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U. Michigan seniors discouraged from running the Naked Mile

By Maria Sprow

[Michigan Daily](#) (U. Michigan)
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(U-WIRE) ANN ARBOR, Mich. -- Wednesday, University of Michigan seniors will open their e-mail boxes to find an annual letter from University President Lee Bollinger discouraging them from running the Naked Mile next Tuesday, the end-of-term tradition begun in 1986 as a prank by the men's lacrosse and rowing teams.

Bollinger's e-mail to describes the Mile as an "event laden with risk." Vice President for Student Affairs E. Royster Harper and Department of Public Safety Director William Bess also plan to send an e-mail to the student body Wednesday discussing problems with the run.

University Provost Nancy Cantor has also sent a letter to faculty urging them to dissuade their students from running.

"Many runners who were motivated by the enthusiasm of the moment, further fueled by alcohol, later expressed regret at having participated," Cantor wrote. "Participants are subjecting themselves to potential assault, arrest and serious physical harm; and there is the very real likelihood that the consequences of their actions will come back to haunt students far into the future."

University spokeswoman Julie Peterson also said the University has spent "a couple thousand" dollars on print ads characterizing the mile as dangerous and a "groper's paradise."

"It's an educational campaign," Peterson said.

DPS spokeswoman Diane Brown said she could not comment on the number of who will be present but that security and police enforcement will increase until students running.

"We need it to go away long before anyone incurs a major injury or death," she said.

Although runner participation decreased last year to an estimated 400 students, the crowd watching the event remained consistent with previous years, at about 10,000.

Brown added that construction surrounding Angell Hall could be a unique safety hazard this year.

"There's a lot of construction activity and fencing in the area where this has traditionally taken place, and this has made some areas a lot smaller," she said.

There has been speculation that the route, which traditionally takes runners through the Diag, will change this year, bringing runners down Washburn Avenue to South University Avenue instead.

Such a change in the route would mean the entire run would be under the jurisdiction of the Ann Arbor Police Department and not DPS.

Bollinger's e-mail also claims that the "narrow pedestrian walkways between (the Diag and the

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 04/10

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Hatcher Graduate Library), Haven Hall and Tisch Hall/Museum of Art will be closed and access to and from the Diag in that vicinity will be restricted."

DPS patrols all University-owned areas and made 15 arrests last year, Brown said for indecent exposure.

"Our citations tend to be for alcohol-related violations," Brown said.

AAPS officers patrol city and street areas, especially along South University. Last year arrested three runners for indecent exposure and another subject for malicious destruction. Last year was the first year AAPD arrested anyone for indecent exposure, which is criminal sexual conduct. Persons charged with CSC can be required to register on National Sex Offender Registry.

After a group of Livonia residents sent a letter to Michigan Attorney General Jennifer Granholm complaining about the run last year, the AAPD stated they would make indecent exposure and increase police presence. The AAPD has not yet announced for this year's event.

As in previous years, the Michigan Student Assembly will be present at the run to help with runner safety. LSA junior Elizabeth Anderson, chair of MSA's Women's Issues Committee said MSA hopes to have 300 student volunteers on hand to warn runners about street hazards, keep the path clear and keep sexual harassment and video taping to a minimum.

MSA is holding a mass meeting for anyone who is interested in volunteering Thursday 7 p.m. in the Anderson Room of the Michigan Union.

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