

EMU: Manager says theft, vandalism are problems

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said he worries about the safety of students and staff who remain in the building after hours.

Although the EMU officially closes at midnight, student groups such as KWVA campus radio and the Oregon Daily Emerald continue working in the building after hours every night. Other groups frequently request permission to work on special projects in their offices after midnight.

Miller said the ability for students to use the building after hours is one of the things that

makes the EMU unique. "It's rare to have a student union that allows access to students after hours," he said. "It's also rare to have student offices open at the desire of the occupants."

However, while he considers the EMU's accessibility an asset, Miller is concerned about the safety risks. Late at night when the building is mostly empty, staff and students who stay late are at risk from people who may be hiding in the building, such as the couple arrested by OPS.

Because the EMU is open to the public all day, anyone can enter the building. Students of all ages as well as professors and staff members use the building, so it is impossible to distinguish between people who need to be there and people who are there to sleep or hide out.

"This is a large public building, and many people feel very comfortable being here," Miller said. "We're an ideal target. It's easy to look normal in this building."

Winitzky agreed. "It's not a tough building to get into. There are so many places for people to hide, where they can duck in and hang out and wait for the building to close."

Another part of the safety problem is that so many keys to the building are given out that it is difficult to keep track of them all. Because there is no established method of ensuring the return of these keys, some of them, which date as far back as the 1970s,

have been declared lost and may still access some doors. There is no way to know who may now be in possession of these keys.

In addition, the building's 78 exterior doors are frequently left propped open with newspaper or tape over the locks, and sometimes they are merely overlooked when the building is being closed for the evening. For instance, on May 1, the loading dock door and a kitchen door in the Skylight were found unlocked by custodians, Miller said.

"If someone leaves the building and doesn't close a door properly, everyone in the building is at risk," he added.

Kraiman, who is often in the building during late hours, said he continually finds people who shouldn't be there who say they have gotten in through an unlocked or propped-open door. Although he has never felt personally threatened by those people, he is concerned about the students on his staff who work late hours. "I don't like the idea of them being subjected to that," he said.

OPS has been quick to respond to problems in the EMU, Winitzky emphasized. When they receive a call, "their turnaround time is minutes." However, because the graveyard crew responds to calls all over campus, they may not always be immediately available.

Students as well as staff members have noticed safety prob-

lems in the EMU.

"Students have complained that they're scared, and they wouldn't use places [in the EMU] because they felt [those places] had become a habitat for non-students," Miller said. Some of the areas mentioned were the International Lounge, the Taylor Lounge, the second-floor lobby and the Skylight.

Former ASUO President Bill Miner said he, too, is concerned with the safety of students who stay late in the EMU.

"As a man, I feel pretty safe. But I have a lot of female staff members, especially people who stay after dark, and I don't feel safe for them," he said. "I know that in the past we've had some incidences of female students being harassed in the EMU at night." Miner added that he is not aware of any harassment taking place this school year.

At KWVA, DJs who work at night are instructed to take certain safety measures, said hip hop director Eugene Chism. "We always keep the door locked," he explained. "We're not supposed to let anyone in, and we can't prop the door open."

Chism said while he has never felt physically unsafe, he has received threatening phone calls and has seen people "snooping around" the EMU.

Thus far, no one has ever been attacked and physically injured in the EMU that Miller is aware of, he said. However, theft has

been a security problem in the building. Miller estimates that within the past 12 months, a big screen television was stolen from the recreation center, four or five computers were taken from student offices and several backpacks and video cameras have disappeared from various areas.

Winitzky also mentioned that he has seen an increasing amount of graffiti and property defacement, especially in bathrooms and stairwells.

"Six or seven years ago, I spent several hundred dollars a year on graffiti removal and property damage," he said. "Last year I spent about \$6,000." The money comes directly out of the EMU facilities budget, he added.

Although the EMU board is looking at ways to increase the building's security, such as a new key system, these measures are expensive and could be a long way off, Miller said. In the meantime, students can help reduce theft and safety problems in the EMU by merely being aware of their surroundings.

Students who stay late should remain in their office as much as possible, should never walk around the building alone and should always keep their office door locked, he said. And if they see anything out of the ordinary, they shouldn't hesitate to report it.

"Good awareness has averted potential problems in the past," Winitzky said. "We need all the eyes and ears we can get."

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Plan: Implement may take several years

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our faculty and staff, but also on resources," according to the proposal.

Georgeanne Cooper, a member of one solution teams, said the project was and will continue to be beneficial for many.

"The whole process was fun," she said. "It enabled parts of the University and community to come together for solutions. This needs to continue through implementation and beyond."

The goals created in the Process for Change project are not necessarily new. The University's mission statement says the "University is a community of scholars dedicated to the highest standards of academic inquiry, learning and service."

It also describes the University's commitment to undergradu-

ate education, with the "goal of helping the individual learn to question critically, think logically, communicate clearly, act creatively and live ethically," and the University's commitment to graduate education to "develop creators and innovators who will generate new knowledge and shape experience for the benefit of the community."

The Process for Change project accompanies the Governor's Task Force on Higher Education and the Economy, which has "recommended significant changes in both the governance and the finance of higher education to make it better able to respond to the needs of students and the state."

For more information on Process for Change, visit the University's Web site at www.uoregon.edu.

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