the right to possess a firearm and the right to vote (Burton, Cullen, & Travis, 1987; Olivares, Burton, & Cullen, 1996). Social consequences have also been found to exist for convicted felons, including relationship difficulties, employment problems, harass-

ment and feelings of shame (Goffman, 1963; Dodge & Pogrebin, 2001; Pogrebin, Dodge, & Katsampes, 2001).

Recent literature suggests that the nature and extent of these consequences is particularly greater for sex offenders. Tewksbury (2004, 2005) reports damaged relationships, housing and employment difficulties, and instances of harassment for sex offenders registered in Kentucky and Indiana. Tewksbury & Lees (2006) found similar consequences reported in qualitative interviews with registered sex offenders from a large urban county in Kentucky. Community notification efforts in Wisconsin were also found by Zevitz and Farkas (2000) to facilitate societal ostracism, harassment, and other social problems for sex offenders.

The nature and extent of collateral consequences for sex offenders is likely to increase even further in the near future, as evidenced by a number of policies promoting further sanctions for registered sex offenders. Tewksbury and Mustaine (2006) have examined the imposition of residential buffer zones around "child gathering places," and report that significant numbers of registrants are in violation of such restrictions. Other communities have recently begun to use GPS monitoring systems to track sex offenders' movements. Overall, the numerous and increasing collateral consequences accompanying sex offender registration make reintegration into society exceptionally difficult for offenders (Harding, 2003; Tewksbury and Lees, in-press), and may contribute to unintended, adverse outcomes.

The most recently emerging body of literature regarding sex offender registries and registrants focuses on identifying the distribution of registrants in communities, and the characteristics of communities where registrants are concentrated. In short, registered sex offenders, while found throughout most communities, are especially likely to be found in communities with high levels of social disorganization (Mustaine, Tewksbury & Stengel, in-press) and to have often changed residences (either since arrest or during their time of registration) (Mustaine, Tewksbury & Stengel, 2006; Turley and Hutzler, 2001). When registrants move, significant numbers move to locations exhibiting higher levels of social disorganization than their previous neighborhoods. As a result many registered sex offenders can be found in communities with low levels of social capital and informal social control.

### *Offenders' Perceptions of Sanctions*

Understanding the consequences and results of criminal sanctions is often difficult to gauge outside of statistical data such as recidivism rates. However, research consistently and strongly suggests that valuable and even unanticipated knowledge may be gained by learning offenders' perceptions of the sanctions imposed upon them (Larson & Berg, 1989). As Crouch (1993) explains, since the offender is the one receiving the sanction, he or she must truly believe in its punitive and deterrent value in order for the sanction to achieve its goal. This type of knowledge is particularly important for policymakers regarding the utility and effectiveness of a new, developing sanction such as sex offender registration. The views of sex offenders provide valuable insights regarding what constitutes sanctions perceived as fair, effective and efficient. Such information can in turn inform policy-makers about how effective sex offender registries can be constructed and implemented.

The way in which offenders view sanctions has been strongly linked to recidivism. Principally, offenders must view a sanction as legitimate and fair in order for the sanction to impact their re-offense rates. Sherman (1993, p. 452) points out that "people obey the law more when they believe it is administered fairly than when they don't." Williams and Hawkins (1992) note a positive relationship between offender perceptions of sanctions and increased compliance with the law. The converse has also been shown to be true; offenders who perceive their sanctions to be unjust, arbitrary or ineffective are more likely to recidivate (Sherman & Berk, 1984; Sherman, 1993; Petersilia & Deschenes, 1994).

Sanctions imposed on offenders must not be viewed as too severe or inescapable, a view that literature has shown often leads to recidivism. Sherman and Berk's (1984) classic study examining mandatory arrests for domestic violence cases revealed that only for a certain group of people did arrest deter future offending; for offenders with no "interdependencies" (e.g., job, marriage, etc.), arrests only resulted in anger in response to relatively harsh punishment and actually had a counter-deterrent effect. Petersilia and Deschenes (1994) explain that punishment must be viewed as fair and proportional to the offense in order to achieve maximum deterrent value.

While the offender's view of regarding the legitimacy and fairness of a sanction is

important for public safety concerns regarding recidivism, offenders' perceptions of specific sanctions can have a highly desirable impact on programmatic issues of sanction implementation and design. Turner, Greenwood, Fain, and Deschenes (1999) found that the views of offenders were very helpful in the creation of a drug court program, since the offender was personally familiar with particular components of the program and able to gauge other participants' reactions and outcomes of the program. The perception of sex offenders regarding registration should be considered valuable for similar reasons related to the new, untested nature of such a rapidly growing sanction (see Tewksbury, 2006; Tewksbury & Lees, in press).

Ultimately, policymakers involved in design, implementation, and analysis of sex offender registries can gain highly valuable information from registrants about the effectiveness, utility, and legitimacy of current registration procedures and structures. Research that incorporates offenders' perceptions of registration should be considered among the best methods of examining the collateral consequences and experiences of registered sex offenders, and of particular value for assessing the nature and extent of experiences of sex offenders listed on a university-based registry.

## Methods

Data for the current study were collected through mailed, anonymous surveys sent to all persons listed on a sex offender registry maintained by a four-year public college or university in the United States. To identify such individuals, websites for all 579 four-year, public colleges and universities were searched to find those institutions with a publicly-accessible sex offender registry (SOR). A total of 39 (or 6.7 percent of all reviewed institutions) university-maintained SORs were identified. These registries included listings of 113 individuals.

Once identified, each individual's name and address was recorded and checked for accuracy (i.e., correspondence) with the respective state-wide sex offender registry. All 113 registrants were mailed a cover letter, informed consent explanation, survey, and postage-paid return-addressed envelope. The Human Studies Protection Program Office at the authors' institution reviewed all materials. Data collection was conducted in January, 2006.

## Sample

A total of 26 completed surveys were returned. This represents a response rate of 24 percent.<sup>1</sup> While this is not a very high response rate, this needs to be understood as a difficult to reach population. Due to experiences of stigma, media exploitation, and skepticism regarding researchers and other "officials" (Tewksbury & Lees, in press), registered sex offenders may be a population especially unlikely to accept invitations to participate in research. Additionally, response rates and sample sizes of this magnitude are common in research with registered sex offenders (Sack & Mason, 1980; Tewksbury, 2004, 2005, 2006; Tewksbury & Lees, 2006, in press; Vandiver & Walker, 2002). Because the response rate is not large, results need to be viewed with caution.

The sample is almost exclusively male (96.2 percent), white (92.3 percent) and older than the typical college student (mean age = 39.6, median = 38.5). The sample includes students (65.4 percent), employees (27.0 percent) and individuals who are both students and employees (7.6 percent). Students in the sample are also older than the typical college student (mean = 36.4, whereas in 2002–2003 only 18.6 percent of university students were age 35 or older) (National Center for Education Statistics, 2006). The sample represents individuals from ten states.<sup>2</sup>

As shown in Table 1, the offenses for which these individuals are registered are primarily offenses against children (65.4 percent), known to the offender (i.e., not strangers, 92.3 percent) and these individuals typically report having had only one victim (7 percent report multiple victims).

## Instrument

The data collection instrument was designed specifically for this study. The instrument is a four-page questionnaire containing 41 closed-ended and 2 open-ended items. The items assess demographics, offense characteristics, questions about experiences with collateral consequences and public recognition as a RSO.

<sup>1</sup> Four surveys were returned undelivered due to either insufficient, non-existent addresses, or the registrant no longer residing at the residence and having no forwarding address.

<sup>2</sup> The largest proportion of respondents come from Florida (34.6 percent) as well as from Texas (19.2 percent), Ohio (11.5 percent), Illinois (11.5 percent), 3.8 percent from Connecticut, Kansas, Kentucky, Massachusetts, Oklahoma and South Carolina.

The primary variables of interest in this study are self-reports by registrants regarding 13 forms of collateral consequences (focusing on both on-campus and off-campus experiences) and four items regarding perceptions of stigmatization and social impediments to academic progress/success.

## Findings

All RSOs report that they know they are listed on their state-wide SOR, yet more than one-third (38.5 percent) report that they were *not* aware of their listing on their university SOR. The mean length of time that individuals have been listed on SORs is 4 years and 10 months for state-wide SORs and 2 years and 10 months for their university-maintained SOR. A majority (73.1 percent) of RSOs say that they have seen their state-wide registry page, but only 38.5 percent (or, 62.5 percent of those who know of their registration on a university-maintained SOR) have seen their university SOR page.

More than two-thirds (68 percent) of RSOs report that they do not have any contact with university officials as a result of their listing on the university SOR. However, when considering their interactions on campus, most (56.5 percent) report that they are recognized, at least a few times a year or more as a RSO. Interestingly, a minority of RSOs (21.7 percent) report that they are recognized on a daily basis as a registered sex offender. Despite this fact, most RSOs on university registries perceive that the majority of people on their campus do not know of their status as a registered sex offender. Only 4.2 percent report that they believe almost all campus members know of their status. One in six (16.7 percent) believe that no one on their campus knows of their status, and fully 52.5 percent believe that only a "few" or "some" people know them to be a registered sex offender. This contrasts with the belief of 30.7 percent of RSOs that "all" or "almost all" persons they know away from campus know of

**TABLE 1:**  
*Victims of RSOs on University SORs*

Type of Victim	Percent of RSOs
Child victim(s)	65.4
Stranger victim(s)	7.7
Relative victim(s)	26.9
Friend/Acquaintance victim(s)	50
Female victim(s)	69.3
Male victim(s)	19.2
Multiple victims	7.7

their status. Only 26.9 percent of RSOs claim that "few" or "some" people in their lives away from campus know them to be a RSO (and no-one reports that away from campus "no one" knows of their status).

### Collateral Consequences

As shown in Table 2, at least one-third of the sample reports having experienced each of six of the 13 surveyed collateral consequences. Additionally, for all but two of these experiences, students are more likely than university employees to report having had such experiences. Most common among the collateral consequences reported by this sample of RSOs is employment difficulties. Two-thirds (65.4 percent) of the entire sample, and nearly 4 of every 5 students (78.9 percent) report having lost or not received a job, because they believed they were discriminated against due to their status as a RSO. Also common among the reported collateral consequences are housing difficulties, verbal and written harassment away from campus, and loss of friends.

In addition to being asked whether they had ever experienced these forms of collateral consequences arising from their status as a registered sex offender, each respondent was also asked to respond to five questions assessing their perceptions of stigmatization and collateral consequence experiences. As shown in Table 3, when responding to these scaled items (0 = Completely Disagree, 10 = Completely Agree), RSOs report that they do believe their listing on the state-wide registry has influenced their lives, but they

**TABLE 3:**  
*Perceptions of Stigmatization and Imposition of Collateral Consequences*

Question	All RSOs	Percent of Students
To what degree do you believe your life has been influenced by being listed on the state-wide sex offender registry?	8.12	8.18
To what degree do you believe your life has been influenced by being listed on the university sex offender registry?	4.44	4.88
Because of being on the sex offender registry I have had difficulties making friends at the university	5.21	5.50
If you are a student: Because of being on the sex offender registry I have been discouraged about pursuing my academic goals	—	5.00

do not necessarily believe they have been negatively affected by their university SOR listing. When directly asked to reflect on whether the state-wide registry listing or the university-maintained SOR listing has been more influential on their lives, fully 73 percent report the state-wide registry has been more influential, 19.2 percent believe both have been about equally influential, and 7.8 percent believe the university registry has had more of an impact on their lives. Clearly, being listed on the state-wide SOR is perceived as much more influential in their lives for this sample of RSOs than being listed on their university-maintained SOR.<sup>3</sup> Additionally, this sample of RSOs reports ambivalence regarding the effect of sex offender registration on their social lives and (for students) on

<sup>3</sup> Differences between mean responses to the questions about how life has been influenced by listing on the state-wide and university SOR is a statistically significant difference, for both the entire sample and the student-only subsample, using a t-test ( $p < .001$ ).

their perceived support/encouragement for pursuing academic goals.

Respondents were asked one free response question on the survey instrument, asking them to identify the worst thing about being a registered sex offender. The majority of respondents identified numerous consequences that they perceived to be the "worst thing." Responses to this question were remarkably similar to past research findings with regards to collateral consequences of sex offender registration and consequences of felony convictions in general. The most commonly reported consequence (30.8 percent) was the misperception, stereotype, or stigma that accompanies sex offender registration. These responses reflected feelings of frustration and a view that "everyone" thinks all RSOs are "predators," "rapists," or "pedophiles." Because of these concerns, respondents severely criticize the structure of many sex offender registries that fail to distinguish between "minor" and "heinous" offenders.

One-quarter (23.1 percent) of respondents reported the worst consequence of registration to be the general uncertainty associated with being listed, "exposed," and "known" to the public. The responses included persistent feelings of vulnerability and withdrawal from or avoidance of many social settings. Other collateral consequences reported include difficulties finding and maintaining housing (15.4 percent) and jobs (23.1 percent). Difficulties pursuing and maintaining relationships with significant others, friends and families were identified, but reported by only 16.6 percent of our respondents.

### Conclusion

In examining the experiences of registered sex offenders on university-maintained sex offender registries it is important to keep in mind that this is a new form of sanction, and present at only a minority (6.7 percent) of public, four-year institutions. In this way,

**TABLE 2:**  
*Reported Collateral Consequences*

Collateral Consequence	Percent of ALL RSOs	Percent of Students*	Percent of Employees*
Not hired for, or fired from a job	65.4	78.9	44.4
Denied a promotion at work	15.4	15.8	11.1
Had academic performance suffer	26.3	—	—
Lost/Denied place to live	42.3	47.4	22.2
Treated rudely in public	34.6	50.0	22.2
Lost a friend who discovered status as RSO	42.3	50.0	44.4
Lost a significant other	19.2	15.8	22.2
Harassed in person away from campus	34.6	31.6	33.3
Harassed in person on campus	11.5	15.8	—
Assaulted away from campus	3.8	5.3	—
Assaulted on campus	3.8	5.3	—
Received harassing telephone calls	15.4	21.1	—
Received harassing mail/notes/flyers	38.5	47.4	11.1

\*Percent of students and percent of staff both include the two respondents who report being both a student and employee on their campuses

now is the time to examine the effects of this new form of registry, and to use research findings to guide the development, modification, and use of such tools in the future.

Several major findings emerge from this study. First, fully one-third of these RSOs did not know that their educational institution maintained a SOR with their name listed on it. This fact may call into question the deterrent value of such registries. Additionally, registrants report a wide variety of collateral consequences as a result of being listed on both a state-wide and a university-based sex offender registry. These consequences include housing and employment difficulties, problems with social relationships, instances of harassment and feelings of uncertainty and fear.

Perhaps most important for educational administrators, analysis suggests that consequences may be more severe for students than for employees. The subsequent consequences of this (perceived) greater impact, however, are unclear at this time. Whereas previous research has suggested that offenders' perceptions of a sanction's fairness and impact on them is related to recidivism likelihood, this issue has not been explored for this population.

One way to explain the differences in experienced collateral consequences for students and employees is to look at age and length of experienced registration for each group. Student registrants are significantly younger than employees (mean of 36 vs. 50). This fact in itself may help to explain students perceiving the effects of registration as being more severe. However, even more informative may be the fact that employee registrants report a mean of 4 years more experience with registration. Students report having first been listed on their statewide registry an average of 4 years earlier (with a mean of 2 years on their university-maintained registry). However, employee registrants report a mean of nearly 10 years of registration (with a mean of 4 years on their university's registry). This suggests that as registrants become more accustomed to their status they may be less likely to see negative consequences arising from the registration experience. This may also suggest that the initial shock/humiliation/shame that may be associated with registration (Tewksbury & Lees, in press) may diminish with time. In short, registered sex offenders may develop more effective means of coping with their status as RSOs, and thereby may come to see fewer impacts from their status as registrants.

Results of the present study closely correspond with the existing literature examining collateral consequences of sex offender registration. With this unique population of RSOs, the collateral consequence experiences can be seen as equal to or (especially for students) more frequent and intense than those described by RSOs in the general population. The present study also shows that a RSO likely faces *additional* collateral consequences as a result of being subsequently listed on a university-based sex offender registry in addition to a state-wide listing. Clearly, these are issues that policy-makers—especially those in higher education—need to be aware of and consider as university-based sex offender registries continue to develop and appear.

Additionally, it is important to point out that the present research, in fact the entire body of emerging literature concerning the experiences of sex offender registration, raises more questions than are answered. For instance, the present research does not consider the issue of whether university students of different statuses (full or part time, area of study, type of campus) experience registration differently. Neither can the present research address whether or not university-based registries are used by members of the campus community, and whether the students, faculty and staff on these campuses are even aware of the existence of the registry (or the identities of registrants). Clearly, these are issues that future research should address. Concerning SORs in general, issues of whether collateral consequences build in intensity or produce diminishing returns for registrants could and should be investigated. With large numbers of registrants being required to register for life, what can such persons (and communities in general) expect from the registration process in 15, 20 or more years? Is lifetime registration a wise move, and are there additional collateral consequences that may appear only after registrants are listed for lengthy periods of time?

Policy issues, as well as research questions, surface as a result of this research regarding the implementation and maintenance of university-based sex offender registries. Perhaps most importantly, research on the possible negative effects of sex offenders via additional registries is greatly needed. Literature has already suggested that adverse outcomes may be associated with the imposition of severe and seemingly "inescapable" sanctions. The true efficacy of sex offender registries needs to be further evaluated before the implementa-

tion of more specific registries (such as university-based SORs) occurs. The creation of organization-specific sex offender registries, in addition to state-wide registries, may have an effect counter to programmatic goals of public safety and lower recidivism. Overall, it is necessary for assessments and evaluations of sex offender registration to continue in order to best inform and shape policy and practice.

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