

WSU cops undecided about false report charges

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By David Johnson of the Tribune

Both women have now recanted campus assault reports

PULLMAN - Two women who have recanted three reported assaults on the campus of Washington State University were under investigation Tuesday night for possible filing false reports charges, Lt. Steve Hansen of the WSU police department said.

But at this point, Hansen said, authorities and school officials are leaning toward making sure the women, both freshmen, receive counseling. He said a decision on potential charges should be made within a week. Filing a false police report is a gross misdemeanor that could involve both fines and jail time.

The latest recantation occurred Monday night during an interview at WSU police headquarters, Hansen said. That assault was alleged to have happened in the early morning hours of Aug. 24.

The second woman earlier recanted two purported assaults, the first allegedly happening on the evening of Aug. 19, and the second on Aug. 24. The women, Hansen said, do not know one another and therefore authorities are not pursuing a possible conspiracy.

The reported attackers were similarly described as a white man with a stocky build.

The development leaves the campus free of any reported assaults so far this semester, Hansen said. And while the false reports create unnecessary fear among students, parents and residents, not to mention work for police, Hansen said people should remain vigilant as they walk around campus, especially at night.

Reports of the three assaults caused WSU president Elson S. Floyd last week to offer \$5,000 of his own money for information leading to an arrest and conviction. That money, according to a WSU news release, will be maintained in a campus safety fund administered by WSU police and the WSU Women's Resource Center for future rewards.

The three false reports were enough to have resource center officials announce last week the early deployment of a transportation program for women on campus and throughout Pullman. The program, which uses three vehicles and a number of volunteer drivers, routinely starts a few weeks into the fall semester.