



WENDY FULLER/Emerald

University officials participate in a campus crime teleconference in which a five-person panel discusses factual data about crimes on campus.

Officials discuss crime on campus

College representatives talked about ways to decrease campus crime during a teleconference

By Jesse Sowa
Community Reporter

A variety of crime problems continue to plague colleges and universities across the nation, but the solutions to those problems are not easily found, several higher education instructors and administrators said Monday during a campus crime teleconference.

During the teleconference, titled "Protecting Your Campus from Crime: Challenges and Solutions," which was based in Vermont and shown on the University campus, a five-person panel of college officials discussed factual data about campus crimes, federal laws pertaining to campus crime, compliance with campus crime laws and effective security and public safety programs on campuses.

Tom Hicks, associate director of the University's Office of Public Safety, was in charge of the teleconference in Studio D of the Instructional Media Center. A significant part of the discussion was

based on the Accuracy in Campus Crime Reporting Act of 1997, federal legislation proposed in March that looks to change some of the ways campus safety is dealt with.

The legislation includes a plan to increase the number of crime reports campus police provide to the public and media. Another aspect of the legislation supports continued confidentiality for crime victims.

S. Daniel Carter, vice president of Security on Campus, Inc., a group that created the crime reporting act, said college students on their own for the first time coupled with the infusion of alcohol is not good news.

He also said the increasing number of enrolled students over the past five to 10 years has led to a higher crime rate on campuses. Carter said increases in violent crime and property crime have occurred during the same time period.

Art Otey, the director of public safety at Maryville University in St. Louis, Mo., said most crime at Maryville is property crime, and the crime rate is worse than 10 years ago. However, more people are now reporting crimes than in the past.

"It is the greater society that has changed," said Bernie Pleskoff, dean of campus life at Loyola University in Chicago. "People bring those problems you would see in our neighborhoods [20 years ago]."

Otey also said many more people are now making less money, which he said he believes makes them desperate.

University of Ottawa administrator Yvon McNicoll said many thieves target university property, which he said he believes to be a problem at most schools.

Pleskoff said there is also the issue of everyone pitching in to solve the problem.

"Everybody has a job to do," he said. "We need to come to grips with that."

The level of drinking and the steadily decreasing age of those drinking is also considered a problem.

Dr. Rosalind Andreas, an assistant professor and special assistant to the chair for Partnership Development Programs in the College of Education and Social Services at the University of Vermont, said some students in elementary and high schools now "have well-established patterns of binge drinking."

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