

To: University Community
From: Hank Webber, Vice President, Office of Community and Government Affairs
Date: April 11, 2005
Re: Crime Update

I am writing to provide a progress report on a very unusual series of assaults that has taken place in Hyde Park over the last several months and to tell you about the ways we are working with the city, elected officials, and local schools to end it.

As you know, this is a striking aberration during a period of many years in which crime has been steadily declining in Hyde Park. I want to assure you that we have made it the highest institutional priority to bring these attacks to an end as quickly as possible.

As reported in our security alerts and in local newspapers and television coverage, since Jan. 31 there have been more than three dozen incidents throughout Hyde Park, at various times of the day and night, in which generally lone males have been attacked and beaten by groups of young men. Working with the city police, our University police officers have by now arrested 33 individuals who were responsible for at least 13 of these cases. The vast majority of those arrested are between the ages of 14 and 16. None of these assaults has occurred on the university's campus, but they have occurred in our neighborhood, and at least one victim has been seriously injured.

I am very appreciative of the success the police have so far had in making arrests. But we are nonetheless redoubling our efforts with the police, elected officials and local schools to bring these incidents to a rapid end. These actions include the following:

- Both the University and the city are assigning extra regular and plain-clothes officers to the affected areas.
- We will maintain communication with Alderman Preckwinkle, Alderman Hairston, and local school officials who are aggressively monitoring activities.
- This will be an important part of the discussion at upcoming CAPS meetings including this Thursday, April 14, at 7 p.m. at Regents Park (5050 East End), Thursday, April 21st at 7 p.m. at the Hyde Park Neighborhood Club (5480 S. Kenwood), and Tuesday, April 26 at 6 p.m. at Harris Bank (47th and Drexel).
- I will hold special meetings for students and members of the university community on Monday, April 18 at 5:00 p.m. and Tuesday, April 19 at 12:30. Both will take place in room 109 of the Biological Sciences Learning Center.
- We will continue to post security alerts and advisories about this until the events end. The campus and community can subscribe to the security alert system at: <https://listhost.uchicago.edu/mailman/listinfo/safety-awareness>

I strongly urge everyone to take advantage of this alert system.

If you would like further information about the alert or other aspects of this effort, I encourage you to contact Bob Mason of the South East Chicago Commission, at 324-6926 or secc@forward.net. He will be happy to provide you with the latest information on the work that our community is doing to resolve this issue.

As always, I encourage you to note the location of the blue emergency phones in your area, and to call 911 any time you see or hear something you think the police should be aware of.

I want to reiterate that working with other institutions to end these crimes is my highest priority. Together, we will help Hyde Park quickly resume the steady improvement in quality of life that has made it an increasingly desirable community in which to live, learn, and raise our families.

Sincerely,

Hank Webber
Vice President for Community and Government Affairs