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CAMPUS SECURITY:

Access to campus crime information spotty, Pacific Northwest records audit finds

When it comes to campus safety, some universities leave students in the dark.

That's what 25 journalism students within the Edward R. Murrow School of Communication at Washington State University concluded following a four-month study to find out whether citizens could find out about crime at 20 universities in five western states. They discovered the difficulty for average citizens to find out crime safety information, even when federal law mandates access. While most universities provide at least some basic statistical crime information, the students found that numbers are often incomplete or lower than statistics kept by law enforcement agencies. The students also found that only a quarter of the agencies would report basic rape statistics and only 40 percent of the colleges would make disciplinary records public.

Below are the project results, along with resources to help you find out about crime on your campus.

OVERVIEW:

Records audit finds that universities paint rosier picture than reality

By Rob Keenan

Ryan Schaller never knew what hit him.

On a warm April night in Seattle, Schaller had been partying with Craig Ulrich at Ulrich's fraternity house at the University of Washington. The two left the party and decided to go swimming under the Montlake Bridge. The two headed back to Ulrich's Wallingford-neighborhood apartment, where, according to court and police documents, Schaller picked up Ulrich's hunting rifle and pointed it at his chin, taunting his friend with a drunken "Shoot me. Shoot me."

Moments later, Schaller was dead, shot in the head by his drinking buddy. The story made the Seattle Post-Intelligencer and The Daily, the student newspaper at UW. But not everyone was surprised by the incident.

"I've become totally desensitized to the violence," said James Passey, a junior political science and Spanish double major at UW who lives across the street from the apartment complex where Schaller was killed. While he said campus safety hasn't gotten better or worse during his time at school, he's become inured to the violence at his urban campus.

That is, the violence that he knows about.

A study of public records availability in five Northwest states showed the only information readily available at every campus studied was the mandated statistics set forth in the 1990 federal Clery Act. While most universities provide at least some basic statistical crime information online, the reported numbers were often lower than statistics kept by local law enforcement agencies, the FBI and the Department of Education. This was particularly noticeable in Idaho and Utah. While many universities appeared to under-report their crime statistics, not one over-reported its crime.

Also, only a quarter of the government agencies reported basic rape statistics and only 40 percent of the universities would make their disciplinary records public.

A class of 25 journalism students at Washington State University in Pullman, Wash., requested information from four key sources – education, health, police and courts – about crime at public universities in the Pacific Northwest states of Idaho, Montana, Oregon, Utah and Washington. They specifically asked for information dealing with violent crimes: rape, homicide and violent assaults between 2000 and 2002. The information requested was for general statistics, not individual records.

Depending on which state the information was requested from, there were varying degrees of success. Although “sunshine laws” designed to promote public access to public records are generally based on the federal Freedom of Information Act, each state has subtle differences that can make access to public records a lengthy, expensive or exasperating process. In addition, the students found access to some information was readily available via the Internet, while other information was deemed exempt from disclosure, and some records requests did not receive any response at all.

In general, the highest “success rates” for receiving requested information came from Washington and Idaho, with the poorest response rate coming from Montana and Oregon. Neither the Montana nor the Oregon access statutes place a time limit on responses for requests for information. While the general assumption is that the time limit for state agencies to respond mirrors the federal Freedom of Information Act, requiring a response within 10 days, this time limit is not explicit in every law.

Because each state also differs in how much may be charged for public records, some requests went unfilled because the charges would be prohibitive. Oregon statutes, for example, allow for the charging of copy and search fees, and the student seeking Oregon police records was quoted a figure of more than \$300 for police logs. The departments were either unwilling or unable to send the information electronically via e-mail and also refused a request for a fee waiver.

Location also played a role in the nonacquisition of certain records. In Utah, a student was told the records she had requested were indeed open and public, but that searching and compiling them would be a lengthy and arduous process, not likely to be fulfilled within the statutory time limit. If the student had been able to physically inspect the records in Utah, she would have been able to view the information free of charge. However, due to the distance involved, this proved unfeasible.

Easy access: Clery Act statistics and the Internet

In 1990, Congress passed the Jeanne Clery Disclosure of Campus Security Policy and Campus Crime Statistics Act, which required universities and colleges to release a number of statistics and records detailing the safety of a given campus. Among other things, the Clery Act mandates disclosure of violent crimes, including homicide, rape, assault and arson. Under federal law, a school must release this information annually covering the preceding three-year period.

Most public universities had the Clery Act information on their Web sites, although there were differences between and even within states for how much Clery Act information was available. Some schools simply had the statistics in a spreadsheet format, no more than a few pages long; some schools had lengthier reports available for public perusal. In Utah, for example, Utah State University in Logan released a full report, including detailed analysis and graphs. By contrast, Southern Utah University in Cedar City released only crime statistics and did not respond to a follow-up request for a more detailed report.

Because the Clery Act allows for hefty fines and the loss of federal monies for schools that fail to comply with its provisions, the study found this information available without exception at each school. However, the information provided by the schools in compliance with Clery regulations did not always match information from other sources. A student examining police records in Idaho found that fewer sexual

assaults were reported by universities than were reported by the federal government. The crime picture reported by universities may be rosier than reality.

In addition, the Clery Act statistics are not all-encompassing and do not include off-campus locations. While fraternity and sorority housing locations are considered on-campus for the purposes of Clery disclosure, off-campus apartment complexes dominated by students are not. Even as the statistics themselves were easy enough to obtain, the overall results may be misleading to prospective students. Ryan Schaller's death, for example, will not be reflected in the latest Clery numbers, even though Craig Ulrich is a student at the University of Washington and is being charged with manslaughter – because the incident occurred off-campus.

Making it hard: Access to health care records

Among the most difficult information to obtain was information from health clinics and hospitals. Although the student reporters were requesting statistical information involving treated incidents of rape and violent assault, most health care providers presented with request letters denied the requests, stating an exemption from disclosure under the Health Insurance Portability and Accountability Act of 1996. HIPAA provides for severe penalties for health care providers if information is released that contains individual identifiers of health care recipients. However, there is no specific exemption under HIPAA that prohibits or prevents the dissemination of statistical information.

This process became even more laborious during the follow-up letter phase, when students on the health beat clarified their requests, asking again for collective statistical information without any individual identifiers. After Round 2, most of the hospitals responded in the negative, stating they either did not compile the requested statistics or, as private institutions, were not subject to disclosure acts. In Oregon, the health reporter found nearly all of the major student-attended hospitals in the university towns were private institutions and were unwilling to release statistical information. After much cajoling, only one hospital was willing to release any information at all: a list of statistics unrelated to the original request, including birth and infant mortality rates.

In some cases, knowing the right person to talk to made all the difference. At Washington State University, the health reporter was able to get statistical information from WSU Counseling Services about the number of people who had stated "sexual assault" was an issue of concern for them. Statistics of this nature carried a caveat, however, as issues of concern might not necessarily reflect recent victimization; due to the nature of the providing agency, a student might be seeking treatment for years-old trauma and still state the issue as important to him or her.

Best and worst: A summary of access success

With so much information being requested from so many different institutions and agencies, it becomes easy to get bogged down in specific details: the fees, the waiting periods, the exemptions that vary state-to-state. However, each focus area had its standouts – both best and worst – in terms of access to records.

The education reporters, who asked for Clery disclosure information, sex offender registries, disciplinary board statistics, promotional materials sent to parents and prospective students and basic demographic information about the school and campus, found much of their requested material available freely online. The best track record for requested information in this area came from Washington state, where all but one school (the University of Washington) was able to provide all the requested information either online or through physical documents. The exception for UW came as a result of a three-month backlog on records requests. The worst was Montana, where the four universities polled never responded to requests for promotional materials.

Reporters covering the courts requested federal uniform crime report statistics, the number of cases charged and prosecuted for rape, violent assault and homicide, and statutory definitions of the violent crimes under study. The best record here was in Montana, where most of the information was available freely on the Internet; the only exception was in the number of cases prosecuted, which would have required paying copy fees as high as \$1 per page for the information. The worst record came out of Utah, where courts in Cedar City and Salt Lake City simply did not respond to any of the request letters and the courts in Ogden simply denied all of the requests.

The reporters covering police departments requested the police logs of both campus and city departments, operational budgets, statistics on violent crimes and general jurisdictional information. Here, the best track record was in Idaho, where most of the information requested was readily available online. The worst record came from Oregon, where requests were either ignored or the reporter was told the information would come at a price – the combined total for access to Portland, Corvallis and Ashland city police logs would have come in at just over \$2,100.

Health reporters faced the most discouraging searches of all. They sent out requests for statistics on the number of people treated for rape or violent assault, the number of rape kits used by health care facilities, the number of people counseled for rape or other violent trauma, and any available breakdowns by demographics, including gender, ethnicity, student status and sexual orientation. Montana again had the best track record, but just barely – although the University of Montana and hospitals in Missoula were able to comply with all four requests, facilities in Havre and Bozeman denied the majority of requests. Oregon, however, fared worst – with the exception of facilities at the University of Oregon and in Eugene, which never responded to the letters at all, the other facilities around the state denied each and every request.

Overall, the most consistent response rate came from agencies in Washington, where every request received some form of response from a records officer. Because of the more lax policies in Oregon and Montana, non-responses from agencies were fairly commonplace in those states.

METHOD:

Students ask for information as if they were prospective students

The Northwest Campus Crime Project was modeled after the dozens of public records audits conducted throughout the nation since 1995 (links to many of the audits can be found at the University of Missouri – Columbia freedom of information Web site). The idea was to ask for information as any prospective student or parent might and see how government officials respond. If asked, students identified themselves as students from Washington State University, even though most state laws prohibit agencies from asking the identity of requestors or purpose of the request.

Twenty universities were chosen in five Northwest states: Washington, Idaho, Oregon, Utah and Montana (see list of universities and their results). The largest four public universities in each state were chosen for the study in order to compare comparable schools that serve the greatest number of students. Also, as they are all public institutions, they are subject to their respective state open public records laws.

A dozen different types of records were requested of universities, police departments and hospitals to gather enough information to get an idea of how much crime each of the universities experiences. In the end, because of logistical difficulties in comparing the universities for some records, the study focused on four main types of records, all of which were statistical compilations and did not include the identities of people involved:

Basic campus crime statistics as required by the federal Clery Act

Campus police logs, also required to be public

The number of rape victims treated (asked of university health clinics, local hospitals, and other health providers that would treat campus rape victims)

Campus disciplinary board statistics

The students requested the records by phone, e-mail and mail (using the online records request letter generator at www.splc.org). After their initial requests, they followed up if the agencies did not respond in the required amount of time. The agencies were given more than a month to respond, far longer than allowed by most laws (in most states the required response time ranges from three to 10 days). If the agencies responded with the information, even if late, they were noted as complying. If not, their response was noted accordingly. In many cases the information was provided online. If the students' requests were shuffled around to different offices and never answered, then the request was considered denied.

RESULTS:

Response varies by record and university

Overall results for four types of records

Four types of records were requested for each of the 20 universities. Results were mixed:

1. Basic campus crime statistics available

All 20 universities provided basic statistical crime information as required by the Clery Act. Even better, 18 of the 20, or 90 percent, provided the information online. Weber State University and Eastern Washington University did not provide the information online but did provide the information when asked. The problem students found in their research based on other public records was that often universities' reported crime statistics were much lower, or more favorable for the university, than statistics obtained from the federal government, city police and other sources. While all the universities provided the statistics as required by federal law, the accuracy of the statistics was in question.

2. Three-quarters of colleges provide campus police logs online

Campus police logs, which list basic facts about crimes as they occur, were provided by most universities, as required by the Clery Act. Fifteen of the universities, or 75 percent, provided their logs online, including all of the Montana and Idaho schools and most of the Washington and Utah schools. The University of Oregon provided some of its log online. It was not possible to determine whether any of the logs were complete -- some universities may exclude some information from their logs. Oregon State, Portland State, Southern Oregon, and Southern Utah did not respond to the records request. The only university to outright deny access to the information was the University of Washington.

3. Only 30 percent of health organizations provide basic rape statistics

When students asked health organizations for information about the number of rape victims treated (no identifying information), they got mixed answers. Seven of the jurisdictions refused to provide statistical information and seven others did not respond to the request, for a compliance rate of only 30 percent. Only five entities provided the information: Boise State, Montana Tech, University of Montana, Southern Utah, Eastern Washington, and the University of Washington.

4. Only 40 percent of the universities provide campus disciplinary board statistics

Another gauge of campus crime is the disciplinary board, which typically handles matters in which the police may not get involved. Eight universities, or 40 percent, attempted to comply with the request for disciplinary board statistics, some more successfully than others. The rest of the universities were of little help, shuffling the requestor around until nothing happened or not responding at all. The universities that did not respond to the request were Idaho State, Lewis-Clark, Montana State Billings, Montana State Bozeman, University of Montana, Southern Oregon, Southern Utah, Weber State, University of Washington, and Western Washington.

Results by state and university

Idaho

Boise State University

Campus crime statistical information: Provided online

Campus police logs: Provided online

Rape statistics: Complied

Disciplinary board statistics: Complied

Idaho State University

Campus crime statistical information: Provided online

Campus police logs: Provided online

Rape statistics: No response

Disciplinary board statistics: No response

Lewis-Clark State College

Campus crime statistical information: Provided online

Campus police logs: Complied

Rape statistics: No response (shuffled around)

Disciplinary board statistics: No response

University of Idaho

Campus crime statistical information: Provided online

Campus police logs: Provided online

Rape statistics: Denied the information

Disciplinary board statistics: Complied

Montana

Montana State Billings

Campus crime statistical information: Provided online

Campus police logs: Provided online

Rape statistics: Did not provide records

Disciplinary board statistics: Denied

Montana State Bozeman

Campus crime statistical information: Provided online

Campus police logs: Provided online

Rape statistics: Denied records

Disciplinary board statistics: Denied

Montana Tech

Campus crime statistical information: Provided online

Campus police logs: Provided online
Rape statistics: Complied
Disciplinary board statistics: Complied

University of Montana

Campus crime statistical information: Provided online
Campus police logs: Provided online
Rape statistics: Complied
Disciplinary board statistics: Denied

Oregon

Oregon State University

Campus crime statistical information: Provided online
Campus police logs: No response
Rape statistics: Denied
Disciplinary board statistics: No response (shuffled around)

Portland State University

Campus crime statistical information: Provided online
Campus police logs: No response
Rape statistics: Denied
Disciplinary board statistics: Incomplete records received

Southern Oregon University

Campus crime statistical information: Provided online
Campus police logs: Did not provide
Rape statistics: Denied
Disciplinary board statistics: No response

University of Oregon

Campus crime statistical information: Provided online
Campus police logs: Complied partially
Rape statistics: No response
Disciplinary board statistics: Complied

Utah

Southern Utah University

Campus crime statistical information: No response
Campus police logs: No response
Rape statistics: Complied
Disciplinary board statistics: No response

University of Utah

Campus crime statistical information: Provided online
Campus police logs: Complied partially
Rape statistics: No response
Disciplinary board statistics: Complied

Utah State University

Campus crime statistical information: Provided online
Campus police logs: Complied partially
Rape statistics: Denied

Disciplinary board statistics: Complied

Weber State University

Campus crime statistical information: Complied

Campus police logs: Complied partially

Rape statistics: Denied

Disciplinary board statistics: No response

Washington

Eastern Washington University

Campus crime statistical information: Complied

Campus police logs: Provided online

Rape statistics: Provided

Disciplinary board statistics: Complied

University of Washington

Campus crime statistical information: Provided online

Campus police logs: Denied

Rape statistics: Complied

Disciplinary board statistics: Denied

Washington State University

Campus crime statistical information: Provided online

Campus police logs: Provided online

Rape statistics: Denied

Disciplinary board statistics: Complied

Western Washington University

Campus crime statistical information: Provided online

Campus police logs: Provided online

Rape statistics: Denied

Disciplinary board statistics: No response (shuffled around)

HASSLES:

Students ignored, berated and charged hundreds of dollars for records

By Julie Ledford, Natasha Jaksich and John Dolan

Citizens who seek public information are often shuffled around, ignored, berated and charged such high fees that it makes the requests unworkable.

One student in this public records project was yelled at on the phone, another lectured.

At least they got a response. Students often were transferred on the phone five or more times, usually ending up with voicemail and no return call.

"No one seems to know who can provide this information to you within our hospital," said John Stillman, Director of the Internal Review Board for the University of Utah Hospital in Salt Lake City in an email regarding a request for public health records.

In Idaho, a student was transferred to the Lewiston Police when she asked hospital officials at St. Joseph's Regional Medical Center for public health records. The student was then transferred to the public health department and never did receive the information she asked for.

The Butte Police Department in Montana did not return messages left four times for different people, including the person designated as the records officer.

In many cases, when agencies responded, it was far later than the deadlines imposed by law.

Almost universally, police departments in Washington state did not respond within five business days as mandated by the Washington Public Disclosure Act. Sometimes they did not respond within weeks or months.

When agencies did respond, they often wanted to charge hundreds of dollars to provide the records. Robert Deutsch, the captain of the Corvallis Police Department, said it would cost \$5 for the first five pages of information and 5 cents a page thereafter for any requested information. The total estimated cost of copying daily activity logs was about \$450.

Linda Hoggatt of the Ashland Police Bureau estimated the costs of copying daily activity logs and the departmental budget around \$378.

MINOR:

Bulk of crimes on campus involve theft and burglary

By Brian Veach

The bulk of most campus mayhem involves theft and burglary.

All of the universities studied in this project, with the exception of Montana State University of Bozeman, show larger numbers of thefts on campus than any other crime listed in their annual crime report.

For example, at Portland State University there were 14 times as many reports of theft as reports of sex offenses for the year 2002. Similarly, at Washington State University there were 14 times as many reports of theft on campus as reports of aggravated assault on campus for the year 2002.

Montana State University of Bozeman is the one campus that does not follow this trend of higher theft and burglary rates than any other reported crime. In 2001 there were 10 reports of burglary and nine reports of forcible sex offenses. In 2002 there were 11 reports of forcible sex offences and 10 reports of burglary.

Sarah Luft, a senior at Washington State University, said that she had her laundry stolen from the laundry room of the dorms she lived in her freshman year.

"They took everything, even my underwear," Luft said.

Luft didn't report the crime, but she said she made a point to watch her laundry more closely when she went to the laundry room.

Elizabeth Franklin, crime analyst at the University of Washington's police department said that theft is a crime of opportunity.

"It only takes 30 seconds for someone to steal a backpack," Franklin said.

Here are theft and burglary statistics for the universities for 2002:

Washington

Eastern Washington University, 67
Western Washington University, 10
Washington State University, 278
University of Washington, 959

Utah

Southern Utah University, 6
Utah State University, 21
University of Utah, 27
Weber State University, 19

Montana

Montana State University-Bozeman, 10
University of Montana, 384
Montana State University-Billings, 22
Montana Tech, 0

Idaho

Boise State University, 36
Idaho State University, 105
University of Idaho, 7
Lewis-Clark State College, 4

Oregon

Oregon State University, 67
University of Oregon, 73
Southern Oregon University, 88
Portland State University, 374

CLERYS:

Clery Act initiated by parents of murdered university student

By Megan Patrick

On the morning of April 5, 1986, Jeanne Clery had no idea the events that would take place within the next 24 hours would change both her life and that of her parents forever.

By the end of the day, she would have been raped, tortured, sodomized and murdered in her Lehigh University dorm room. Her parents say she was killed because of what she didn't know.

Clery's attacker, who was sentenced to death, had no trouble gaining access to her dorm room. He walked through three propped-open doors, which should have been locked, and into her room. Not one person asked who he was or why he was there. Surprisingly, there were 181 reports of propped-open doors in Stoughton Hall, where Clery lived, in the four months before her death, according to the Security on Campus Web site. <http://www.securityoncampus.org/>

Afterward, the university claimed no negligence and classified the attack as an "aberration."

Out of their rage, Connie and Howard Clery founded Security on Campus, Inc., the first national, nonprofit organization dedicated to the prevention of criminal violence at colleges and assisting campus violence victims nationwide.

In 2000, the most recent year for which statistics are posted on the U.S. Department of Education Web site, there were 77 university-related murders, 3,601 forcible rapes, 149 nonforcible rapes and 7,846 counts of aggravated assault in 2002. This is down from 914 university-related murders, 5,661 forcible rapes, 1,815 nonforcible rapes and 28,217 counts of aggravated assault in 2000.

In 1987, the Clerys began efforts toward enacting laws requiring colleges and universities nationwide to provide current and prospective students complete information about violent campus crimes, drug and alcohol offenses and security procedures in place. In 1990, former president George Bush Sr. signed the Crime Awareness and Campus Security Act, now known as the Jeanne Clery Disclosure of Campus Security Policy and Campus Crime Statistics Act. The law requires all colleges receiving federal funds to report crime statistics annually.

In another effort to prevent campus crime, the Clerys also founded the Campus Victims Litigation Program, a database of case law in civil actions by victims of campus crimes and victims of administrative cover-ups of such crimes.

Daniel Carter, Security on Campus vice president, said he thinks the Clery Act has made an impact, but it may only be a limited one. The real problem, he said, is getting universities to comply with the act.

“Fewer universities comply than you might expect,” he said. “Schools must realize that it is more profitable in the end – and not just monetarily – to do the right thing.”

Carter said he has seen a response from students, the people who benefit most from the legislation. And that, he said, has pleased Connie and Howard Clery.

“The death of their daughter has certainly been difficult for them,” he said. “But it’s helped them find some meaning in the tragedy.”

COMPLY:

What citizens can do if a university does not comply with the Clery Act

By Casey Lee

If a university does not comply with the Clery Act, citizens can do something about it.

The Clery Act mandates that colleges report crimes on their campus in a variety of categories, including criminal homicide, sex offenses, robbery, aggravated assault, burglary, motor vehicle theft and arson. Since the law’s enactment in 1990, schools including the University of Pennsylvania, Clemson University and Virginia Tech, have been found in violation, according to Security on Campus.

To report a school in violation of the Clery Act, follow these steps:

1. Get a copy of the institution’s security disclosure.
2. Inspect the copy to ensure the school is reporting everything they need to. Visit the Security on Campus Web site to find a list of these obligations, and note any discrepancies.

<http://www.securityoncampus.org/>

3. If the facts demonstrate that the school is leaving out certain cases, compile all the evidence that can be found.
4. Gather each violation into a list and forward it to the regional office of the U.S. Department of Education for the state where the school is located. Also call 1-800-4-FED-AID to submit a complaint.
5. The DOE should provide a letter recognizing the complaint, but they ask that complaints be sent by any means providing a tracking device.

Security on Campus has filed more than 100 complaints with the Department of Education since 1996, and all but two have been investigated, according to Daniel Carter, the non-profit group's senior vice president.

Most complaints receive a desk review, rather than a full program review, he said. DOE performs only two or three program reviews per year.

Carter said DOE tries to work with universities to achieve compliance rather than imposing fines. It may take DOE anywhere from a week to a year after being informed of possible non-compliance to review the case, Carter said.

HELP:

Tips for getting access to crime statistics in your town

Citizens have a variety of ways – more than just the Clery Act – to find out about crime at their universities or neighborhoods. Here are some tips for getting public information from law enforcement agencies:

1. Ask your local police.

Police keep logs of crimes, which are public in most states. Also, incident reports that describe basic details of individual crimes are usually public, depending on the state. Visit your police or sheriff's office to inquire about their crime records.

2. Check national data online.

The federal Uniform Crime Reports (<http://www.fbi.gov/ucr/ucr.htm>) data provided online by the FBI include statistical crime data for 17,000 police agencies in the country. The free data also include hate crime statistics.

3. Read up on the law.

Every state has a law that protects the public's right to government information, but the laws can vary widely. The Reporter's Committee for Freedom of the Press (<http://www.rcfp.org/ogg/index.php>) provides guides for every state, called "Tapping Officials' Secrets."

4. Submit a records request.

Sometimes some police agencies are not receptive to in-person requests for information. Dozens of audits (<http://www.nfoic.org/foi-center>) have been done nationwide to find out compliance to public records requests, and law enforcement typically is less likely to provide information than other agencies. Online request letters, tailored to specific state laws, are available at the Student Press Law Center Web site. <http://www.splc.org/foiletter.asp>

5. Be persistent.

Although many states require a speedy response from records keepers, the provision does not guarantee that all information will be provided. If an agency does not give access to information, it is important to ask

for an explanation. In most cases, personally identifiable information should be redacted and the remaining material provided to requesters. Statistical information is almost always public.

6. Seek help.

Ultimately, if the information is not released according to the law, legal advice should be sought. The state attorney general could be useful at this juncture. Student journalists can contact the Student Press Law Center for legal advice. In the Northwest, consult access experts in your state. <http://www.splc.org/>

LINKS:

Resources about the Clery Act and how to find out about campus crime

[Security on Campus Inc.](http://www.securityoncampus.org/) (<http://www.securityoncampus.org/>)

A nonprofit group that advocates open disclosure of campus crime information, started by the parents of Jeanne Clery. The site includes educational materials regarding the Clery Act, news about Clery Act violations and crime statistics for universities throughout the country. It also includes a national audit of university compliance to the Clery Act, conducted in 2002, which found that only 37 percent of institutions are in full compliance of the law. An earlier study in 1996 also found poor compliance.

[Student Press Law Center](http://www.splc.org/) (<http://www.splc.org/>)

A nonprofit group dedicated to assisting student journalists. The SPLC conducted a study (<http://www.splc.org/newsflash.asp?id=208&year=2001>) in 2002 regarding college journalists' views toward university compliance of the Clery Act. The SPLC also has publications (<http://www.splc.org/legalresearch.asp?subcat=9>) on covering crime on campus available for free online.

[Chronicle of Higher Education campus crime stats](http://chronicle.com/stats/crime/) (<http://chronicle.com/stats/crime/>)

This publication provides free online facts and crime statistics about universities nationwide.

[U.S. Department of Education](http://www.ope.ed.gov/security/) (<http://www.ope.ed.gov/security/>)

Crime statistics for more than 6,000 universities in the United States are available, as well as other information.

[California audit of university campus crime statistics reporting](#)

The California state auditor conducted a 2003 audit of California universities, finding that some institutions report inaccurate or incomplete statistics.

Relevant articles:

"**UC keeps sex crimes in shadows,**" by Terri Hardy and Matthew Barrows, The Sacramento Bee, Sept. 24-25, 2000. A five-month investigation found that rapes at University of California campuses were seldom made public, despite federal requirements.

"**Unsealing campus law enforcement records,**" by Steve Pasternack, Newspaper Research Journal, Vol. 14 & 15, No. 4 & 1 (Fall 1992/Winter 1993). Concluded that universities were not doing a good job complying with the Clery Act.

IDAHO:

Universities found to under-report rape statistics

By Evan Caldwell and David Dean

Universities in the state of Idaho are underreporting the number of rapes on their campuses, which could lead parents and students to believe their campuses are safer than they actually are.

The Jeanne Clery Disclosure of Campus Security and Crime statistics Act requires universities in the state of Idaho to accurately report crime statistics, including rape, for their campuses and to make this information available to all current students and employees.

Records requests for the Clery Act statistics were sent to four Idaho universities in March of 2004: University of Idaho, Boise State University, Lewis and Clark State College, and Idaho State University. All four of the universities provided the statistics in either a letter or through a link to their Web page (see compliance results). The University of Idaho reported one rape on their campus from 2000-2002. Idaho State University reported four rapes in that same time period.

The two remaining universities provided their statistics and both reported the same number of rapes; zero.

So for all public universities in Idaho, there were only five rapes reported. As encouraging as that number sounds, it may not be accurate.

The Uniform Crime Report provided by the Idaho State Police said there were 12 rapes reported at public universities from 2000-2002, seven more rapes than what was reported in the Clery Act statistics.

To figure out which number is correct, records requests were sent to the police departments at those same four public universities. The requests asked for the number of rapes reported to the police from 2000-2002. This would indicate whether the Clery Act statistics or the Uniform Crime Report was correct. But it turned out to be another completely different number.

The universities' police department reports said there were 20 rapes total reported to the campus police departments from 2000-2002. This is 15 more rapes than the Clery Act statistics indicated, and seven more rapes than the Uniform Crime Report indicated.

So which of all these numbers and reports are correct?

Steve Chatterton, Idaho State University Public Safety Director, said he is confident the Clery Act information is the most correct.

"I think the (Clery Act statistics) are a fair representation," he said. "I don't think freshmen or their parents look at it as much as some think they do. However, it is worth the effort for those who would be interested."

It's important to know which number is correct so that students and parents can make an informed decision about which university is the safest. It would be to the university's advantage to report the lowest possible numbers in their Clery Act statistics to make people believe their university is as safe as possible.

But underreporting is a big risk for the schools to take.

Capt. Cameron Hershaw of the Moscow Police Campus Division said all crimes reported get into their Clery Act statistics, and there may not even be an advantage to underreport crimes on campus.

"The feds are real hard on reporting," he said. "If you don't comply you can yank your federal funding and they've done it before. We are all trained to report them."

Hershaw also said underreporting can easily be noticed during a federal audit, which is a hefty risk that no one wants to take.

“If I ever get questioned, I want to say that my numbers are straight,” he said.

But do the students even care? Hershaw doesn't think so.

“Students, when deciding what college to go to, tend not to even look at the crime stats,” he said. In fact, Hershaw said when his daughter was deciding between attending USC or UW, he couldn't even get her to care about the crime near or on those campuses.

Noe Olivera, a senior undergraduate student at the University of Idaho, said he has never even heard of the Clery Act.

“I wasn't even aware those statistics were compiled,” he said. “But it is concerning that the numbers don't add up. It would be nice to know which number to believe. I would hope the schools aren't lying to make themselves look better.”

Candace Goodman, a junior undergraduate student at Boise State University, said she feels familiar with the Clery Act and she thinks a lot of the discrepancies come from jurisdiction inconsistencies.

“The whole on-campus, off-campus thing is so murky,” she said. “It allows the universities to get away with as much as they can and still be able to validate their numbers.”

If the discrepancies in the numbers are the result of conflicting reporting and different interpretations on what is actually on-campus and off-campus, it may be difficult to ever completely understand which numbers are accurate. But, many students and even parents of potential students, like Annie Moserie, just don't care.

“My daughter is going to UI next year,” she said. “My husband and I just need to know that there aren't a bunch of serial murderers on the loose. You can't get too wrapped up in those numbers because the exact numbers aren't that important. Those sorts of things are going to happen, no matter where you go.”

OREGON:

Lack of agency deadlines, high fees hinder access to basic information

By Travis Conrads

In the state of Oregon, known for its liberal activism, accessing public records is difficult, time-consuming and can cost large amounts of money. This is due to many things, including confusion between state and federal laws, and a state public records law that doesn't have a deadline for response to public-records requests.

Focusing on the four biggest universities in Oregon — the University of Oregon, Oregon State University, Portland State University and Southern Oregon University — dozens of public-records requests were sent to campus police, city police, campus health centers, local hospitals and courts. Reporters asked for information from the years 2000-2002 regarding violent crimes on and around the four campuses, with disappointing results.

A small amount of information was gleaned — mostly Clery Act reports, which federal law requires be published annually — but most requests were denied, skirted or simply ignored.

Of the five states on which the Access Northwest project focused, only Oregon doesn't have a deadline for response to requests. The agency that receives the request must respond in a “reasonable time,” said Tim Gleason, dean of the University of Oregon School of Journalism and Communication, where he

teaches media law.

As of April 14, several agencies, including various offices at Portland State University and the county court clerk in Multnomah County, had not responded to requests that were sent in late February.

"That's not a reasonable time," Gleason said. "No response is not a reasonable response."

Les Zaitz, an investigative reporter with The Oregonian and one of the state's most prominent advocates of open government, said much of the problem may be that the project was done by students.

"Frankly, my guess is if they know you're students, they are blowing you off as a bother," Zaitz said. If they don't respond, one reason may be that "they don't think you'll kick up a fuss if ignored."

Some court records were available online, including county Uniform Crime Reports, but requests for further information were unsuccessful. The Benton County court clerk forwarded the reporter to the Circuit Court, where the reporter was passed from person to person until he finally left a voice mail message that was never returned. Upon follow-up, the woman denied that the court had prosecution and conviction statistics and tersely told the reporter she didn't know where he could find them.

This was the story with most courts, and the hospitals weren't any easier. Virtually no statistics were released from hospitals, but most of them are private and stated that the state public-records act didn't apply to them. Another hospital said the hospital didn't keep treatment statistics for violent crimes.

One area where crime records were readily available was at police stations, but almost all stations said that rounding up the requests would cost a significant amount of money. For the statistics sought (police logs, operational budgets and available statistics by crime type), Portland police would charge about \$480. Ashland police estimated \$378. Corvallis police estimated \$450, plus the cost of budget document copies and shipping.

The Portland Police Bureau does not have computer programming necessary to reproduce daily activity logs. Veronica Nordeen, the administrative assistant in the records division, said it would take the agency two years to create this programming. According to Nordeen, the requester would have to wait at least the two years and then pay \$20 for every month the agency is working on the documents, or roughly \$480.

Uniform daily assignment rosters that outline bureau personnel attendance per shift were available at \$8.50 per roster with an average of three rosters per day. Nordeen said that for a month of rosters, it would cost a requester \$800.

Oregon law allows agencies to charge for copying and search costs, which can lead to high costs for access to records.

Getting sex offender registries from universities also produced interesting results. Joey Ngan, director of security at Southern Oregon University, said Oregon state universities are not required to maintain sex offender registrations. The Campus Sex Crimes Prevention Act, or "Megan's Law," took effect in 2003 and requires schools to publicize where individuals can get information about registered sex offenders on campus. It might be that universities are not aware of the laws requiring them to make the lists available, as the law took effect just last year.

"State agencies are feeling quite pressed and overworked," Gleason said. They could be focused more on their main job tasks than public-records requests. But that doesn't mean they can't be punished for not responding or complying with requests.

Gleason was unaware of any state law trumping federal laws requiring the release of sex offender registries.

“That doesn’t make any sense,” Gleason said. “Every institution is required to follow (federal law). Your federal funding is at risk (if you don’t).”

Zaitz said there are many problems in Oregon when it comes to getting information, and there are several reasons why it’s becoming more difficult. First, the increasingly powerful argument of “personal privacy” is hurting access, and Zaitz said the media are losing the fight. Also, he said, government budget cuts have agencies spread thinner than they’d like.

“Public-records requests then become a real burden – do you do your job or do you help the public get information?” Zaitz said.

But he has an idea that would be a first step toward improving access.

“For the average citizen, agencies should be required to produce a records policy – identifying the records the agency keeps, who has them and how to get them,” Zaitz said. “Most often, citizens know what information they want but don’t know what document contains the information. In too many government agencies, the employees aren’t helpful in guiding people to the right records, except for basics (such as deeds and lawsuits).”

The most important problem with public access, though, said Zaitz, is that the government keeps expanding what types of records can be hidden from the public, and if the media can’t give examples (previously published stories) of what the records would be used for, the government will close them.

“ If the press doesn’t make better use of the laws," he said, "the public will increasingly suffer."

MONTANA:

University officials unwilling to provide disciplinary board statistics

By MJ Valencia

In elementary school, students who misbehave are sent to the principal’s office. In college they see the disciplinary board.

Finding out basic statistics of what disciplinary board handle, however, is next to impossible. Some schools denied having information and claimed to not keep crime and disciplinary records, while some schools were inconsistent with the information kept. Apparently, according to university officials, the reason they can not tell the public what their disciplinary boards do is because they don’t keep track of what they do.

Here are how four universities in Montana responded to requests for basic statistical tallies of their disciplinary boards:

Montana State, Billings

The request for a statistical summary of all the conduct board hearings and results for violent offenses and sex offenses for 2000-2002 was handled by Curt Kochner, vice chancellor of Student Affairs. No information was provided because the incidents were considered “informal.”

Kochner said, “None of the offenses reported during the years of 2000-2002 were referred to conduct board hearings. Any disciplinary actions that were taken regarding these reports were handled through the informal disciplinary process.”

Montana State, Bozeman

Cathy Beyer, vice president of Student Affairs for Montana State University, sent a letter stating the amount of disciplinary board hearings which had taken place between the year 2000 and the present. According to the Beyer there were four boards during the 2000-2001 school year, six boards during the 2001-2002 school year, 13 boards during the 2002-2003 school year and three so far for the present school year.

However, when an e-mail was sent for the request of a statistical summary of all the conduct board hearings and results for violent offenses and sex offenses for 2000-2002, the information was denied. The reason given, they claimed, was that they don't keep track of their disciplinary incidents.

Leslie Taylor, legal counsel for Montana State-Bozeman, said, "MSU does not collect or publish disciplinary board statistics. Therefore, no public record exists with this information."

Montana Tech

A request for disciplinary board statistics was made to Paul Beatty, dean of students at Montana Tech. He confirmed that there had not been any violent offenses or sex offenses that have gone through the judicial referral system in the years 2000-2002.

"The Annual Security Report lists only two violent and sex offenses," Beatty said. "The 2002 offense was reported by Butte Silver Bow Law Enforcement and involved a male to male sex encounter occurrence in one of the parking lots. The 2001 offense was an acquaintance rape and was counseled by our staff. Neither of these was referred or heard by our campus judicial board."

University of Montana-Missoula

David Aronofsky, University of Montana legal counsel, said, "We do not compile all of the records you are requesting, and Montana public records laws do not require public agencies to prepare records not kept in the ordinary course or public agency activities or operations."

UTAH:

Universities report different crime statistics to students, government

By Leila Summers

Money. Dorms. Food. Friends. Safety.

But many universities report crime statistics to the public that may be inaccurate. Two Utah universities, University of Utah and Southern Utah University, the biggest and smallest four-year public schools in the state, both reported fewer sexual assaults than the U.S. Department of Education reported them to have. Some argue that reporting lower crime numbers falsely sells the image of a safe campus.

Others say human errors likely caused the discrepancies.

The University of Utah, with 28,000 students in Salt Lake City, is the largest public university in the state - and also reports the largest discrepancy in statistics.

The Clery Report for University of Utah, lists two forcible sex offenses in 2000, seven in 2001, and 10 in 2002. But the U.S. Department of Education reported 11 in 2000, seven in 2001, and 12 in 2002. In other words, the University of Utah reported 19 rapes versus 30 rapes the Department of Education reported.

Campus police only have seven of these attacks listed on the department Web site.

Lynn Mitchell, University of Utah police chief, said his university statistics are correct.

"I have no understanding of why the numbers are off," Mitchell said. "Numbers we report to the department of education come right from our database. The numbers are then typed in by hand, which might have caused discrepancy."

Definitions add to the confusion, Mitchell said.

"People report differently," he said, referring to how a rape is classified. Most universities specify if a rape occurred on-campus, in an on-campus Residence Hall, or on public-property. Some universities have additional classifications.

This could be a cause for double entry, Mitchell said, if individuals reporting the crime are confused about which location to report. Mitchell said a hospital located on the University of Utah campus is considered "public property," but if a crime was committed there, it might be mistakenly reported as "on campus." It might then even be reported as both "on campus" and "public property," he added.

Statistical inconsistencies are likely due to human error, he said.

"When entering data and putting information in the database down by hand, it is possible that it got screwed up," Mitchell said.

Mitchell said the university does not intend to manipulate information.

"We would want to be forthright," Mitchell said. "And tell people there is a problem if there is a problem."

The U.S. Department of Education Web site states its statistics count all reported forcible sexual assaults, even if no charges were pressed. David Bergeron, director of policy and budget development for the office of post secondary education in the Department of Education, said crime data should be identical between the department and universities.

"The source is the same," Bergeron said. "It's the institutions."

Discrepancies may have occurred when universities classified information. Bergeron said it's common to have non-violent forcible sexual assaults, such date rapes, misclassified as non-forcible sex offenses-- a classification reserved for incest and sex with a minor.

Bergeron said a handbook to clarify Clery Act compliance and definitions is under construction by his department to minimize future confusion.

Misread data and sloppy handwriting could be additional reasons for inconsistencies, Bergeron said. He added that if a university realized statistical errors after filing its yearly Clery Act report, it cannot easily fix the discrepancy.

"There's no mechanism for (universities) to make auto-corrections," Bergeron said. "They only have access to the system for two months out of the year. Otherwise, they have to contact a help-desk, and an institution may be intimidated to do that."

Institutions believed to violate the Clery Act could face a federal audit and fine of \$27,500 per infraction incorrectly stated, said Catherine Bath, executive director for Security on Campus, an organization that monitors Clery Act compliance.

"I expect the department of education report to be correct," Bath said. "It's like lying on an IRS tax report; you lie to the government and you get in trouble. Universities know this."

Incorrect data on Websites are against the law, Bath said, because they mislead parents, students and potential students about campus crimes and safety.

"They think it benefits their image," Bath said. "They don't want to scare parents and students." Instead, Bath said this sends out the message that universities choose to ignore sexual assault.

"This should tell parents: If your daughter is raped, (her case) will be swept under the rug," Bath said. "Schools reporting zero rapes are stuck in the dark ages and in denial."

Bath said schools with higher sexual assault numbers may ironically be safer than a school reporting zero rapes. These schools, she said, admit rape is a crime and might be encouraging women to report without fear of negative repercussions from the university.

Other schools, may dissuade women from coming forward to report sexual assault. Bath said because alcohol is involved in 90 percent of sexual assaults, women fear being punished for underage drinking and will believe the crime was her fault.

Instilling this anxiety in women, Bath said universities punish the wrong people.

"Schools are part of the problem," Bath said. "Boys can take advantage of the system because they know universities will just give them a slap on the wrist."

Mitchell said the University of Utah police department works closely with Salt Lake City police to monitor crime rates. He said university police and are notified of all crimes affiliated with University of Utah students. He said additional sexual assault reports do not exist that he is aware of.

The university employs 32 fulltime police office to monitor school grounds and handle possible threats, according to the Department of Public Safety. The Campus Sex Crimes Prevention Act requires universities to keep track of convicted, registered sex offenders enrolled as students, employed by the school or working as volunteers on campus. This law amends the Jacob Wetterling Act which explains the likelihood of sex offenders to re-offend.

Utah State University reported low crime numbers overall, but a discrepancy occurred in the Clery Act statistics. The number of rapes for 2002 didn't match the number discussed in the police yearly evaluation that is also available on the school Website. The Clery Act statistics did match the Department of Education statistics report.

The USU Clery Act reported two sexual assaults for 2002, but the 2002 Annual Report listed on the website report one of these two rapes.

The report, written by the USU police department, explains: "As with virtually all rapes reported on campus, the rape reported in 2002 was an acquaintance rape."

USU has approximately 16,000 students and is located in Logan, Utah.

Southern Utah University, a school of approximately 6,000 students in Ceder City, Utah, is the smallest public four-year university in the state.

SUU reported zero rapes for all three years.

But public records provided by Valley View Hospital, located on the SUU campus, suggest multiple women were treated for sexual assault injuries. Data for the years 2000-2002, obtained by the Freedom of Information Act, show 11 women ages 18-23 sought "observation following alleged rape."

This discrepancy strongly suggests SUU, like University of Utah, might have underreported sexual

assaults on these campuses, or that sexual assaults that occur are not being reported to university police.

Bath said the Clery Act only requires universities to compile data from local police stations, not hospitals. "Some universities are not putting enough 'good faith' efforts to attained required statistics," Bath said referring to language in the Clery Act trusting universities to accurately report statistics.

Other Utah hospitals located near or on public universities denied public records requests.

Jim Davis, public affairs director for the Student Health and Wellness Center at USU wrote in a Feb. 23 email such: "medical records do not fall under the Utah Code that you have cited, and are not generally considered 'open records.' If you desire information regarding rape and assault, which are legal terms, not medical diagnosis, I would direct you to... the Campus Police Department."

Though HIPAA, a law protecting private medical information, mandates self-identifying information be withheld from the public to protect the patient's identity, information may be presented in a way to withhold identity. For example, SUU provided data listed by injury, age, sex and race. Names and social security numbers were not included in the data.

Other hospitals did not dispute whether such records were open to the public as the Student Health and Wellness Center at USU did, but responded instead that requested statistics were not kept.

Lori Morris, a spokeswoman for the McKay-Dee Hospital said the hospital did not keep rape-related statistics.

"This is something that is reported to law enforcement authorities," Morris wrote in a Feb. 23 e-mail. "And they track those statistics."

The Freedom of Information Act, mandates public records be provided to the public upon request. But if records do not already exist, as Morris said was the case at McKay-Dee Hospital, then the institution is not required to compile to satisfy that request.

Private corporations such as the Salt Lake Regional Medical Center, in Salt Lake City near University of Utah, quoted jurisdiction granting extra privacy rights in their denial to provide statistics.

"Salt Lake Regional Medical Center, Inc., is a privately held corporation and does not meet the definition of 'governmental entity,'" wrote the HIPAA compliance coordinator and paralegal for this medical center. He cited Utah Code Annotated 63-2-103(10) which defines "government entity."

Logan Regional Hospital near USU in Logan, Utah, did not release statistics, according to an e-mail dated Feb. 23. Again, Utah Code Annotated Sections were cited and suggested seeking information from the state of Utah. This hospital said the state of Utah would be the only source for this information. HIPAA provisions were also cited as reasons against providing the records.

"Logan Regional Hospital cannot release the information you requested without a signed release from the individual patient," wrote Teri Chase-Dunn for the Logan Regional Hospital.

"We do not track rape statistics at the hospital," said Debbie Ostrander, PIO for Logan Regional Hospital. Public records were difficult to acquire from Utah universities, hospitals and courts. But according to Utah state code, "every person has the right to inspect a public record free of charge and the right to take a copy of a public record during normal working hours. All records are public unless otherwise expressly provided by statute."

Rape can be a sensitive subject for people to discuss, especially in smaller communities where victims could be easily identified. Rape statistics in larger areas tended to be easier to acquire, likely due to a large population.

The state of Utah defines rape as: sexual intercourse with another person without the victim's consent,

regardless of whether the actor is married to the victim. Rape is a felony of the first degree in Utah, according to Utah Code Ann. 76-5-402.

The number of rapes in the entire state of Utah increased steadily during the years 2000-2002, according to the Utah Department of Public Safety 2002 year end crime report. Rapes increased by approximately 50 each year.

The threat of underreported crimes on college campuses proved its danger in 1986 when Jeanne Clery was raped and murdered in her dorm room at Lehigh University. Her parents claimed they were not informed of 38 previous violent crimes that occurred on her campus three years before her murder. The Clery Act was later enacted in her memory. The Clery Act is a federal law requiring all universities to maintain a database of campus crime and report crimes as they happen to students at the university.

SEX OFFENDERS:

Registry information easily available in most states, but not Oregon

By Katie Rosenthal

Finding out whether a sex offender lives next door is a few keyboard clicks away in most states, but not in Oregon.

While most states provide sex offender registry information online for free, getting the information in Oregon can be difficult.

The federal Campus Sex Crimes Prevention Act of 2000 amended the federal Jacob Wetterling Crimes Against Children and Sexually Violent Offenders Registration Act by requiring a registered sex offender to notify the state of his or her enrollment, volunteer position or employment at a university. The state must then report this information to the person's university they attend.

However, in Oregon, a state version of the Wetterling Act failed in committee in 2002. Therefore, Oregon universities are not in compliance with federal requirements, said Tom Hicks, interim public safety director at the University of Oregon.

Despite the failure of the federal Wetterling Act requirements in the Oregon legislature, some state universities are making registered sex offender lists available to the public. (For a list of links to sex offender registry information in your state, see the [AccessNorthwest sex offender registry links](#)).

The Southern Oregon University Women's Center has the past year's list of registered sex offenders in Jackson County, Ore., and people may walk in to view the list.

There are 663 registered sex offenders in the county, said Women's Center Director Adrienne Wonhof. Three registered sex offenders – all senior class students – are on the SOU campus, said Director of Security Joey Ngan.

Meanwhile, people at Portland State University may walk into the front foyer of the Campus Public Safety Office to see its list of registered sex offenders, said Director Michael Soto.

However, Hicks said his department doesn't have a list of registered sex offenders on campus or in Lane County, Ore., where the University of Oregon is located.

Hicks said the department has arrangements with the Oregon State Police and Eugene police to inform them of predatory sex offenders, but they don't disseminate the reports because state law does not

require them to do so.

But there are other options for the public to find such information.

People can access the Oregon State Police Web site and request a list of registered sex offenders by zip code to be mailed to them, Hicks said. "Our zip code at the University of Oregon is 97403, but we're just like any other individual trying to get information."

Oregon is the only state in the Pacific Northwest to not post sex offender registries on the Internet. Montana, Idaho, Washington and Utah have online sex offender registries provided by their respective law enforcement agencies.

For instance, Washington state legislators passed the Community Protection Act in 1990, which requires law enforcement agencies to release relevant information that preserves campus security. Washington State University posts a link to the Washington State Sex Offender Information Center, which then asks the user to search for an offender by the county, zip code, street, city, offender's last name or conviction. Eight sex offenders with valid addresses reside near the WSU campus in Pullman.

Meanwhile, Eastern Washington University in Cheney posts the number of Level I, II and III sex offenders on campus. Vital statistics about Level I and Level II offenders may not be released to the public, according to the EWU University Police Sex Offenders Web site. However, the department will post how many offenders in each category are on the campus.

EWU has 2 Level I and 2 Level II sex offenders on campus, according to the Web site. The university has no Level III sex offenders to report.

In the light of neighboring states placing sex offender registries online, Hicks said legislators are again trying to pass the bill that failed in 2002.

"It's a historical problem," Hicks said. "Criminal law is generally a state's responsibility, not a federal responsibility."

PREVENTION:

Universities use technology and community education to fight crime

By Rebekah Courson

Universities are using more than just police officers and German shepherds to fight crime.

New technology, community outreach and working with students are tools at the disposal of campus police departments.

"We have a specific initiative against alcohol and drug violations referred to as Cougar Accountability that would be considered a "crime prevention" strategy," said Elaine Voss, the Washington State University director of the Office of Student Conduct. "We work with students from an educational perspective as long as that seems to be productive. However, there are times when students pose a health and/or safety risk to themselves or others and are required to leave the university for a specified period of time."

Simply increasing light sources on campus can help. The University of Washington works with students to identify areas that need more lighting, said Vicky M. Peltzer, the chief of police for the University of Washington Police Department.

The University of Washington also tries to involve the community in crime prevention.

“The UWPD has implemented community policing strategies to assist in solving problems,” Peltzer said. “UWPD has a full-time crime prevention officer who works with educating students, staff, faculty, and visitors on safe practices on campus. Officers have also been assigned to bike patrol duties for higher visibility. UWPD has a CrimeWatch bulletin for current crime trends to keep our community apprised of current issues to seek help in solving and preventing further crimes.”

Other Northwest universities use new technology to fight campus crime.

“Some technological improvements include new alarms and monitoring equipment; state-of-the-art computer capabilities; computer aided dispatch and automated records management system upgrades; on-going upgrading of emergency call-box telephone system,” said David A. Doughty, assistant chief of the Western Washington University Police Department.

Other Washington universities are looking to the future.

“Camera systems and other electronics are the way of the future,” said Thomas McGill of the Eastern Washington University Police Department. “Crime prevention is really what a modern police department uses to protect its citizens. The job of law enforcement is proactive prevention. We spend a vast majority of our officers’ time in the residence halls working with students on their safety by educating them about paying attention to their surroundings, locking their doors and do not let someone into the residence halls without checking to make sure they belong.”

Some campus police departments, such as the one at Southern Oregon University, has had to struggle with budget cuts.

“Due to many recent years of budget constraints we have not had much ‘new technology’ used in crime fighting,” said Joey Ngan, director of security at Southern Oregon University. “With the pervasiveness of computer networking and cabling throughout campus, IP-addressable and network controllable cameras can be installed easily throughout campus and monitored centrally. But, don’t know if anybody is doing it.”

BEYOND:

Some universities voluntarily report minor -- and most common -- crimes

By Lacey McMurry

Counting numbers doesn’t seem like it would be the job of a police officer.

For university police though, it is part of their jobs to compile a report of campus crime statistics.

The purpose of the Clery report is to make students more aware of crime on campus, yet many campuses have begun targeting the information to incoming freshmen and parents so they are able to compare crime rates on different campuses. In order to make the information more accurate many colleges are beginning to include information not required by the act to be reported.

The report gives statistics on seven types of major crimes: murder, sex offenses, robbery, aggravated assault, burglary, motor vehicle theft, manslaughter, arson, arrests or persons referred for campus disciplinary action for liquor law violations, drug-related violations, illegal weapons possession, and hate crimes.

Parents are concerned with how much crime is happening on campus and want to make sure their students are safe, said Lt. Steve Milne of the Utah State University Police Department.

The problem with the report lies with what information about crime is not included.

"The Clery Act looks at more violent types of crimes, and a campus like ours just doesn't have that type of crime," Milne said.

There are a variety of other misdemeanor crimes that are not required to be reported, yet some universities have taken the steps to add them.

Next year Portland State University Police will be adding the category of public indecency to the report, said Chief of Police Michael Soto. Since Portland State is in an urban environment, misdemeanor types of crimes occur more regularly than in rural universities, Soto said, and it is important that information is available to students.

Some universities have begun to deal with this problem of reflecting accuracy by listing the number of offenses of other types of crimes which are not required by the act to be reported. Others have decided to use different tactics to make students and parents more aware of the small crimes which occur everyday.

The University of Utah uses its Web site to help give more detailed information to students. At least once a week their Web site is updated with recent crime reports.

Across the Northwest universities are following the trend of adding additional information to the report. One of the most common categories universities add is larceny or theft. The University of Utah makes sure the police log is updated online so students can see descriptions of small thefts, such as backpack or computer thefts, which have occurred on campus, said Police Detective Mike McPharlin of the University of Utah Department of Public Safety.

Police and public safety officials on various campuses have concerns with how well the report demonstrates safety on campus and the misrepresentation of crime it provides.

"The report will never accurately reflect crime on campus," McPharlin said, "It (the report) accurately reflects the crime it wants to track."

Many of the major public universities in the Northwest are adding additional descriptions of petty crimes and graphs to their websites to make the information more relevant to the types of crimes occurring on campuses.

Some universities have also added separate reports to their Web sites which help create more context to the information than the basic table of statistics that most universities use for their Clery Act reports.

The Utah State University Police Department produces a year end statistical report that includes graphs and charts detailing exactly what crimes occurred and where crime was reported down to the very campus building or area. They also list reasons that affect the statistics they have gathered, such as crimes that were cleared the following year or cooperation of adjoining and overlapping police agencies.

There are still some universities that don't change or add anything to the report from year to year. Donna LaRue, Assistant Chief of Police at Montana State University said the only things they add in addition to the mandatory requirements of the report are notes explaining unusually high numbers of crimes in a particular category.

While some universities continue to give students additional relevant information about crime on campus, others are in the midst of discussing ways to encourage students and parents to access the information and take it all into consideration.

Some schools have been taking a closer look in the last few years at how much the report is actually doing for students and parents. There have been discussions about how much the report is being utilized, Milne said. Part of the problem may lie with the information contained within the report.

The bottom line is that the report gives a general idea of what is going on campus, Milne said, but not to the extent that it should.

GRANTS:

Federal program helps universities fight violence against women

By Ben Guerchit

Colleges and universities have been looking to the U.S. Department of Justice since 1999 for money to help prevent violence against women on campus.

Congress first established the grant program as a part of the Higher Education Amendments of 1998. The grants have been controlled by Violence Against Women Office (VAWO) (<http://www.ovw.usdoj.gov/>) since the beginning.

According to VAWO, the grant program was designed to encourage colleges to adopt comprehensive and coordinate responses to violent crimes against women on campuses.

Idaho State University was one of 21 colleges to receive the grant in 1999. Stephan Chatterton, Director of Public Safety for Idaho State said, they established a women's advocates program and trained advocates to respond in different situations.

The Department of Justice handed out \$8.1 million in grants in 1999. Idaho State received just over \$280,000. Chatterton said the competition for the money was tough with over 100 universities competing for the grant money.

Idaho State was not the only university in the Northwest to receive the grant in 1999. Western Washington University received close to \$500,000. Pat Fabiano, program director for Prevention and Wellness Services at Western Washington, said the money was used to form a women's victim service as well as a men's violence prevention program.

Fabiano was one of the organizers for the Ending Violence Against Women (EVAW) Project at Western Washington University, which was established with the money. According to the project summary, one goal of the program was to change the social and physical environment in which violence against women occurs. This was achieved through educational programs, policies, and procedures.

Another goal of the grant program is to enhance collaboration between campuses and local criminal justice and victim advocacy organizations. Chatterton said the program was very effective, particularly in making the relationship better between judicial boards, campus police and off campus advocate groups.

Fabiano said the overall goal was to improve the safety environment on their campus. "We are still assessing the outcomes," she said.

Neither school has seen any dramatic change in the amount of violent and sexual crime against women on campus, but the programs have increased awareness.

"I believe there is a heightened awareness of violence against women on campus now," Fabiano said. "We had a fairly low incident of crime on campus to begin with; between one and three reports a year," Chatterton said. "The program mostly showed an increase in participation with women's advocate groups."

In 2000, the grant program awarded \$6.8 million to 20 college campuses in the United States. In 2001, close to \$11 million was given to several different schools.

Idaho State received a two-year renewal for the grant in 2001.

Chatterton said the women's group on campus has now taken control of the grant program and will be in charge of renewal of the grant in 2004.

Other schools in the Northwest also received grants in 2002 from the U.S. Department of Justice. Among those schools were the University of Idaho receiving almost \$200,000; Montana State University Bozeman receiving \$185,000; Montana State University Northern receiving more than \$200,000 and the University of Oregon receiving \$186,000.

CREDITS:

Advanced journalism class uses team approach for audit

The Northwest Campus Crime Project was the class project for Journalism 475: Access to Public Records in the Edward R. Murrow School of Communication at Washington State University, spring 2004. The instructor was Dr. Susan Dente Ross (accessnw@wsu.edu), a media law scholar and executive director of AccessNorthwest at WSU. She was aided by graduate student research assistant David Cuillier.

The project was led by journalism senior Rob Keenan, a former editor of Washington State University's campus newspaper The Daily Evergreen. Keenan, who acted as "managing editor" for the project coordinated five teams that each focused on a state in the Northwest:

Washington

Ben McCombs, editor
Brian Veach, education
Jake Dorsey, police
Rebekah Courson, health

Idaho

David Dean, editor
Alicia Whitlow, education
Evan Caldwell, police
Hannah Garrison, courts
Casey Lee, health

Oregon

T.J. Conrads, editor
Katie Rosenthal, education
Julie Ledford, police
Mychael Raya, courts
Stefanie Aldrich, health

Montana

M.J. Valencia, editor
Ben Guerchit, education
John Dolan, police
Heather Reardon, courts
Megan Patrick, health

Utah

Leila Summers, editor
Lacey McMurry, education
Natasha Jaksich, health
Ann Marie Magnochi, courts
Mike Feigen, police