

# Report: On-campus crime decreases slightly

By Casey McDermott  
COLLEGIAN STAFF WRITER

After a small jump in on-campus crime in 2008, Penn State's University Park campus saw a small decrease in its total offenses for 2009, according to a report released this week.

In Penn State's annual "Policies, Safety and U" report, statistics show that on-campus crime levels have fluctuated over the past three years. According to the report, total offenses rose from 2,055 in 2007 to 2,268 in 2008, then tapered off to 2,252 in 2009.

And most of those on-campus crimes can be traced back to alcohol, Chief of Police Stephen Shelow said.

Offenses such as underage drinking, public drunkenness and DUIs lead most crime categories, he said. Marijuana use and possession is also an issue, he said.

In light of alcohol's "overwhelming" influence on university-relat-

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Steve Shelow  
Penn State chief of police

ed crime, Penn State President Graham Spanier wrote in an e-mail that the university is continuing to step up its safety education, prevention, enforcement and cooperation between the State College Police Department, University Police and the Office of Judicial Affairs.

"The overwhelming factor in most university-related crime is the presence of excessive amounts of alcohol," Spanier wrote. "So this is a very important focus of our interventions."

But Shelow said it's not just alcohol that's an issue. Other crimes, like theft — one of the highest-reported crimes on cam-

pus — continue to create problems for police.

In 2009, there were 439 cases of non-motor-vehicle theft on campus, according to the report.

Most of those cases, however, involve unsecured or unattended property, Shelow said. The most commonly stolen items include bicycles, textbooks, cell phones, backpacks, gym bags, computers and electronic accessories like cellular phones and iPods, he said.

Overall, Shelow said crimes such as forcible rape, homicide, robbery and serious assaults are consistently low over the years.

According to the report, there

## Campus crime statistics released

On-campus crime declined slightly in 2009, but police said alcohol offenses and theft continue to create problems.

Year	Total Offenses	Larceny Theft	Liquor Laws	Drunkness
2007	2055	460	487	111
2008	2268	413	571	150
2009	2252	439	548	157

Source: "Policies, Safety, and U" Report 2009

Kimberly Barner/Colegian

was a slight rise in aggravated assault offenses on campus last year: 23 total in 2009, compared to nine in 2008 and four in 2007.

Non-aggravated assault declined last year, hitting 31 offenses in 2009, after a spike to 51 in 2008 from 21 the year before, according to the report.

But overall, Shelow said Penn State and its surrounding area remains generally secure.

"The University Park campus and the Centre Region continue to be one of the safest places to live, work and study," he said.

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# Sestak welcomes youth involvement in campaign

By Anita Modi  
COLLEGIAN STAFF WRITER

While most students spent Saturday afternoon raising money for the Interfraternity Council/Panhellenic Dance Marathon or watching the Penn State-Minnesota game, a group of 20 students attended the rally for Congressman Joe Sestak outside Old Main.

As a part of his campaign for a seat in the U.S. Senate, Sestak stopped in State College to address issues such as job security and education and encourage an audience of students, faculty and locals alike to vote on Nov. 2.

Though the rally officially began at 3 p.m., participants began to gather before the steps of Old Main half an hour earlier, drawn by campaign-themed musical performances and patriotic songs.

Four students representing the Juniata College Democrats drove 45 minutes from their campus in Huntingdon, Pa., to University Park to support Sestak at the rally. They said most students are

indifferent toward politics.

"There's a lot of apathy both at our college and across the state," said Zach Gordon, a senior majoring in politics at Juniata College and president of the Juniata College Democrats. "We have to be very aggressive when encouraging people to fill out voter registration forms."

Yet Sestak found himself up against more than just apathy at the rally.

He was met with a dozen student representatives of Pat Toomey's campaign silently holding signs and passing out brochures in favor of his opponent throughout his speech.

Sestak seemed unfazed by the Toomey supporters, however, as he spoke about the potential of America's youth.

He said he met a freshman in Penn State's ROTC program upon arriving to Penn State and expressed his admiration at the dedication of students supporting their nation.

The congressman said the average employee working at his head-

quarters is between 21 and 22 years old.

"I love the youth," he said. "I would take a youth willing to bang that door open to get what they want over anyone, and I mean that sincerely."

As a member of the education committee in the House of Representatives in Washington, D.C., Sestak said he understands the need for improving education nationwide to make America a competitive global power. He said he especially appreciates students giving their time to attend the rally and asked them to take the time to vote on Nov. 2.

A volunteer for the Sestak campaign, Alex Lukasiewicz spends her time reminding fellow students to register to vote and show up to the polls on voting day.

Lukasiewicz (sophomore-ecology), who attended Saturday's rally, said she knew the congressman had supported student loan reforms in the past and shared many of her values.



Fran Ruane/Colegian

Democratic Senate candidate Joe Sestak speaks at a rally at Old Main Saturday afternoon to drum up support before the midterm elections.

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