

**Editorial**

## Campus Security a Priority for UNLV

The safety of the UNLV campus is perhaps one of the most important issues facing our student body. It is an issue that we feel can no longer be ignored.

With the growth of the university's population, there are more students and more area's on campus for crime to occur. Although UNLV has traditionally been a "safe" campus, the increased population warrants wide-spread changes in the way UNLV is policed.

No longer is it sufficient for the university police to patrol UNLV alone. There has to be a conscientious effort by university officials to establish more campus safety programs. Students, whether they live on or off campus, need to be educated on how they can reduce the risk for crime. This service should be offered free by UNLV's campus police.

The Rebel Yell also supports UNLV's student body president, Stephanie Boixo, in her effort to establish a student-run security force. Although it is not a new idea, it needs to be used to its full potential. It is time for CSUN to establish and maintain a student security force to improve safety on the UNLV campus.

It is also time for the university police to release all of UNLV's crime statistics if they are not already doing so. The students and faculty of the university deserve to know what crimes and how many of them occur at UNLV. If students and faculty know what crimes are occurring on our campus, we can work to prevent them and keep a keen eye on suspicious activity. We believe that full-disclosure is in the best interest of the campus community.

With a coordinated effort between students, student government and the university police, we can make UNLV a much more secure campus.

It takes unity and hard work. We all must join in and play a part in making UNLV a safe place to work, live and learn.

The above is the opinion of The Rebel Yell. All other inclusions on the opinion page reflect the opinions of the author or artist indicated and do not necessarily reflect the opinion of The Rebel Yell staff.

## University Police Preventing Security Improvements

Ask the University Police if UNLV is a safe campus and they will tell you it is. Ask your typical UNLV student if the campus is safe and they will tell you isn't.

Therein lies the problem. Who are we to believe?

It is easy to believe our own police department. After all, they are the people who have to deal with crime on a daily basis. Being on the front line, they know how much crime actually occurs on our campus. The question remains, do they tell us everything?

Most UNLV students who have walked on our campus at night say they do not feel safe. While the campus is well lit in most areas, there are parking lots and campus corridors that are dimly lit. For students that take night classes or remaining on campus late in the evening, there is a sense that danger lurks behind every corner. Are students justified in being fearful?

Since these doubts have been raised, there is obviously a security problem at UNLV. The problem maybe one of perception instead of reality, but it needs to be addressed.

In the past few decades, universities and colleges have become more like businesses than institutions of higher learning. With increased competition and cutbacks in federal and state funds, schools have had to heavily recruit students. Enrollment figures have now become one of the most important factors for most universities, including UNLV.

When a high school senior is deciding where to attend college,

**Straight From the Gully**



SCOTT GULBRANSEN

parents often look at how safe the particular campus is. Most universities have made it a point to print their crime statistics so parents can compare their school to others they might be considering.

The problem with these statistics is that there is no way to know if they are accurate.

While UNLV is a state institution, and must release some crime statistics, there are various crimes that are not reported. Statistics concerning rape and assault cannot be considered accurate since a majority of those crimes go unreported. Also, universities are not bound to release all of their statistics. Schools have been known to only release statistics they want to. This often leads to trimmed down reports that do not reflect the true crime rate on the campus.

There is no evidence of UNLV understating their crime statistics but some feel they might be doing so. Having seen UNLV's official crime statistics, it seems they might be light.

Our campus is in an urban area that is surrounded by low-rent apartments. Even though most of those apartments house students, the area is very transient which leads to the problem. With so many different people parading through the area, it is hard to accept the UNLV crime statistics. Most campuses in urban areas have moderate crime rates. UNLV's crime rate is extremely low for an urban campus.

So obviously, there is a problem at UNLV. The police tell students they are safe but stu-

dents do not agree.

Student Body President Stephanie Boixo has made campus safety her passion since day one of her campaign. Boixo is advocating several different security improvements she feels will make students feel safe. In a recent interview, Boixo said that UNLV is indeed a relatively safe campus, but that there is room for improvement.

"Overall, UNLV is a safe campus," Boixo says. "But students do not feel that it is. That's a problem we need to deal with as soon as possible."

Boixo claims that even though UNLV is relatively well lit, lighting needs to be improved.

"People parking in 'the pit' (unpaved parking at Tropicana) do not have a lot of light when walking to their car at night," said Boixo. "We need to get those areas lit as well as the rest of campus."

Boixo wants to improve lighting as well as increase the size of UNLV's student security force. Unfortunately, she is running into roadblocks raised by university police. They believe that there are enough police to cover the area. They do not feel that student's concerns warrant the reassignment of student public safety workers.

These student parking "enforcers" are the students that give you parking tickets the minute your parking meter expires. But, according to university police, they couldn't staff student security force.

Who are they kidding! Although Boixo has made a concerted effort to improve campus safety, it is the university police that have the final say in

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## Transfer Students Need Not Apply

Transfer students were left out in the cold when the faculty senate passed out its merit scholarships. And this isn't the first time.

Some members of the faculty senate scholarship committee said they didn't think transfer students should get any scholarship money.

Some members of the committee should think again.

"We just don't have enough money, so some group had to be excluded and it ended up being transfer students," Shelley Heaton, chairperson of the committee, said. "There were some people on the committee that didn't think transfer students should get any money."

To be eligible for the merit money, students have to be freshmen or have completed 24 credits at UNLV. Thus, transfer students entering the university for the first time were not eligible. But, if those students entered in the fall and attended full-time, completing 24 credits by the end of the spring semester, they would be eligible the following year right?

Wrong. The faculty senate scholarship committee meets during the spring semester to award scholarships for the following academic year. So unless a masochistic transfer student

**On Target**



CHRISTOPHER MITCHELL

takes 24 credits during the fall semester, they are out of luck for the next year too. That means, students that transfer to UNLV as juniors and complete their degree programs here in two years will graduate without ever being eligible for the merit scholarships.

The committee needs to wait until after the spring semester to make the scholarship decisions. "It is difficult to get everyone [on the committee] together during the summer," said Heaton.

Cheryl Dedrickson, assistant director for scholarships at Student Financial Services, said, "The people on the committee should look at being on the committee as a great honor."

Exactly. And that is why they should meet in the summer, after transfer students have had the opportunity to complete the necessary 24 UNLV credits. If some members of the committee cannot be bothered in the summer, replace them. Or, the committee should take into account the credit hours that transfer students are enrolled in during the spring semester. If their spring courses, in addition to the units they have already completed, gives them 24 or more UNLV credits, they should be considered for the scholarships.

"We are trying to find the most equitable way to award the money," Heaton said. Fortunately, the faculty senate reviews its policies each year so the transfer student policy doesn't have to live forever.

Three students give their input to the faculty senate committee. These three students should represent the diversity of the student body, including transfer students.

UNLV, like most institutions, offers a large portion of its scholarship money to freshmen, trying to entice them to choose UNLV. The university should also try to entice students that choose junior colleges before coming to UNLV. The high costs of four-year schools are driving many excellent students to attend less expensive junior colleges during their first two years. Transfer students, no matter what school they are transferring from, are as worthy of scholarships as any other group of UNLV students.

"Whenever you have students with 3.5 to 3.9 grade point averages and you can't give them scholarships, you have a problem," Judy Belanger, director of Student Financial Services said. "We have a lot of worthy students, including transfer students, but we [UNLV] just don't have the amount of scholarship

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