

NEWS

INFO SERIES

Your right to know: Crime Logs

BY RACHEL MIKAELSEN

Knowledge is power. The more you know about what goes on in society the better citizen you can be. The same goes for your role in college. Though students may feel that they are in the dark when it comes to what really goes on behind the scenes at Brevard or any other campus, documents exist that a school must provide for their review.

These documents give you information such as campus crime statistics, and how the school spends money. A series of articles will appear in the next several issues of *The Clarion*, informing Brevard students of their freedom to information and ways to use the law to protect this right and use it to their advantage.

The first aspect we are going to explore is the right to information on campus crime. Crime invades every college, some more than others.

The Crime Awareness Campus Security Act of 1990 states that beginning September 1, 1992, schools receive

ing federal aid, grants, student loans and federal work study are required to publish and distribute an annual security report containing:

1. Campus security policies and procedures.
2. Law enforcement status and authority of security personnel including working relationship with state and local police departments.
3. Description of crime prevention and drug and alcohol abuse programs available to the community and students.
4. A listing of any policies regarding law enforcement relating to drug and alcohol use.

The law only requires that "on campus" occurrences be reported to the student body.

On May 28, 1999, the *Chronicle of Higher Education* published crime statistics from 483 colleges with 5,000 or more students enrolled. The statistics cover 1996-97 school year to 1997-98 school year. The *Chronicle* reported

Offenses	96-97 to 97-98	Occurrences
Murder	-31.6%	19-13
Forcible Sex Offenses	+ .4 %	1,049-1,053
Non-Forcible Sex Offense	-29.5 %	132-93
Robbery	-9.2 %	980-890
Aggravated Assault	-.8 %	2,087-2,071

a number of statistics as noted in the associated graph.

Many times the campus paper will publish a report similar to the one above that would pertain to their own school, providing the student body with crime statistics on a regular basis. Any one interested in the crime logs may make a written or oral request to the Dean of Campus Life.

Also under the FOI open records laws exists a Campus Sexual Assault Victims' Bill of Rights. This Bill of Rights allows students and journalists to be aware of what goes on during cases involving sexual assault. The law says, "a school must provide information re-

garding the outcome of on-campus disciplinary action to both accused and accuser." An administration is not required to release the information to the student body, but interested students may contact the accused and accuser to inquire if they wish for the news to be known. The law applies to all institutions receiving federal aid. A written or oral request may be made to the Dean of Campus life.

Crime statistics alert in coming students of the environment in where they will be living. Reviewing crime logs can allow students and their parents to prepare safety precautions and behaviors.

Court approves appeal for KSU yearbook case

BY MATT BERGER U-WIRE (DC BUREAU)

(U-WIRE) WASHINGTON — The U.S. Sixth Circuit Court of Appeals has agreed Monday to rehear the case of whether college administrators can censor student publications after a three judge panel ruled in favor of the school earlier this fall.

The court, located in Cincinnati, agreed to rehear the case against Kentucky State University, which confiscated the *Thorobred* yearbook in 1994 because of poor quality. The three-judge panel ruled the school had the right to confiscate the books, ruling against two former KSU students.

Circuit Judge Alan Norris ruled in September that it was reasonable for the school to

want to maintain its image by confiscating the yearbooks. University officials said they confiscated the books because of "undisputedly poor quality" and a purple cover.

Mark Goodman, executive director of the Student Press Law Center, said the decision was encouraging for student media.

"The only thing you can assume is that a significant number of judges on the court agreed that this decision raised questions that prompted them

to reconsider the facts," Goodman said.

Two former KSU students, Capri Coffey, the yearbook's editor, and Charles Kincaid, a member of the school's newspaper and a yearbook purchaser, sued the university after the school's vice president for student affairs, Betty Gibson, confiscated the yearbooks. She claimed it had a "vague theme" and was upset by inclusion of photos unrelated to the school community - including Bill Clinton and Ross Perot.

The adviser of the yearbook at the time, Laura Cullen, was transferred to another position within the university on the day the yearbooks were received.

In September, the court relied on the 1988 Supreme Court decision of *Hazelwood School District vs. Kuhlmeier*, which upheld censorship of high school media. But Goodman said there are distinctions between public high schools and colleges.

"The fundamental problem with the September ruling was the application of high school censorship standard to the college environment," Goodman said. "That's such a disturbing notion." He said most courts have worked hard to create a difference between colleges and high schools.

"Nowhere is free expression more important than on university campuses," Goodman said. Officials from Kentucky State University did not return requests for comment.

BY RACHEL MIKAELSEN

As Americans, we are given certain inalienable rights that should never change with time. One of these rights is the freedom of speech and expression. The First Amendment guarantees us this, as should our school system. Censorship acts as a

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way of control and manipulation when exercised over a student body. Censorship comes in all kinds of distasteful forms: administration flat out not allowing free expression, with holding financial support, threats or editing publications such as school

news papers, for material that may not place the institution in a positive light. All of these methods create an uncomfortable environment where students may fear speaking up for their own defense. Censorship hinders the most important element of learning: the creation of new ideas. What is the purpose of learning, if students cannot share their knowledge and opinions with others?

Our government was founded on freedom and democracy. If young people are to become responsible citizens, they must experience displays of this democracy in order to appreciate it. A school that censors its publications goes against this idea of freedom and democracy and the lessons cannot be learned. College students need to be aware that censorship exists, in order to prevent it from happening. Awareness is the key to prevention.

Become a responsible campus citizen, join Student Government.