Journalism students win national award for investigative reporting
DENTON (UNT), Texas -- An investigative story by nine University of North Texas journalism students about the failure by some university campuses to comply with the Jeanne Clery Act has received this year's Jeanne Clery Campus Safety Award from Security on Campus, Inc., a national nonprofit organization.

The nine UNT students, who are all earning master's degrees from UNT's Mayborn Graduate Institute of Journalism, share the award with six journalism students from Southern Methodist University and one student from Texas Christian University.

Security on Campus, Inc., educates current and prospective college students, their parents and others about the prevalence of crime on U.S. college and university campuses. The organization monitors enforcement of the Jeanne Clery Act, a federal law originally passed in 1990 as the Student-Right-to-Know Act. The law requires colleges and universities to disclose campus crime statistics, publish daily crime logs and distribute crime alerts to warn students and others of dangerous situations on campus.

The law was amended in 1998 and renamed after a student at Lehigh University in Pennsylvania who was raped and murdered in her dorm room in 1986. Clery's parents lobbied for passage of the law, which is administered by the U.S. Department of Education, and now choose a recipient each year for the Clery Campus Safety Award. The award honors schools and individuals that have accomplished extraordinary things to make college and university students safer.

The UNT students' story, "Insecurity on Campus," appeared in the Dec. 1, 2004 edition of Fort Worth Weekly. The report uncovered failures by SMU, the University of Texas at Arlington and Texas Woman's University to comply with the Clery Act, citing specific examples.

As a result of the story, S. Daniel Carter, senior vice president of Security on Campus, urged officials at the U.S. Department of Education to take whatever steps are necessary to enforce the law, including imposing fines of up to $27,500 for each violation.

The UNT students who helped to write "Insecurity on Campus" were Shalandys Anderson from DeBerry, Texas; Rebecca Ekpe from Accra, Ghana; Jaclyn Gonzales from Fort Worth; Christina Jancic from League City, Texas; Elizabeth Lee from Lawrence, Kan.; Lindsay Marshall from Benbrook; Brooke Scoggins from Plano; Hannah Seddelmeyer from Corpus Christi and Taylor Timmons from Dallas.

Their instructor Dan Malone, a staff writer for Fort Worth Weekly, said the investigation resulting from the story and the recognition the story has received "speaks to the thorough and professional manner in which these students tackled an ambitious and difficult assignment."

Mitchell Land, UNT associate professor of journalism and director of the Mayborn Graduate Institute of Journalism, said the Jeanne Clery Campus Safety Award "reflects the excellence that the institute seeks to achieve in bringing the best journalism education to our students."

"I am extremely proud of the students and their professor, Dan Malone, for their hard work in investigating such an important issue as crime on university campuses," he said. In addition to the Jeanne Clery award, "Insecurity on Campus" received a first place award in the student category of the First Amendment Awards, given annual by the
Society of Professional Journalists, Fort Worth Chapter, and second place in the student category of the Houston Press Club's Lone Star Awards.
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