

Assault prevention group looks for recruits

The University's Yellow Jackets Volunteer Program will be looking for new volunteers during Week of Welcome this fall

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Family/Health/Education Reporter

They won't sting you. These Yellow Jackets are actually here to help.

The University's Yellow Jackets Volunteer Program, an assault prevention group made of students, faculty and staff, will begin recruiting in the fall during Week of Welcome.

The program began in the middle of spring term after a rash of assaults against female students occurred around campus.

Volunteers patrol campus in pairs, equipped with flashlights, radios and their signature yellow coats. The program's participants and creators agreed to the policy that volunteers are not meant to intervene during a crisis situation, they are meant to be the eyes and ears of the University.

Director of Public Safety Tom Fitzpatrick, of the Department of Public Safety, said the idea was based on a neighborhood watch, and the mere

presence of uniformed patrollers might be enough to help deter future attacks on students. DPS, along with the LGBTQA, and Alpha Phi Omega, a service organization, were some of the groups instrumental in jump-starting the program, Vice President for Student Affairs Anne Leavitt said.

Some said the Yellow Jackets program might be a better alternative.

"I just feel the campus community would be better served by preventative measures rather than policing measures," University student Shane Cudihy told the Emerald on March 12.

The Yellow Jackets serve a different purpose.

"We look for any suspicious activity," Yellow Jackets student coordinator Meghan Madden said. "We also escort students on campus or if people are alone they can walk up and ask for an escort."

Madden said their bright uniform attracted a few jeers while the pairs went out on their shifts, but overall people have been grateful for their presence, and support the program.

Madden added in spring term, the program could not fill all the time slots, so volunteers had to do double

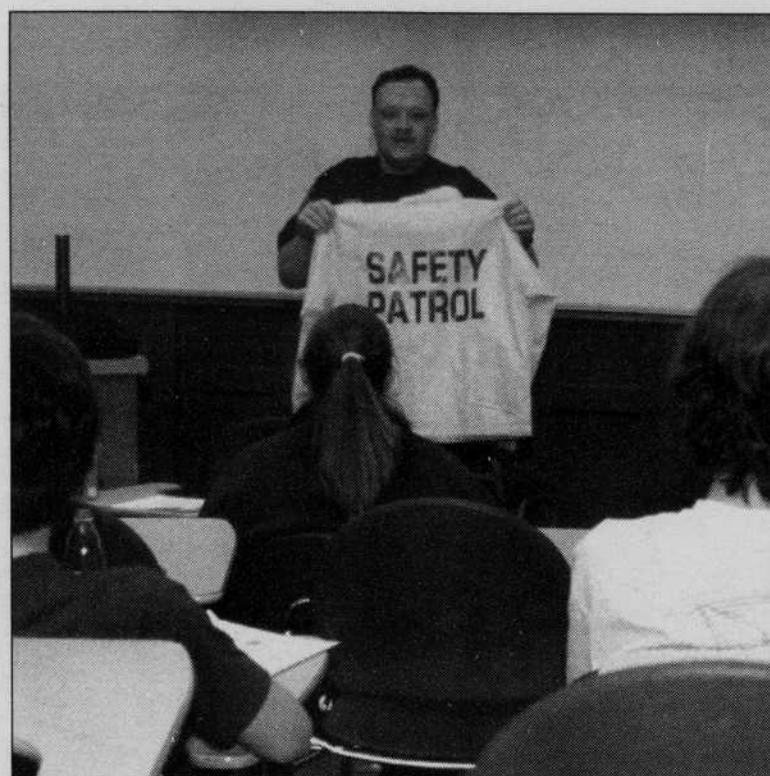
shifts. About a dozen people helped kick off the program, but it had grown to 25 by the end of spring term, she said. Madden said the small turnout probably was because of timing.

She hopes that by beginning of fall term, the group will have an easier time recruiting people. Madden said getting 100 people involved is the goal.

Night Ride, the co-ed version of Saferide (a women-only assault prevention service), which began this summer, offers another means of keeping students safe. The group's existence began in response to complaints of violations of the 1972 Title IX Higher Education Acts this past year. Title IX stipulates that women and men should have equal access to services. Night Ride is aimed primarily at the lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender and minority population, as these groups are often victims of hate crimes.

Night Ride will also be recruiting volunteers for the fall.

Contact the news reporter at jilliandaley@dailyemerald.com.



Emerald

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