

# CAMPUS SECURITY UNDER SCRUTINY

by SEAN McQUAID

**D**o you feel secure on this campus, and if not, why? That's the basic question being asked at the university by consultant Brian Ash, who has been conducting a series of probes and interviews across campus to examine the safety of the university on behalf of UPEI's President Eliot. The study was prompted by strong concerns within the university community in the wake of the recent alleged sexual assault at Marion Hall.

Ash is careful to stress that he has no specific credentials as a safety consultant, but has had extensive experience in university administration. Ash also bases his selection for this job on the fact that Dr. Eliot believes him to be objective (as an outside party) and he was readily available since he is now retired. Ash characterizes his undertaking as a fact-finding mission to examine all aspects of safety on the campus. "I must emphasize that I don't have the expertise to [appraise] security operations," Ash said. "I'm much more competent to make comments on administration generally as it affects safety and security ... to draw attention to areas of concern."

Ash is reluctant to discuss his findings until his investigation is complete and he has reported to the President, but he concedes that there are "some problems" with campus safety and

that he "can make some recommendations that will improve safety quite rapidly." In reference to calls for increased lighting, he agrees that "there are some distances (to walk) where it's dark enough to make people apprehensive." Still, he

maintains that "from a physical safety standpoint this university is quite good," and he cites the AVC building as one structure whose security is exemplary.

Ash says that his investigation is concerned with not just physical safety but also psychological safety, whether students feel safe on campus. In terms of addressing the issue of sexual assault he feels that we should work towards changing men's attitudes toward women, making men aware of how vulnerable women feel and trying to reassure some men who

feel threatened by women's efforts to assert their rights. "We should attempt to come together to solve our problems," Ash says, and he believes that attitudes can change at a university if they can change anywhere. "If we believe in education we believe in change."

As to what will be done with the results of the study, Ash says that is up to the President, but he presumes the President will act upon the recommendations, and that it will be "soon ... very soon. If there's action to be taken, [the President] wants to act quickly." ■

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