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**FOR RELEASE**

## **Survey Addressing Women's Safety at UK Begins Today**

**LEXINGTON, Ky. (March 31, 2004)** – A telephone survey on University of Kentucky women's safety will begin at 5 p.m. Thursday, April 1. The survey is sponsored by the Center for Research on Violence Against Women, the UK President's Commission on Women, the Division of Student Affairs, the Graduate School, and Student Government.

Carol Jordan, director of the Center for Research on Violence Against Women, said the survey would gauge victimization that may have occurred at any time in a student's life, including her time at UK. "Our interest is in looking at how many young women at this university have had an experience of victimization and the way in which that experience has impacted their lives," Jordan said.

In addition to learning how often victimization occurs, the interdisciplinary research team for the project also plans to analyze the data to learn the circumstances associated with victimization, such as where incidents occur most often and who is involved. This will help identify the risk factors for victimization.

"That kind of contextualized information can be used by the university to develop prevention and intervention programs to reduce the incidence of victimization or to mitigate its effects," Jordan said.

Another aspect of the survey will measure the attitudes and perceptions of women students and how fearful they are of becoming crime victims. Jordan said not only are some young women impacted by the direct experience of victimization, research suggests that the fear of becoming a crime victim can also influence the life of a woman. She gave an example of a female student who may be less likely to walk across campus alone at night to study at the library because she is fearful of harm.

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“It is our interest to assess the fear of crime experienced by female students and how that fear manifests itself in their educational attainment, interpersonal relationships, and their physical and mental health,” Jordan said.

One thousand female graduate and undergraduate students at the university will be surveyed anonymously to determine prevalence and incidence rates, risk factors, and attitudes and perceptions concerning victimization. The survey will be conducted by telephone and should be completed within four weeks. Findings from the survey will be announced in the fall. While participants’ identity will be protected, data from the survey will be shared with university administration, UK Police, counselors, and others who work with students and work to make a safe environment at UK.

The Women’s Safety Survey is being led by Jordan and Pam Wilcox, associate professor of sociology, and a team of researchers from departments across the university. “UK is extremely fortunate to have a wealth of interdisciplinary research expertise on the topic of victimization, and strong support from administrators to address this problem for female students at the university,” Jordan said.

The research team includes 11 faculty who have specific expertise in crime, victimization, rape, domestic violence, and related research areas. Additional information about the survey can be accessed on the Web site of the Center for Research on Violence Against Women at <http://www.rgs.uky.edu/crvaw/>.

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