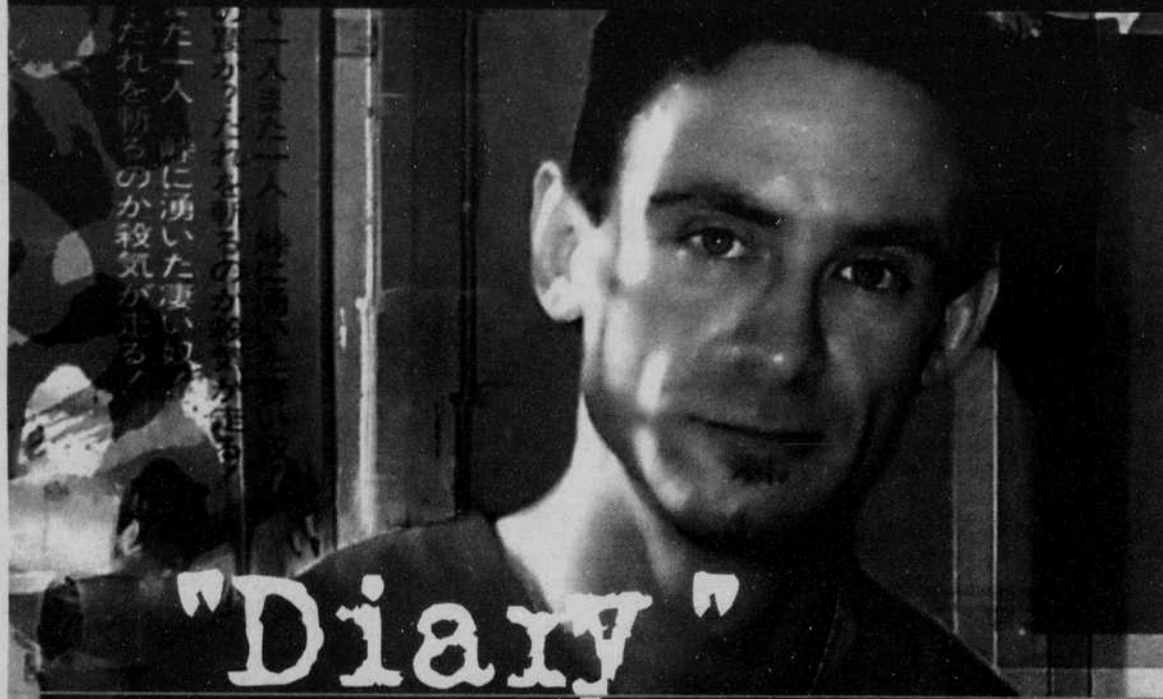


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DPS Interim Director Tom Hicks (left), EPD campus liaison Sgt. Kris Martes and Assault Prevention Shuttle PR Coordinator Sarah Wells discuss how their organizations and the student body are closely related at a public safety forum on Thursday.

Public safety forum addresses concerns

About 200 students came to the ASUO-held forum to ask questions and voice their concerns about safety

By Chad Kreiger
Freelance Reporter

The ASUO held a public safety forum on Friday where nearly 200 students were able to voice their concerns to about a dozen panelists representing different community and campus groups, including the Department of Public Safety and the West University Task Force.

ASUO Campus Outreach Coordinator Shannon Tarvin said all the issues raised at the meeting would be recorded by the ASUO and worked on for effective change.

"We're not going to forget about this tomorrow," Tarvin said.

One student asked Richie Weinman, a member of the West Neighborhood Task Force, why Eugene doesn't have a housing code, noting that the city of Corvallis does.

Weinman said a housing code would be expensive because of enforcement costs and inspections. He questioned where the funding for a housing code would come from and said "a lot of the problem is lack of maintenance."

Weinman also expressed concern about campus riots, calling them a "really big deal for the city" and a "stupid waste of resources at a time when we are broke." He encouraged students to walk away from any scene that could potentially become a riot.

"Don't stand and watch it," he said.

DPS Interim Director Tom Hicks addressed the concern that a lack of communication exists between students and campus officers.

"If a person feels that they were

not treated respectfully ... we will have a process for the person to meet with the officer one-on-one to work out the disagreement," he said.

Several students were confused about the appeals process for parking citations. Hicks said in order to appeal a citation, a petition must be filled out at the petitions office, which is located at the DPS office. If the problem is not resolved, the appeals board can address the particular officer's decision. After that, there are no further appeals.

A large portion of the forum was dedicated to sexual assault awareness. Eugene Police Department Sgt. Kris Martes said the University is a "target-rich environment" for sexual assaults.

Hicks said about 75 percent of sexual assaults involve alcohol.

When students asked for legal definitions of sexual assault, Sexual Assault Prevention project coordinator Megan Thompson told audience members not to worry about legal definitions.

She said the authorities should be notified immediately if a student believes he or she has been sexually assaulted.

Hicks said efforts to decrease incidents of sexual assault include increased visible patrol, more interaction between officers and residential hall complex directors, emergency phones and improved lighting on campus.

University student Nathan Kamesar felt the forum could have been held in a better facility where "more intimate questions" and "more relations between campus security and students" would be encouraged.

Chad Kreiger is a freelance reporter for the Emerald.

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