

Students, faculty agree racism is still a problem at OSU

■ **CRIME:** Many believe that racial incidents often go unreported by students

The Associated Press

CORVALLIS — A year after Oregon State University students boycotted classes to protest a hate crime on campus, some minority students say racism has gone underground.

"Last year, there were a lot of incidents in the paper. It was just blatant racism going on," said

Tava McGinty, director of the Black Cultural Center at Oregon State. "It's different now in that things aren't so out in the open."

On Feb. 9, 1996, two white students urinated and spat on a black student while shouting racial slurs. Eric Hutchinson and Christopher Curry admitted the harassment, served short jail terms and were expelled.

About the same time, someone scrawled racial slurs on posters for a black student government candidate and publicity posters

for an appearance by Anita Hill.

This school year, no racial attacks have been reported to campus police or through calls to a university hotline.

But school officials are cautious about drawing any conclusions.

"People don't always report to the police," said Donella Lucero, manager of campus security services. "There's a lot of reluctance because they don't know how they'll be treated or perceived or what will happen. So we only get a percentage of what the real ac-

tivity is."

Melanie Bonnichsen, co-chair of the President's Commission on the Prevention of Hate-Related Activity, said a lack of major incidents doesn't necessarily mean nothing happened.

"I think that means [the incidents] aren't recognized or people don't know where to go to report them," she said.

McGinty and other black student leaders are holding a forum Thursday to look at the current racial climate on campus.

Larry Roper, vice-provost for student affairs, said last year's well-publicized incidents detracted from the university's efforts to promote diversity and tolerance.

"We're working very hard in that regard," he said. "I would never say we're doing enough. But the perception was we weren't doing anything."

In recent years, Oregon State has created the president's commission and an Office of Minority Affairs.

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For more information, see pages 107 in the spring UO Schedule of Classes.



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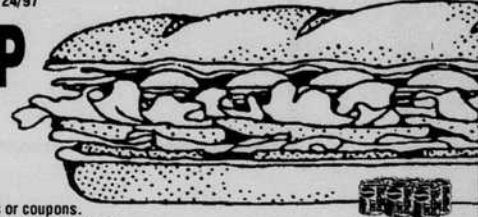
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