

STATEMENT BY ROBERT D. CLARK - BSU

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Black students at the University of Oregon came to my office yesterday to state that they had been harassed by police. They have called on the University--and other citizens of the community--to help them in this circumstance. As noted in Friday's Register-Guard, the allegations of police harassment are already being examined by the American Civil Liberties Union joined by University of Oregon law students.

Cases of harassment cited to me by black students indicate that blacks are stopped indiscriminately when it is charged that a particular black has committed a crime, that blacks are more apt to be frisked, or approached with drawn gun, or handcuffed: Women students as well as men have been stopped on the streets without apparent reason. Such harassment would be an affront to any citizen. Harassment of any of our citizens, particularly for reason of race, color, or ethnic grouping, cannot be tolerated in our society and must be stopped.

I know from first hand information from Mayor Anderson and Chief Allen that any instances of harassment are contrary to the established policy of the Eugene Police Department which states in writing: "It is the policy of this department, (EPD) both on paper and operationally to treat every person with dignity and respect regardless of race."

At the same time, the existence of a policy is not in itself sufficient to insure that individual infractions--either deliberate or through misunderstanding--will not occur. All of us know as the

Koerner Report pointed out, that racism is prevalent in our society. It is so much a part of the conditioning and subconscious behavior of so many whites, that it manifests itself in impulsive action even though policies or laws exist which prohibit such behavior. We must, therefore, as individuals and a society, not only speak out and be on guard against deliberate racism, but just as importantly, the conditioned and subconscious racism and corollary behavior that are so much a residual of the American past.

We must register and document the complaints and work with the law enforcement agencies continuously to assure that policy becomes practice. I am glad to say that Keith Martin, speaking for the City Administration, stated to me only yesterday that the City will cooperate fully in the investigation of current allegations of harassment and maintain a continuing vigil in this regard. My office will give whatever assistance is possible.