

# Students say campus crime reports may mislead



**NORTHWEST**

PORTLAND (AP) — Crime statistics compiled by Oregon colleges and universities may give students a false sense of security, student groups say.

A brochure from Portland State University, for example, says there were 39 burglaries and 41 car thefts on campus between 1989 and 1991.

But the brochure records only one aggravated assault, one drug-related arrest and one robbery during that three-year period.

And it reports Portland State did not have a single rape, liquor law offense or weapons violation on campus during that three-year period.

"Portland State appears to be this wonderful place where nothing happens," said Holly Davolt, coordinator of the campus escort service based at the Women's Union Resource Center.

Davolt has reason to suspect otherwise. The women's center in 1992 recorded 26 reports of public indecency or sexual harassment and reports of one assault, two robberies and two rapes on or near campus. Davolt said she worries every night she walks in the dark from campus to her apartment and breathes "a great

sigh of relief when I make it home."

So far this year, several serious crimes have been reported on or near the Portland State campus. In January, a man with a gun forced a woman to turn her car over to him after she parked it near campus.

Early in February, a woman was struck twice in the face and once in the chest by a man who walked into a women's locker room on campus. On Feb. 20, a woman fought off a man who attempted to rape her in Lincoln Hall.

Lindsay Desrocher, the university's vice president for finance and administration, said the brochure contains accurate statistics and reflects the presence of foot and bicycle patrols on campus.

A new federal law requires colleges and universities to publish an annual summary of major crimes on campus. But even security officials admit they have trouble drawing meaningful conclusions from the statistics.

They include only crimes that occur on property owned or controlled by the colleges and universities and that are handled by campus security.

Crimes that affect students on their way to and from campus are not reported, though most of Portland State's 18,000 students are commuters.

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— Jane Lesser,  
Oregon Student Lobby  
legislative director

Crimes reported by the 1,500 students living on the Portland State campus are handled by the Portland Police Bureau and appear on the university's annual crime report only if campus security learns about them.

The campus crime reporting law "is something new, and it is not perfect," said Greg Parker, spokesman for the Oregon State System of Higher Education.

Students worry universities are using the new crime reports to improve public relations rather than help students take wise precautions.

"It doesn't make students aware they should be taking precautions to be safe," said Jane Lesser, legislative director of the Oregon Student Lobby, which represents students at state colleges and universities.

Many Oregon colleges' crime reports

suggest students have little to fear. Some of them reported zero incidents of violent crime and few incidents of any other serious crimes in 1991.

Lewis and Clark College in Portland, for example, reported only one burglary.

Blue Mountain Community College and Western Baptist College reported no incidents of rape, robbery, aggravated assault, burglary or car theft, and no arrests for liquor, drug or weapons violations.

In the same categories, Central Oregon Community College reported only one car theft, Lane Community College reported one rape and one liquor violation, and Pacific University reported two burglaries and one liquor violation. Statewide, 31 public and private institutions of higher education collectively reported 16 rapes, 11 robberies and 69 assaults.

Western Oregon State College reported five rapes, where all other colleges and universities in the state reported two or less; 22 reported none. Western's high number probably resulted from efforts to encourage victims to report, said Lt. Brock Wallace of campus public safety.

Oregon State University reported 190 liquor violations, 38 assaults and 31 burglaries. The University reported only 14 liquor violations, but 50 burglaries.

## Three rescue woman before car catches fire

PORTLAND (AP) — Passing motorists pulled a woman from her overturned car just moments before the wreck burst into flames, but deputies say the woman has no memory of the accident or the three people who saved her life.

Deborah Cornelius-Poirier, 34, of Sandy was headed west on U.S. Highway 26 about 1:15 a.m. Sunday when she lost control of her car, the Multnomah County sheriff's office said.

The car rolled along the shoulder of the road, then ran nose first into a ditch, which flipped it upside down. The car slid another 135 feet on its roof before it came to rest against a bank beside the road, said Deputy Mark Mahsushima.

One of three people who stopped to help was an emergency room technician, who crawled into the wreck to check the driver's condition, Mahsushima said.

A fire broke out in the engine compartment, and when the passersby could not smother the fire with dirt, they pried open the car door and pulled Cornelius-Poirier to safety.

The woman was taken to Mount Hood Medical Center, where she was found to be uninjured.

"We couldn't believe it," Mahsushima said. "All she had was a couple of Band-Aid size cuts."

Cornelius-Poirier said she had no memory of the accident. "She thought she was driving home," Mahsushima said.

A breath test showed Cornelius-Poirier had a blood alcohol level of 0.22 percent, nearly three times the level at which a person is considered legally intoxicated in Oregon.

## Bill may lower legal alcohol level

SALEM (AP) — A bill to lower the blood alcohol level at which a driver is presumed to be drunk would make criminals out of social drinkers and do little to reduce traffic wrecks, opponents said Monday.

"The only effect of lowering the blood alcohol content is to put more drivers in legal jeopardy," said Michael McCallum, spokesman for the Oregon Restaurant Association.

But supporters of the bill said that even mild levels of intoxication can impair driving ability and increase the chance of accidents.

"The new, lower level will act as a deterrent to unsafe decisions to drive after drinking for many Oregonians," said Jane Aiken, a member of the Governor's Advisory Committee on DUII.

The testimony came as the Oregon Senate Judiciary Committee opened hearings on a bill to set the legal standard at 0.04 percent, half the current standard of 0.08 percent.

Officials say the 0.04 percent level, which would be the lowest in the country, amounts to two or three drinks in an hour for most people.

Paul Romain, spokesman for the Oregon Beer and Wine Distributors Association, said such an approach would give lawmakers the illusion that they're cracking down on drunken driving.

In fact, Romain said, it wouldn't have any impact on hard-core offenders who drive "like bullets" down the highways after drinking excessively.

"We're sitting here talking about the social drinker and nobody else," he said. "We would like to see you go after the real problem."

McCallum said Oregon and other states already have passed numerous laws cracking down on drunken driving and most people consider it socially unacceptable to drink and drive.

"The 0.04 plan is aimed more at curbing social drinking than at improving highway safety,"

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he said. "It would make casual, social drinkers fearful of being branded as criminals."

But John Tongue, a Tualatin physician who supports the bill, said there's growing evidence that even mild doses of alcohol impair driving ability and that lowering the blood alcohol limit would save lives.

"A 10 percent reduction in deaths and injuries overall I think is a conservative estimate," Tongue said.

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