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## Caller: New policies aim to protect students from fraud

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asking inappropriate personal questions, offering to pay people \$400 or \$500 for a two-hour study and calling as late as 11:30 p.m.

In one call, the caller identified his supervisor as Dr. Suiter, Cromer said. There is no Dr. Suiter in the University psychology department or in any other department at the University.

"It's very hard to figure out what the person's motivation would be in doing this," Moses said.

Legitimate researchers never call late at night or pay study participants more than \$7 to \$10 per hour, Cromer said.

Cromer said most of the affected students are not psychology majors, although they are mostly female.

"It's not just a psychology problem," Cromer said. "It's a campus-wide problem."

All psychology faculty, as well as graduate and undergraduate students who perform research under the supervision of faculty members, have been informed of the situation.

"People are kind of surprised and disturbed that this is going on," Moses said. "It's a disturbing thing for the students who are receiving these calls, and it has the potential to negatively affect the legitimate research that's actually going on in the psychology department."

One relief for the department, Cromer said, was that the caller does not seem to have infiltrated the security of the Human Subjects Pool Web site, which students in psychology and linguistics classes use to sign up to participate in studies for class credit.

"He seems to be using the phone book, basically," Cromer said.

The psychology department dealt with similar difficulties in April when a man was arrested for impersonating a psychology professor. Moses said the man derailed a student's graduation plan by promising her she could do her honors research project in his non-existent lab.

Despite that, Moses said incidents like this have not happened before during his 13 years with the psychology department.

"Very likely, it's just a random occurrence," Moses said.

Cromer dismissed the possibility that the calls could be perpetrated by someone inside the psychology department because of the caller's

transparent tactics and ignorance of department policies.

"Is it a research assistant having some fun? I think that's highly improbable," Cromer said.

The Institutional Review Board must approve every study involving human subjects that takes place at the University. Juliana Kyrk, Institutional Review Board program officer for the Office for the Protection of Human Subjects, said that about one third of the University's studies involving human subjects come from the psychology department.

Other departments conducting studies with human subjects include political science, human physiology, anthropology, geography and the College of Education.

Kyrk said all study participants must be told the following before they participate: who is doing the research, what the research involves, how long the study will last, how confidentiality will be maintained, who to contact with questions about the study, the rights provided by the Institutional Review Board, that participation in the study is voluntary and that they may refuse to participate in the study.

"It must be voluntary and noncoercive," Kyrk said. "The participant always has the right to discontinue participation at any time."

Cromer said that if a student who is not currently enrolled in classes that are part of the Human Subjects Pool or if that student has not signed up to participate in one of the paid psychological studies advertised in campus locations receives a phone call about a psychological study, he or she is probably being contacted in error. She recommended requesting the caller's phone number and calling back the next day to ensure that the study is legitimate. Moses also recommended writing down anything that appears on a phone's caller ID.

Moses said any students receiving phone calls that sound inappropriate from someone posing as a psychological researcher should contact him (346-4918 or [moses@uoregon.edu](mailto:moses@uoregon.edu)) or the Department of Public Safety (346-6666).

Contact the business, science and technology reporter at [esylywester@dailyemerald.com](mailto:esylywester@dailyemerald.com)

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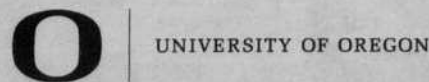
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## Gay rights activists target House speaker

TROUTDALE, Ore. — This quiet, tourism-oriented town east of Portland could become a battleground as gay rights activists prepare a campaign to topple a Republican legislative leader who thwarted a move to allow civil unions for same-sex couples.

Troutdale is in the heart of the district represented by GOP House Speaker Karen Minnis, who enraged gay rights backers this summer by refusing to let the House vote on a civil unions bill that had been passed by the state Senate with the blessing of the Democratic governor.

State and national gay rights groups are targeting Minnis for defeat in 2006 as part of an effort to elect more gay-friendly legislators and defeat lawmakers who have opposed giving more rights to gays and lesbians.

A spokesman for a national gay rights group in Washington, D.C., said Oregon is one of several states where bills to provide more rights to gays and lesbians have faltered and where activists will work to defeat lawmakers who stood in the way of the measures.

"There are a handful of states where a change in a couple of seats could make a big difference," said

David Smith of the Human Rights Campaign. "And you could choose no finer example of that than House Speaker Karen Minnis."

The civil unions controversy is the latest chapter in Oregon's gay marriage debate that began in early 2004, when Multnomah County issued marriage licenses to 3,000 same-sex couples before a judge ordered the county to stop. Last fall Oregon voters approved a constitutional ban on gay marriage.

Minnis knows she's in for a tough re-election fight because of her stand against the civil unions bill that would have allowed same-sex couples to gain most of the benefits of marriage.

"They're coming after me," she said during an interview in Troutdale. "I think they are going to attack me personally at every given turn."

At least on paper, Minnis appears to be vulnerable to a concerted, well-funded effort by gay rights groups.

Democrats hold an eight percent voter registration edge in Minnis' House district in eastern Multnomah County. And Democrat Rob Brading, who lost to Minnis by six percentage points in 2004, plans to run against her again next year in what promises to be a higher profile race.

—The Associated Press