

Charges of racism voiced at candlelight rally, vigil

By Lori Horwitz

News Editor

Bringing traffic on Asbury Drive to a halt, more than 300 members of the Emory community joined a candlelight rally marching through campus Wednesday night in protest of two reported rapes.

The crowd assembled on Dooley's Quad to listen to a series of speeches which blasted violence toward women.

Amy Laura Hall of Choices called for solidarity among everyone in tackling the problem of sexist violence. "We must work together," she said. "We must listen and then we must act."

A.K. Umoja, a graduate student from the Institute for Liberal Arts, said he came to the rally "as a black male standing in solidarity with women fighting against sexist violence." He implored the crowd not to let the issue of sexism vanish from their attention once the current issues have faded away, "it's a systematic problem that's related to this society we live in,"

Umoja voiced his concern that the different outcomes of the alleged rapes may reflect racial bias. His concern stems from the fact that a black suspect was arrested soon after one rape was reported while the investigation of a white suspect in a second rape was recently dropped.

"You have to explain to us why a black male is in jail and a white

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Alleged SAE rape victim rules out criminal charges

By Regina LaRocque

Asst. News Editor

After conferring with her family, the district attorney, and the Emory University Department of Public Safety on Tuesday morning, the victim of an alleged rape at the Sigma Alpha Epsilon house on pledge night has decided not to pursue criminal charges against her accused attacker, according to Ed Medlin, director of the Department of Public Safety.

In a press conference held Tuesday afternoon, Medlin said that the 19-year-old Emory student made the decision of her own free will, taking into consideration the evidence that has been gathered during the investigation. Although criminal prosecution will not take place, Medlin remarked, "I think something is wrong whenever one person feels victimized by another."

Commented Chris Radpour, vice president of SAE, "We're happy that the charges were dropped, but we're also extremely sorry if anyone got hurt in the process."

In a statement read to the press on Tuesday and released to the Emory community, Laney said, "we deplore any acts of violence or incivility." In addition to pointing out that the University will continue to pursue the case of the alleged rape as a "student conduct matter," Laney put forward his proposal to form a special task force that will examine the relationship between drug and alcohol abuse and violent behavior.

According to Vasti Torres, the Campus Life Task Force on Sexual Assault is enquiring about sexual assault policies at other universities in response to recent events on the Emory campus. In addition, "we are continuing with educational programs on sexual assault," she said.

Navarro says lack of information prompted rumors

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male is not in jail," Umoja said.

A statement addressed to President James T. Laney was circulated among the crowd stating their outrage at the way in which the two alleged rapes were handled by the administration. Other concerns raised in the letter included, "the lack of reliable information regarding the two alleged rape cases and the apparent asymmetry in the treatment of the two incidents."

Responding to complaints of lack of information about the reported rapes and allegations of racism, Director of Public Safety Ed Medlin provided some specifics about the two cases and explained the decision not to file criminal charges against the suspect in one of the alleged rapes. The amount of evidence in the case, he said, "did not establish the basis for prosecution" After conducting more than 20 interviews over a period of several days and meeting with the District Attorney's office, the victim and her parents, a decision was made not to proceed with the case, he said.

Following the speeches, the crowd marched down Asbury Drive, through the Quadrangle and up Fraternity Row. Moments before stepping on to the Row, the marchers began chanting, "Stop the violence, Stop the hate. Emory will not stand for rape."

Earlier that day, almost 200 people gathered on Dooley's Quad in a vigil to support the victims of the alleged rapes. Laney expressed his concern over the incidents, stating the administration is currently searching for ways to improve life at Emory. "We will not tolerate violence and harassment on our campus...[we] won't treat [rapes] as isolated and regrettable incidents," he said.

Emilia Navarro of the Women's Students Department echoed the need for a greater flow of information to alleviate rumors around campus. She said that rumors concerning the investigations of the two reported rapes led to charges of racism and "preferential treatment" for one of the accused.