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DPS

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As a result of the accident, Saylor has placed the involved officer — who she said has no record of previous disciplinary action in his three years with the department — on administrative leave, paid unless she uncovers evidence of wrongdoing on the officer's part. She said that this is the standard action when a motor vehicle accident occurs between an officer and a community member.

Saylor estimated that the investigation to "evaluate how reasonable the officer's actions were" will take no longer than two weeks.

"It's a very serious matter with us that an employee ended up having contact, or having an accident with a community member," she said, adding that whenever it happens, DPS always conducts an investigation to determine fault.

If Saylor's investigation shows the officer intentionally hit the biker or grossly violated DPS policy, it could result in dismissal. She said the only time an officer would be allowed to use their vehicle to hit a subject is if it is to "provide protection for themselves."

The original 911 call to EPD came in at 3:59 a.m. from DPS, reporting that there was a bicycle accident. Glenn Potter, a public information officer with the Eugene Fire Department, said a fire engine was sent to check on the subject. Fire department personnel checked him, but Saylor said the man refused transportation to the hospital.

According to police records, a "bicyclist ran into a DPS vehicle," but no officers responded.

At 4:07 a.m. a second 911 call came through requesting police assistance. The police responded with two units, EPD Public Information Specialist Kerry Delf said. After officers arrived, the man was prohibited from returning to campus.

Saylor said she plans to rescind the trespassing order until she can consult with the officer to determine whether there was any basis for banning the subject from campus.

Senior multimedia design major Chris Birke, who was on his way home, said he witnessed the incident.

Birke, noting that it was extremely dark at the time, said he was about 25 feet away, on a walkway between Columbia and Pacific halls. He said he saw the vehicle make a sharp right turn and slam into the suspect, throwing him off the bike and into rocks in a nearby flower bed. Birke estimated the vehicle was traveling 10-15 mph.

"He just gets smacked by a DPS truck," Birke said. "It sounded like a car door slamming. He flew about two or three feet and landed in the rocks. There's blood on his face. The woman is handcuffing him; he was really dazed."

Birke said the subject had blood streaming from his nose and a bruise on his face. Birke added that he wasn't sure whether the officer intended to hit the man, whom Birke said appeared to be in his early 20s.

"Honestly, I think it was an accident," he said. "But (DPS) set the stage for an accident."

Officers didn't notice Birke until sometime after the collision, at which point he said he was detained, questioned and released. Birke said he was told by an officer at the scene there was a second subject involved.

When Birke went to the DPS office later that morning to "make a report," he said he was again questioned. Birke said he was told by an officer, believed to be Brian Frances, that the second subject returned to the scene and was arrested for theft.

When asked about a second subject, Saylor said, "It's all stuff that's under investigation" and that she couldn't comment.

The DPS media log confirmed only that officers were investigating a single suspicious subject at the time of the collision.

Saylor said the last time such a collision occurred was in the 1980s, when a bicyclist rode into the back of a parked DPS vehicle on East 13th Avenue in front of Johnson Hall.

Jared Paben is a freelance reporter for the Emerald.

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