

Who says college campuses are safe?

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Jeanne Clery, Lehigh University Class of '89, would have graduated last June 4. Instead, her dreams and her parents' hopes for her ended forever on April 5, 1986. At 5 a.m. that day, the 19-year-old freshman awoke to find fellow student Joseph Henry burglarizing her dorm room. Henry raped and beat Jeanne savagely. Then he strangled her.

At the University of California at Berkeley in 1987, a gang of teens police call a "rat pack" followed three students to their dormitory. Words were exchanged, and a pack member suddenly smashed the face of a female student with a brick.

Despite the idyllic images college brochures present, violence is a fact of life on the nation's campuses. Last year colleges reported to the FBI a total of 1990 violent crimes--robbery, aggravated assault, rape and murder. This is a startling number, considering the fact that almost 90 percent of U.S. colleges do not report crime statistics. The incidence of property crime was even greater--more than 107,000 cases of burglary, larceny, arson, and motor-vehicle theft at reporting schools alone. Shockingly, 78 percent of the violent crimes were committed by students, according to the Center for the Study and

Prevention of Campus Violence, at Towson State University in Maryland.

Traditionally most colleges have kept quiet about crime. Fearing adverse publicity, they have tended to deal with offenders internally instead of referring them for prosecution.

The Clerys were a major force behind a new Pennsylvania law that requires all colleges in the state to disclose crime statistics. They also advocate federal legislation requiring such disclosure.

The failure of colleges to warn about crime has created a dangerous situation. Too often, parents and students are unaware of the hazards of life on campus. But concerned parents, students, and college administrators are taking action around the country and setting examples for others to follow.

Here's what every college should do to control violence on campus.

Start a campus-watch program. Security experts agree that any community can reduce crime simply by remaining alert. Colleges are no exception. The proof can be found at Drexel University in the tough neighborhood of West Philadelphia.

Crime used to be rampant near the campus. "Every night cars were stolen, apartments burglarized, windows smashed," recalls Hank Margolis, a 1988 graduate of Drexel. One evening in October 1987, Margolis heard a scream outside his window. When he investigated, he found a woman lying on

the sidewalk, her face bloody. Later the same night, two University students were jumped and beaten by neighborhood thugs.

Determined to fight back, Margolis called a meeting of Drexel's Interfraternity Association and formed Town Watch. Fraternity volunteers now patrol the campus and its surroundings from evening until the early-morning hours. Traveling in pairs, they report suspicious activity via walkie-talkie to a central radio post staffed by sorority volunteers, who then contact Philadelphia police. "There's no doubt the program has reduced crime in the Town Watch area," says John Hood, crime-prevention officer in the police department's 16th district.

Lock and monitor doors. The night Jeanne Clery was murdered, dorm residents had propped open a locked door, as was frequently done to permit late-night pizza deliveries. Jeanne may also have left her own door unlocked, in anticipation of her roommate's return.

Lehigh was aware of its door problem. Security patrols kept records, and relocked propped doors. "In the 6 1/2 months Jeanne was at Lehigh, there were 2000 incidents of propped doors," says her father, Howard Clery. "In Jeanne's dorm alone there were 180 proppings."

Although Lehigh has a policy of disciplining door proppers, "no one has ever been caught," admits Marsha

Duncan, vice president of student affairs.

Now, as part of an out-of-court settlement with the Clerys, Lehigh has agreed to try a pilot door-alarm program. In this, keys are replaced with plastic cards; a machine records the time and the identity of each card user; and a building-wide alarm sounds in case of intrusion. Also, exterior doors are wired to notify police if they are propped open, a simple measure that may be the obstacle preventing another burglary, rape or murder.

Improve lighting and install emergency phones. At night, beautifully landscaped campuses offer shadowy hiding places for muggers, rapists and robbers. One solution to this problem is improved lighting.

After the University of Virginia in Charlottesville instituted a campus watch, trimmed back bushes and installed lightning and emergency telephone call boxes, violent crime on campus dropped 38 percent, and property crime 47 percent.

At any call box, a student in trouble can reach campus police without dialing. If he or she cannot talk, the system tells police which phone was activated, and an officer is immediately dispatched to the scene.

Use escort and van services. Students at the University of California at Los Angeles don't have to worry about

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At University Park

"Contemporary Scholarship on Lesbian & Gay Lives", a colloquium funded by the Department of Human Development and Family Studies and the equal Opportunity Planning Committee will be offered throughout the year in the HUB at Penn State - University Park Campus.

Esther Newton, State University of New York at Purchase, "The Fun Gay Ladies: Lesbians in Cherry Grove 1938 - 1961", October 16, 1989.

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