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Eugene police say while working the campus beat they are typically met with more hostility than elsewhere in the community.

Theft 'biggest' problem on campus

□ Bicycles are the favorite target of campus crooks

By Martin Fisher
Emerald Editorial Editor

It's your first day on campus, you have just checked into your dorm room, met your new roommate and all seems right with the world.

You step out of your room for just a moment to meet your neighbors and when you return, your stereo is gone. Or your CD's. Or some clothes. Welcome to college.

Crime is prevalent throughout society, and the University is no exception. Many students fail to recognize this fact, believing the University provides a more protective environment and that they can trust their fellow students to look out for them.

"That's not the case," said Carey Drayton, director of the Office of Public Safety at the University. Drayton points out that campus is open to the public, and not everyone on campus is a student. Drayton urges students to consider their University residence as their home, and to treat it as such.

"You wouldn't prop the front door of your home open so the pizza guy can get in," said Drayton, yet many dorm residents would not think twice about propping open the outside doors of their dorm. Doing so is simply an invitation to criminals.

There were 635 reported thefts on campus last year, as opposed to 20 reported crimes against people.

"Theft is the biggest problem we have on campus," Drayton said.

Bicycles are a common target for thieves. Many

students who leave their bikes unlocked and unattended for even a few minutes often return to find them gone.

Bicycle thefts have increased by 35 percent since 1989, with mountain bikes increasingly becoming the target of choice. Mountain bikes typically cost between \$300 and \$1,000, and when not locked properly, the bikes provide irresistible targets to many thieves.

Last year, there were 167 bicycles reported stolen, yet less than 5 percent (eight bicycles) were recovered. Citywide, only 9 percent of all reported stolen bikes were recovered.

School break periods give thieves a better opportunity to steal because most residences are vacant during those times, said Tim Birr, public information officer for the Eugene police department.

During the 1991-92 winter break, Phi Gamma Delta, Alpha Tau Omega, Phi Delta Theta, Sigma Chi, Burgess and Spiller halls and the University Inn were all burglarized. Police recovered more than 1,000 CDs, two VCRs and a number of stereos and other property.

Birr strongly recommends students get insurance for their property in case of fire or theft. He also recommends writing down descriptions and serial numbers of all personal property and, along with photographs of the property, keep the information in a secure place such as a safe-deposit box.

While the number of reported assaults, sexual offenses and other crimes against individuals are relatively low, they should not be taken lightly. An average of 10 rapes occur during rush week every year, yet are rarely reported, said Beverly Collins, public information officer for EPD.

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