

Vandalism

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Students suffer in other ways, as well. To protect the building and the students in it, EMU director Dusty Miller has increased security, limiting student use of some parts of the building.

International Lounge

After several incidents of vandalism in the International Lounge, Miller recently decided to close the lounge after 5 p.m. and during weekends.

Near the beginning of winter term, somebody slashed a sofa cushion and pried a brass strip from the front of the fireplace. Past vandals have also urinated on the lounge's bookshelves.

The vandalism usually happens after hours, when staff is minimal, Miller said.

Adeline Chin, president of the Malaysian Student Association, is aware that because of its remote second-floor location on the north end of the EMU, accessible by only one stairwell, the International Lounge can be unsafe.

"The place is pretty secluded, and it's generally a pretty dangerous place to be alone," she said. "I wouldn't want to be there alone at night."

But the members of her group like to get together there in the evening, when everyone is finished with work and classes.

"Now we have to find somewhere else," Chin said. "A lot of students go there in the evening and sit around. A lot of students are asking why [the lounge] is closed."

Chin believes the lounge should remain open in spite of the vandalism.

"I don't know if students are causing it, but it's rather unfair for other students to have to suffer be-

cause of their actions," she said.

Miller agrees that the evening closure of the lounge is a painful loss to students.

"It's not something we like to do; the student union is supposed to be open," Miller he said. "I would love to find a way that would allow the building to be both open and safe for people and things."

Miller has asked the EMU Board, which makes monetary and policy decisions for the building, to brainstorm ways to protect the lounge while keeping it open. EMU Board chair Robin Nelson referred the issue to the board's House Committee at a meeting Wednesday.

"We wanted to make sure this issue got dealt with," Nelson said. "Right now, [closing the lounge] is one of the better ways to deal with the problem, although it's not the best way. Everybody should have access. This is a student union, and it's here to serve students."

House chair Bryan Myss said he plans to get the lounge reopened quickly. The committee will meet Wednesday, and Myss hopes it will formulate a plan he can present to the board the following week.

The committee will talk to student groups who use the lounge frequently to find out if anyone has seen anything that might help the board make its decision, Myss said.

"I would like to get it open, but I don't mind keeping it closed until we find out what's happening," he said. "It's not worth having it damaged to keep it open."

The EMU Board has also begun looking at the building's overall security, Nelson said. A subcommittee has been placed in charge of formulating a building access policy, which would determine who may enter the EMU after closing hours.

Vandalism on campus

Although graffiti constantly pops up all over the building, Winitzky doesn't believe the EMU is singled out for vandalism over other buildings on campus.

"I think if you talked to other building users, such as housing or athletics, you would hear a lot of the same things," he said. "I don't think we're targeted. It just happens. It's unfortunate."

Bob Beals, director of facilities and events operations for the athletic department, said although the athletic facilities do attract their share of graffiti, "it could be a lot worse."

Campus buildings such as McArthur Court and Esslinger get hit harder than Autzen Stadium and the Casanova Center, which are located across the Willamette River, he said. Graffiti extends from Esslinger to Mac Court and the iron gate around Howe Field, sometimes even reaching into the baseball dugouts.

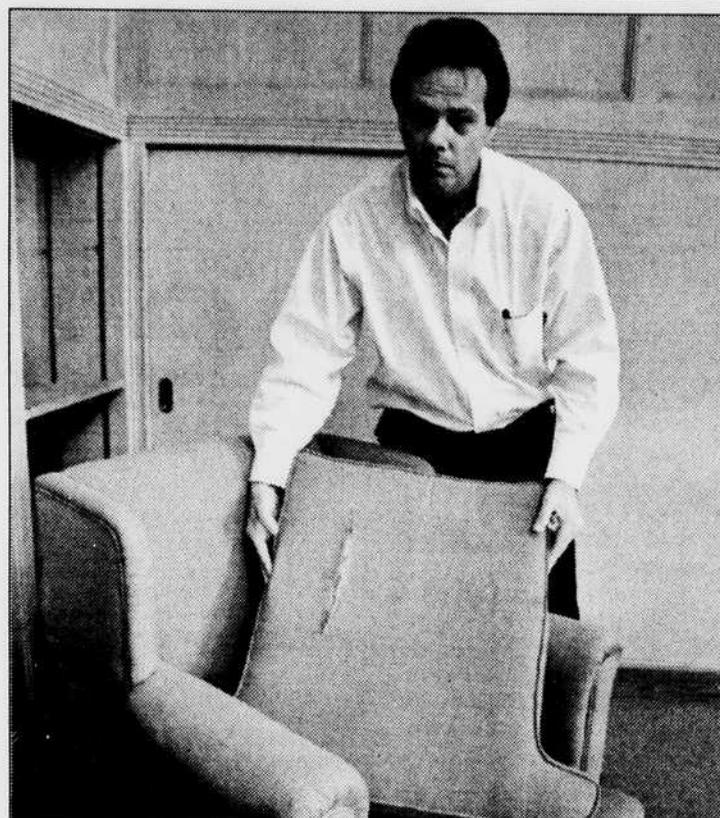
In addition, Mac Court has a history of break-ins through the doors on the cemetery side.

To solve the problem, Beals had the handles removed from those doors so people cannot yank them and snap the locks.

"Unlike the student union, Mac Court is an event center, so it's only open when staff is there to take tickets and open the doors," Beals explained. "I hope it will help; we'll only know over time."

Residence halls also receive their share of vandalism, although this year has been a lot better than usual, said Bonita Damewood, University Housing's custodial services manager.

Gang-related graffiti is the most common form of damage, but van-



Scott Barnett/Emerald

EMU facilities manager Dana Winitzky points out a cushion that was slashed in the International Lounge. The lounge has been the target of vandalism more than once.

dalism in past years has ranged from furniture being thrown off balconies to torn-off parking meters left in urinals.

"This year, there is a little more enforcement of policies, procedures and conduct," Damewood said. "We have more [resident assistants] than we have in the past."

Although the EMU is not necessarily a target for vandals, Beals believes the building is more susceptible to vandalism than others because it is open later.

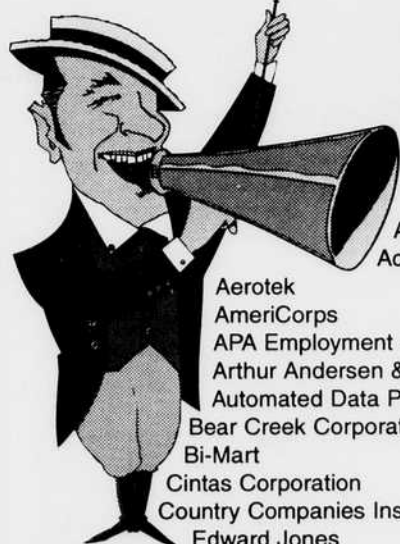
Miller hopes the EMU Board will come up with a way to better protect areas such as the International Lounge, which is vulnerable during late hours.

"I'm sure we could find a better way to spend the money it costs to reupholster furniture and buy brass that must be around 50 years old," he said. "It hurts to waste money and time. Now one of the nicest and quietest places on campus is locked up because people didn't treat it right."

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