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Rankings

continued from page 1A

work experience and discharge of civic duties also matter, she said. Law school administrators say they are trying to defuse some of the competitive elements of law school and build student-to-student interaction to help each student succeed.

The Academic Choice for Excellence program for first-year students, now in its third year, is "designed to promote community," said Assistant Dean for Student Affairs Richard Ludwick. He said students learn to work together

through bi-weekly formalized study sessions and casual mixers during the law school's orientation week before fall classes.

"The law curriculum does not often lend itself to [community building], though the pedagogy is changing," Ludwick said. "So we make an extra effort to build community here."

He added that mixing among students here at the University "tends to be more collegial and kinder" than at other law schools, even in simple gestures. Last year, students brought in doughnuts for classmates and sent out reminders

on key deadlines.

Third-year student David Floren, who said he was near the top fifth of his class his first year, said class ranking is "something to be concerned about, but not worried."

Although his ranking has helped him search for jobs, he said using the system is a handy tool only to an extent.

"It's a natural advantage in hiring. But that's all it is — an advantage — and you can lose that advantage easily. People with no social skills are discriminated against in the workforce, no matter how well they know their stuff," Floren said.

Profiling

continued from page 1A

the official survey will be analyzed by Vik Gumbhir, a Graduate Teaching Fellow with the Oregon Survey Research Laboratory at the University. The data collection has already cost the police department about \$15,000.

State Rep. Vicki Walker, D-Eugene, introduced a bill against racial profiling during the last legislative session. She said the EPD was doing the right thing in acting on complaints.

"I think it's fabulous," she said. "Eugene is working very hard to overcome the perception they're engaging in racial profiling."

Walker's bill to combat racial profiling was later signed into law, but as a different version. The law asks state law enforcement agencies to incorporate language against racial profiling into their mission statements and set up a committee to help fund police forces establishing a survey like the EPD's.

Walker said in her work on the issue, she heard from several students and community members in Eugene who accused the EPD of racial profiling.

"It's a multicultural University,

and I've heard complaints from people of Middle Eastern and Indian origin," she said, adding that people of other races also complained.

But Walker said all those complaints were anecdotal, so it is good that the EPD is conducting the survey to see whether there is any truth to them.

"I think it's great," she said. "I'm really excited about it."

ASUO Vice President Joy Nair also said the survey is a good step, but she offered more tempered enthusiasm.

In her work with the University's Multicultural Center and other student groups, Nair said she has campaigned against racial profiling. She said the ASUO discussed the survey during a recent meeting, and while many on her staff have "some doubts about the motivations and the effectiveness" of the EPD's actions, they all still agreed it was a good first step.

"When we started to really analyze it, we decided some data collection is better than none," she said.

Nair added that as the year progresses, the ASUO will remain active on the issue and will respond to what the EPD discovers in its survey.

Now that the EPD has begun its

data collection, it joins many other law enforcement agencies already analyzing their traffic stops.


Sgt. Scott Miller, a patrol supervisor with the Oregon State Police, said the agency has been conducting a survey for a year. He said the OSP uses codes in its reports to identify age, race and gender and has not changed any departmental policy since it started to keep track.

"In case somebody questions us, we can say, 'Look at this, we're not harassing anyone,'" he said.

However, the time and cost of equipment needed to conduct a survey have kept some agencies from beginning a program like the EPD's.

"It really comes down to a question of stretching resources," said Capt. Bret Freeman, the police services commander with the Lane County Sheriff's Office.

He said the sheriff's office has an "active internal affairs" division that investigates any complaints against the office and will be incorporating some of the EPD's tracking software into a joint computer system it shares with the EPD and the Springfield Police Department.



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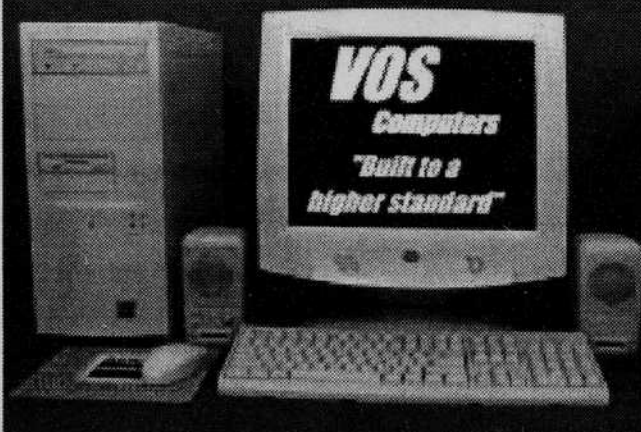
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