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Police substation gets apathetic student review

■ SAFETY: Some students complain of lack of visible law enforcement presence at the 7-Eleven site

By Abe Estimada
Community Reporter

Pedestrians along East 13th Avenue are reacting to the police substation in the West University neighborhood with a mixture of indifference and opposition.

Local merchants, Sacred Heart Medical Center and the University welcomed the more visible police presence in the 7-Eleven parking lot, particularly after last summer when crowds of panhandlers and loiterers disrupted commerce.

The majority of students interviewed said not much has changed despite the presence of the substation, which was built seven weeks ago to serve them.

They also complained that they did not see much police activity from the substation.

"Having the station out here makes no difference," law student Stacy Hauser said. "I don't see any officers or cars parked out there.

But I can see the need for a station with crime and the murder at Dairy Queen last December."

Jim Foster, a religious studies major, said he still gets hit up for change.

"You see the police station, but you don't see the officers," Foster said. "Every 20 feet, you can still see large crowds. It's not uncommon to get hassled even within a few feet of the station."

Students such as Cindy Alverson joined Foster and Hauser in their complaint of groups of people hanging out in front of the businesses with no apparent purpose and the minimal impact the station has had on the problem.

"Somebody could be carrying a knife or screwed up on drugs," Alverson said. "But it does help having the cops around here."

"I know a lot of people who don't like the police, but they don't like the people crowding and blocking the sidewalk either."

E'an Todd, a senior majoring in English, called police enforcement tactics an outdated "Fort Apache approach of driving around in their cars."

"The police station doesn't do anything," Todd said. "Eugene police are still stuck in the '70s and not using the businesses here like they should be. They need to go to the businesses and find out exactly what is going on."

Just moments after giving his statement, an officer walked by.

"Well, there's one, but I haven't felt particularly intimidated walking around here," Todd said. "Today it's not so bad because the human gauntlet isn't here."

Male or female, almost all said they felt safer walking during the day and in groups regardless of the presence of a station.

The loiterers interviewed were unanimous in their opposition to the station.

"My friend got robbed at gunpoint last night," said Steve, who would only give his first name. "If the law is really here to help people, then stuff like that wouldn't happen.

I appreciate that they're here, but they're not really helping anybody."

Another street person, identifying himself as Malcolm, said he was getting picked on by police.

"I got a dog-at-large ticket, just for doing this," Malcolm demonstrated, dropping the leash and leaving his pet momentarily free.

"If you don't look like you have a nine to five job and you don't look like a normal college kid, the police are going to harass you," he said.

DO YOU FEEL SAFE ON 13TH AVENUE?

"Yeah, just because there are a lot of people. Since there are a lot of bars around, there are a lot more people. If I were a girl, I probably wouldn't feel safe."

— Tim Fernstrom
junior, Spanish major

"I feel totally safe. I feel like there is a camaraderie among the youth. We all look out for each other. It's like we're family out here. It's only when outside elements come in that it gets messy."

— Siva Sobieski
Rave promoter

"I feel safer here than anywhere else on campus because it's well lit and there's a lot of people around the bars. I feel safe, especially during the day."

— Emily Aanderud
freshman, pre-journalism major

"No, not if I were walking by myself. If I was with a guy or girl, I would. During the day, I don't mind walking around here unless there are a lot of hippies out."

— Kate Gillespie
junior, psychology

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Free service offers BEST business tutoring

■ TEAM: Bigger, better location gives students greater access to academic help

By Kari Hastings
Copy Chief

When Brandi Curtis, a junior pre-business major, began her accounting course in January, she knew she was in trouble.

"There's no discussion group, and there's about 200 people in the class, so you get no individual attention," Curtis said.

Searching for a solution, Curtis went to the business school office and asked about tutors.

The receptionist told her about the Braddock Education Success Team, or BEST, a free tutoring service for any undergraduate student taking a business course.

Curtis has been using BEST regularly for a month and has nothing but good things to say.

"I was flunking [accounting], but I'm feeling a lot better now," she said. "I'm not learning anything from my professor, so I really appreciate this service."

The 13 tutors that work for BEST find their work just as satisfying.

Todd Perry, a finance doctorate student, said he initially began tutoring for the money, but now finds it extremely rewarding because he can see students improving.

"The best thing is spending 20 minutes with students and having them say, 'Yeah! It all makes sense now,'" Perry said.

While everyone involved with BEST agrees it's a wonderful service, Perry said the word needs to get out.

"I know there are a lot of students out there that need help but aren't coming in," he said.

Part of the reason for this is that BEST was located in a tiny basement room in Gilbert last year. Last term though, it moved to a larger room across the hall from the business school office.

The new room has a large table, a dry-erase board and tutoring cubicles.

On the wall hangs a picture of Robert C. Braddock and his wife, Lois. Braddock, now deceased, founded the Braddock Charitable Foundation, based in San Jose, Calif., which is the beneficiary of BEST.

Braddock was a 1937 alumnus and a halfback for the football team at the University. After attaining a business degree, he moved to California and became wealthy through real-estate development.

His donations helped construct Autzen stadium, Casanova Center, Knight library and Chiles Hall. His foundation also contributes to athletic scholarships.

"[Starting the BEST program] was the last thing he did for the University," program coordinator Katie Cousins said.

The BEST tutoring service is available specifically for U.S. citizens, but the business school hired two tutors at the beginning of this year who only tutor international students.

Perry said Braddock saw U.S. students falling behind their international counterparts in competitiveness, and this prompted his endorsement of BEST.

The BEST tutoring service is available from 8 a.m. to 4 p.m. Monday through Friday in Room 273 Gilbert. For more information, call 346-3324 or e-mail to best@oregon.uoregon.edu.