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A composite of the suspect who allegedly tried attacking a woman outside Shibles Hall on Oct 14th.

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## Assault prompts alert on campus

### Police hunting for alleged assailant

**Tony Reaves**

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University of Maine Public Safety has issued an alert after a female student reported that she was assaulted Saturday night.

According to UMaine Police Chief Noel March, the student was walking from the south end of campus to the north. As she was passing Shibles Hall on the Beddington Road side, a male allegedly grabbed her and attempted to assault her further. The female student broke free and escaped.

The student didn't require medical attention. March said she was encouraged to report the incident to police and did so on Monday, Oct. 16.

"We are taking this matter very seriously," March said.

Public Safety is distributing a computer-generated composite picture of the suspect, who has been described as a white male aged between 22 and 29. The suspect is between 5-feet-11-inches and 6 feet. He has short, brown hair, a slight to medium build and slight facial hair. The female student said he was wearing a green Carhartt-type jacket and blue jeans.

"We're notifying the community, and we're also asking the community if anyone has ideas, suggestions or input that would be valuable in our investigation to please contact the UMaine police," March said.

He encouraged anyone with information to call UMaine police or submit information anonymously through the Public Safety Web site's "Campus Eyes" link.

"This is a highly unusual incident for the University of Maine Campus. In the five years that I've been here, I'm only aware of one other stranger attempted assault of a UMaine student." The incident in question took place in August of 2003 when a male tried to force a female student into a car on Munson Road.

March encouraged the campus to remain calm but vigilant. "This is an example of the reasons why we should be extra cautious of personal safety, and I do not believe there is any need for panic or hysteria over this incident."

A class in self-defense for women starts soon at Public Safety. Officer Deborah Mitchell will help teach Rape Aggression Defense, a full-contact program to teach women tactics against would-be attackers. The five-week class begins Thursday, Oct. 26, from 5:30 p.m. to 8:30 p.m. in the Public Safety building and continues for four consecutive Thursdays.

March said it was unfortunate this happened only days after Take Back the Night, a rally sponsored by the Student Women's Association and the Safe Campus Project to raise awareness of sexual violence against women. He is calling on the community to help locate the suspect, as well as to look out for others to ensure similar incidents don't take place.

"While the UM Police work very hard 24 hours a day to keep the University of Maine campus as safe as it is, we are only successful in that mission when our 11,500 students and our 2,400 employees are also looking out for one another with eyes and ears open," March said.

Women interested in Officer Mitchell's self-defense class can call Public Safety at 581-4040, or contact Deborah Mitchell on FirstClass. Anyone with information about Saturday's incident can call Public Safety or call detective Chris Gardner directly at 581-4048. To report an anonymous tip, go to <http://www.umaine.edu/publicsafety> and click on "Campus Eyes."

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