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Battered women get support

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Special to The Prospector

In an effort to curb domestic violence in the community — 29,997 cases were reported to the El Paso police department last year, costing the department about \$11.5 million — UTEP and other community organizations combined their resources to develop guidelines for all organizations to follow.

The result was the Domestic Violence Prevention Commission — created to help all violence prevention organizations coordinate their efforts cooperatively instead of working independently.

Along with the university, the El Paso Police Department and the El Paso Shelter for Battered Women were also involved in the project.

“Organizations got together because they were not coordinating efforts,” said Dennis Soden, director at the Public Policy Research Center at UTEP. “It makes it confusing for police and the Battered Women’s Shelter.”

Soden said the goal of the commission was to try to eliminate violence, make it easier for victims to access information and to insure that those guilty of violent acts are not let off

■ *Violence, from page 1* easily.

“The great thing about the commission is that the university is totally committed to the problem and there is no tolerance for it,” Soden said.

The commission was created to examine different aspects of violence prevention, to scrutinize services and to determine if services are adequate.

The El Paso Shelter for Battered Women tries to incorporate the recommendations made by the commission said Deborah Turner, the shelter’s community relations director.

And, “Safety is of the utmost importance,” Turner said.

The shelter, which provides programs for continued education, job placement, job training and English-speaking classes, was involved in determining where cracks exist in the system and it helped design measures to

eliminate them, Turner said.

“The program is enhanced by providing more things to those in need,” said Turner.

The Women’s Resource Center on campus contributes to

<h2 style="text-align: center;">Shelter</h2> <p style="text-align: center;">If you need help:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Women’s Resource Center, 747-5291 • El Paso Shelter for Battered Women 24-hour hotline, 593-7300

preventing violence through providing educational programs, seminars and a counseling center.

For five years, the Women’s Resource Center has had “Take Back the Night,” a rally to oppose domestic violence and

rape, and the “Clothesline Project,” a ceremony where T-shirts are dedicated to domestic violence victims.

“Our primary mission is to provide and foster an environment which empowers as well as educates,” said Kimberly Walsh-Kilkenny, director of the Women’s Resource Center. “Fostering education minimizes the victimization.”

Not only does providing advocacy empower, but it also educates, Walsh-Kilkenny said.

“I believe that it works. The feedback is positive,” said Walsh-Kilkenny. “We need to make sure people have the information they need.”

The Women’s Resource Center provides information through book, pamphlets and referrals to the counseling center. Proactive, developmental and reactive programs makes the center supportive in all aspects said Walsh-Kilkenny.

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