

EPD report shows disparity in traffic violations

EPD officers were asked to complete a survey after traffic stops to help identify and prevent racial profiling

By A. Sho Ikeda
Senior News Reporter

A preliminary report on vehicle stops released by the Eugene Police Department on Aug. 12 reveals that nearly twice as many men than women were pulled over by officers for traffic violations. But whether race and ethnicity play a larger role than gender in traffic stops is uncertain.

The results of the first-ever analysis of police traffic stops in Eugene show that black drivers were pulled over at a more frequent rate than other races based on their percentage of the population. White drivers made up the largest portion of traffic stops, most likely because the majority of Eugene's population is white, according to the report. Asian drivers were pulled over the least, and less frequently than any other minority.

Blacks and Latinos also experience longer traffic stops on average than

those of white and Asian drivers.

The study's author, Vikas Gumbhir, a University graduate student working toward a Ph.D. in sociology, said people shouldn't jump to conclusions based on the study. The data reflects one year worth of analysis, and the report stated discrimination is only one of many possibilities that could explain the differences in treatment of drivers.

"Whether racial profiling is happening or not is too much to ask from this data," Gumbhir said. "I don't think this data alone is enough to prove either way."

EPD interim Police Chief Thad Buchanan said in an e-mail to the Racial Profiling Task Group that the issue is more complicated than it appeared on the surface.

"The community wanted to know what our traffic stop data looked like," Buchanan said. "Now we have something to show."

The report is built on data gathered between January 2002 and December 2002 and is based on 17,871 stops conducted by EPD officers. Officers were asked to fill out a 19-item survey on custom-printed machine-readable forms af-

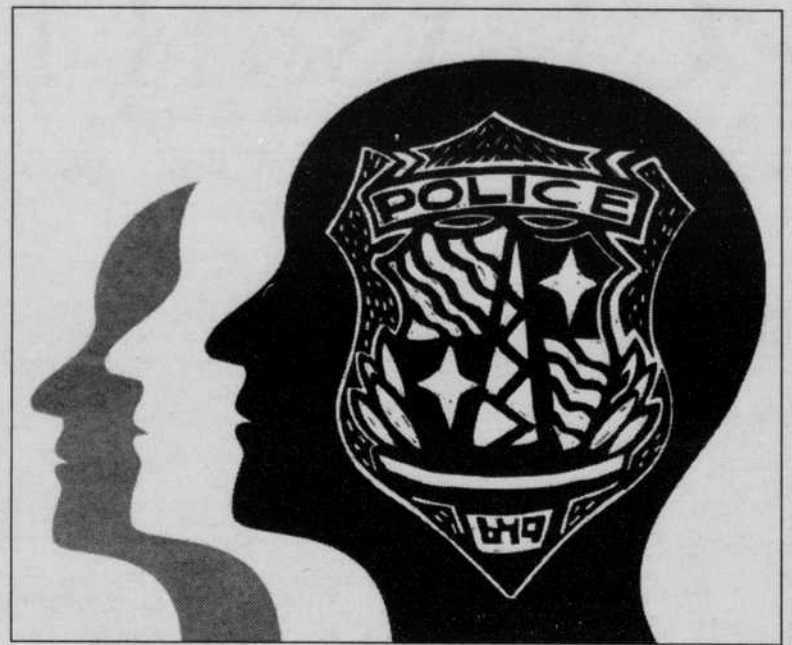
ter a traffic stop. Completed survey cards were then scanned into a database, and the resulting data was checked against the cards for errors and omissions.

EPD estimates that cards were completed for 78 percent of stops.

The majority of traffic stops — 89.3 percent — involved white drivers. Approximately 87.3 percent of Eugene's population is white. Latino drivers, making up 4.3 percent of the population, were involved in 4.3 percent of all stops. Black drivers comprised 2.4 percent of all stops and form 1.1 percent of the population. Asian drivers, while comprising 3.7 percent of the population, were the subjects of 2.3 percent of all stops. In 13.4 percent of all stops the officer formed an opinion on the driver's race before the stop and of those drivers, 90.8 percent were white.

Latino and black drivers were more likely to be searched than white drivers but were less likely to experience enforcement such as receiving a citation. However, Latino and black drivers were more likely to be arrested compared to white drivers.

Most traffic stops resulted from traffic violations such as speeding. How-



Adelle Lennox Design Editor

ever, more black and Latino males than white males were stopped because the officer had pre-existing knowledge of a warrant, a suspended

or revoked license, or other reasons.

Contact the city/state politics reporter at shoikeda@dailyemerald.com.

TASK FORCE

continued from page 6

She said the group was trying to determine whether changes could be made to the University's Student Conduct Code in order to discourage students from rioting or committing other crimes.

The task force progress report also

suggested adding more lighting in the neighborhood, offering a tax exemption to those who build new housing and increasing police presence.

In August, the Eugene Police Department introduced a bike patrol officer to the West University neighborhood in order to enhance policing of the area. Officer Rob Clowers patrols the neighborhood from 11th Avenue to 19th Avenue and

from Kincaid Street to High Street.

Clowers said he also checks up on residences that have purchased kegs of beer with information provided by the Oregon Liquor Control Commission. The officer said he checked on 30 kegs the first weekend of fall term.

"Things had been really quiet up until last week," Clowers said, adding that he issued several minor in pos-

session violations, responded to several large parties and also caught a suspected burglar. Clowers said the majority of problems didn't generally arise from older University students, but mostly incoming freshman, non-students and visitors from Corvallis and Portland.

"Some freshmen even asked me for directions to a party," Clowers said.

The task force meets again on Nov. 6 where people will be elected to serve on the board of the West University Neighborhood Association. For more information concerning the West University Neighborhood Association, contact Steve Norris at 682-5009.

Contact the city/state politics reporter at shoikeda@dailyemerald.com.

University Health Center

Health Promotion Opportunities:

Relax & Renew:

Free six week series designed to develop and strengthen your meditation practice for relaxation and mental clarity. Wednesdays 4:30 pm - 5:30 pm, October 15th - November 19th. Call 346-4456 to register.

Total Cholesterol Screening:

Every Tuesday from 9:30 - 11:30 am you can get free total cholesterol screening. Simply check in at the Health Education room on the first floor of the Health Center.

Lending Library:

Excellent books are available for loan to UO students from the Health Education room in the Health Center. There you will also find health related newsletters, articles, and pamphlets. Just stop by.

Guest Speakers and Presentations:

Peer Health Educators and Health Center Staff are available to speak to your organization on any of the listed health issues as well as others. Call us for details.

Tobacco Cessation Support:

Meet with a peer health educator to discuss strategies to become tobacco free. Nicotine gum, patches and Quit Kits free to all registered students. Call 346-4456 to set up an appointment with a peer educator to discuss options.

Topics Addressed:

HIV/AIDS, Nutrition, Alcohol, Sexuality, Tobacco, Cholesterol, Eating Disorders, Fitness, Stress, Relationships, Weight Management.

Visit our calendar for program offerings:

<http://healthed.uoregon.edu/calendar/> or call 346-4456

Brought to you by
the Health Education Program
at the University Health Center



UNIVERSITY OF OREGON
University Health Center

Oregon Daily Emerald. A campus tradition — over 100 years of publication.