

Campus Safety Issues Addressed

By Lee Vang

The 2000 Concordia University Campus Crime Report reached student mailboxes in late September. A first glance showed a number of empty boxes, indicating the low figures and/or absence of any crimes committed on or nearby the campus. However, taking a closer look, 44 jumps out like sore thumb. Forty-four was the number of liquor law violations on campus residence.

Sara Mulso, Assistant to the Director of Plant Operations for Safety and Security, said, "these numbers reflect the number of underage individuals who were referred to Student Affairs for disciplinary action due to the fact that they were found drinking in residence halls—a violation of our residence hall policies but also a legal infraction."

Explaining the reason and importance of the report, Mulso

said, "The Campus Crime Report is prepared and distributed in compliance with the 1990 Student Right-To-Know/Campus Security Act. This report is required to be completed by all higher educational institutions, which receive federal financial aid. The first report was distributed in 1990. The complete report for Concordia University is available at and more information about the 1990 Student Right-To-Know/Campus Security Act is available at."

Another recent question of safety and security comes from a physical assault on Concordia University students at Dunning field on October 31.

In light of this assault nearby campus, Mulso said, "While CSP students were the unfortunate victims of this assault, the investigation has been handled by the St. Paul Police due to the fact that it occurred off-campus on public property. We have been working

with the police and at this time I am not aware of any arrests in this incident."

However, Mulso, for reassurance to the Concordia community, said, "In my 10 years of involvement with the department, this is the first such incident of this nature that I am aware of students being involved in. I believe that this incident heightened students' awareness that there are random acts of violence that can occur anywhere at anytime. I feel that this also gave our department a chance to remind students to utilize the Escort Service as well as staying with groups in well-lit, high traffic areas."

"Safety," according Mulso, "is a relative phrase. Each individual has a different idea and concept of what conditions need to be met in order for a situation to be safe. I believe that our department provides services that maintain the overall safety, security, and well

being of campus community. While there are incidents, which occur on campus, most are congruent with typical urban crime/incidents and are not a breach of security."

All in all, regarding safety and security on campus, Mulso noted that the "department operates much more effectively with the help of students, staff, and faculty."

"The information they pass on to us is critical as the officers cannot be everywhere at all times," she said. "This heightened awareness makes Concordia University safer for all of us. It is important for the campus community to always be alert, safety-conscious, and knowledgeable. Many incidents may be avoided with some careful forethought." Moreover, Mulso said she is "always interested in hearing about concerns and suggestions that individuals have concerning Safety and Security."

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Task Force Supports Students' Staying Course

By Lee Vang

Nine people, one mission: retention. For the last two and a half months, a group of Concordia faculty and staff members has been working vigorously to gather and analyze qualitative data regarding the retention of students at Concordia University. In the words of Dr. Jones, Chair of the committee, "it has been a very comprehensive process, assisted by a terrific team of dedicated educators."

The "Task Force" is an ad-hoc committee established by President Holst and, as Dr. Jones stated in an October memorandum, it "serves the specific purpose of developing a plan specific to the mission, vision, and strategic priorities for Concordia University, wherein the campus community will be engaged in processes which will successfully increase the percentage of stu-

dents returning to study at and ultimately graduate from the university."

The committee consists of Rosemary Braun (Director of Academic Advising), Dr. Cheryl Chatman (Executive Vice-President/Dean of Diversity), Paul Hillmer (Associate Professor of History), Dr. Edith Jones (Vice President for Student Affairs), Scott Morrell (Associate Dean of Enrollment Services), Dan Mueller (Student Senate Vice President of Relations), Daniel O'Brien (Director of Athletics), Dr. Carl Schoenbeck (Vice President for Academic Affairs/Dean of Faculty), and David Stueber (Director of Institutional Research).

Thus far, the committee has collected information from ten focus groups on campus—approximately 191 individuals. With this data and those previously collected at hand, Dr. Jones said, "we are

in the process of determining specific goals and developing measurable objectives, with individuals assigned to carry out the objectives—including deadlines for developing and/or completing the objectives."

Currently, the committee is focused on three goals: "establishing support for students as the highest priority for staff and faculty, establishing systems to retain new students, and establishing systems and strategies to enhance physical, human and financial resources."

Dr. Jones calls on the campus community, challenging the university to become engaged in retention—to make retention an institutionalized tool. She said, "the engagement and energy of the entire campus community is important to carrying out the goals and objectives of the Retention Task Force...we want to build on our goals and strengths—

Concordia has huge positives and we need to communicate and celebrate our strengths."

One such strength is the building of relationships and so, as Jones said, "we all have our roles in developing positive relationships with and for our students. As a result, we can continue to move toward an even more successful system of recruiting and retaining our students." Furthermore, she stressed that the university campus and community needs to "celebrate what we have and things we can do better...as the saying goes, 'if you do not become better at what you do, you fall behind.'"

The key, according to Jones, is to "recruit students who want to stay and provide support for them." One suggestion is to provide the Concordia community with an information center,

where people can go to learn more about certain subject matters.

"One beauty of Concordia is," as Dr. Jones states, "that we can take issues and concerns to our God in prayer to guide and direct us to the best outcomes possible...President Holst will not and should not be satisfied with second best when it comes to retaining our students. We must systematically go about establishing the best processes for retaining our students, including to continue offering high quality education, high quality services through people, and continuing to petition to our God to bless our efforts."

The Retention Task Force will continue working on establishing a system for the Concordia community to establish processes/systems retain students.

Students Delve Into Hmong History

By Lee Vang

"The college experience, from my biased perspective, is one that should encourage a love of learning for its own sake. So, I'm hoping this [Hmong Oral History] project will provide students with a love of learning and teach them something new and meaningful about their own history and culture," said Paul Hillmer, Assistant Professor of History at

Concordia University.

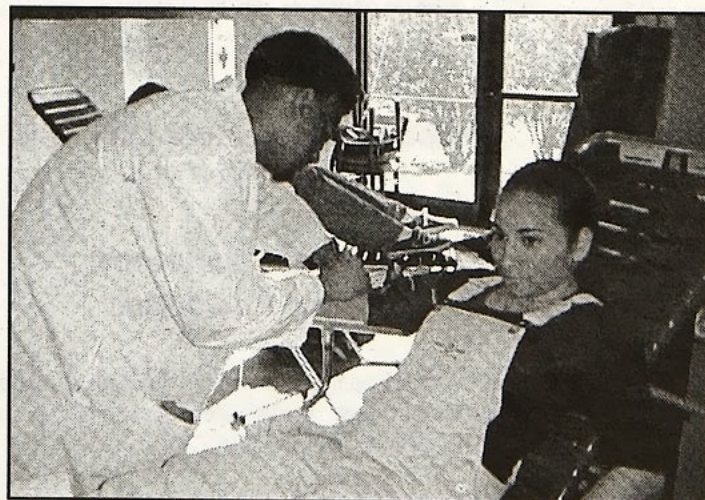
Recently, Hillmer, Concordia sophomore Tou Thao, and other students have embarked on a project of Hmong Oral History—a project that began as a side conversation between Thao and Hillmer.

In May 2001, sophomore Tou Thao contacted History professor, Paul Hillmer, about an internship, which began a promising partnership. On the way over to set up Thao's intern-

ship at the University of Minnesota, Hillmer inquired about Thao's family's history.

"It interested me," Hillmer said. "I asked Tou if he had ever spoken extensively with his parents about their experiences, and he said no. I've been doing oral history as part of my historical inquiry class for over ten years now, so this seemed like a good opportunity to apply the method outside the classroom."

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(above) Concordia Student Wilda Ugarte support Concordia's Annual Blood Drive
Photo by Allison Grosskopf