

# Student admits rape report was untrue

**NORTHAMPTON, Mass. (AP) —** A rape report that prompted students to hold a candlelight vigil and police to circulate a composite sketch has turned out to be false, Smith College officials say.

The Smith College student, who was not identified, withdrew from classes and left the campus Thursday, college spokeswoman Mary T. Callahan said.

"The student has now admitted to me that the story was untrue and that no attack of any kind took place," Dean Ann M. Burger told the school's 2,500 women students in a statement Thursday.

Police and the Hampshire County district attorney's office confirmed the student's April 23 rape report was a fabrication. They said the student was not arrested for filing a false rape report.

"I hope it won't discourage people from reporting rapes or the community from supporting victims of sexual assaults," said Sally Borden, director of victim-witness assistance for Hampshire and Franklin counties.

"It may have the effect of shedding doubt on the credibility of women who really are the victims of rape," she said.

Some 100 people held a candlelight vigil at Smith and marched through Northampton last week to show their disgust over the alleged attack, Callahan said. Police issued a composite sketch of the alleged attacker.

"The facts and her situation are such

that we aren't inclined to seek charges," said Edward D. Etheredge, a first assistant district attorney. "It's always unfortunate when something like this happens because it has an unhappy consequence both on victims whose cases are subsequently tried and it hampers full reporting from other people."

In an unrelated case, the district attorney's office continued to investigate one of two rape reports from last weekend at nearby Mount Holyoke College.

Although police said one of the students at the women's college has withdrawn her complaint, about 200 Mount Holyoke students gathered in the college's outdoor amphitheater Thursday afternoon for an anti-rape rally.

The Mount Holyoke students have begun circulating a petition asking for additional security and lighting on the South Hadley campus, according to Beth Halbrecht, one of the students who organized the rally.

A student who said she was raped behind the college greenhouse by a man she met at a recent campus party withdrew her report without giving a reason, South Hadley police said Thursday.

Lt. William L. Schenker of the South Hadley police department said he had submitted the name of a suspect in the other alleged Mount Holyoke rape to the district attorney's office.