OSU students, angered by false accusations

By Tim Doulin
Dispatch Higher Education Reporter

Students upset about blacks wrongly being accused of committing violent crimes on campus are planning a march on the Oval at Ohio State University at 3 p.m. today.

The march was prompted, in part, by a white woman's admission to police that she fabricated a story about being raped on the Oval last fall by a black man.

OSU police charged Michele Ann Yentes, 19, of 1293 Prentis House Court with one count of making false alarms. The charge, filed in Franklin County Municipal Court last week, is a first-degree misdemeanor.

"There has been a general sense of anger since it came out she was lying," said Joseph Smith, president of the Black Association of North Campus Students.

The organization, sponsor of the march, is a social and moral support group for black students. The organization has about 60 student members.

Police said Yentes reported that she left the main library, 1858 Neil Ave., about midnight Oct. 24. She said she was walking east along a sidewalk on the Oval toward Hayes Hall when she was confronted by a black man.

Police said she reported being threatened and raped at knifepoint. Afterward, a flier with a description and police sketch of the assailant was circulated on campus.

"A lot of black males were scrutinized unjustly because her description was so general," Smith said.

"It was a description of a black male, about 6 feet tall, medium build and short hair. The description could fit most black students on campus."

OSU police spent about "a thousand man-hours" investigating the report, and students and faculty and staff members staged marches to protest crime on campus.

Blacks have been accused wrongly before, Smith said.

Last fall, a woman told campus police she stabbed a black attacker. She later admitted making up the story.

Recently, a Boston man, Charles Stuart, accused a black man of murdering his wife. Police later decided Stuart was lying and planned to charge him in connection with the death before he committed suicide.

"The problem exists on a national scale, and it has happened historically. It is not something that popped up just in the last 10 to 15 years," Smith said.

The march will begin in front of the main library and go to the site of the alleged rape. Marchers then will return to the front of the library, where speakers will address the crowd.

against blacks, plan march
Student march protests false rape claim

By Lisa M. Lomax
Lantern staff writer

"No More Lies" was the theme of a march sponsored by the Black Association for North Campus Students and the African American Students of Ohio State on Thursday.

The march was in protest of a false report made to campus police on Oct. 24 in which Michele Ann Yentes, 19, said she had been raped by a black man on the Oval on her way home from the Main Library.

Marchers assembled in front of the library, then marched to the site of the alleged rape.

During the march, students held signs and chanted, "No more lies," while moving toward the center of the Oval.

Some of the signs read, "We Love Our Black Men" and "No More Lies.

Joseph Smith, president of the Black Association for North Campus Students, said there were three purposes of the march. The first purpose was to make America aware of its history of falsely accusing and prosecuting blacks for imaginary crimes committed by the majority race, he said.

Smith said the second purpose was to warn the OSU community and all Americans that the arbitrary prosecution of blacks will no longer be tolerated.

"In light of the fact that this is not the first time the Pan-African community has been wrongly accused and harassed, and subsequently depicted as barbaric, we demand this institution take serious actions that demonstrate its commitment to cultural diversity," Mbooge said.

Vice President for Academic Affairs Fred Hutchinson said in a written statement, "When an individual member of the Ohio State community acts in a manner that can be construed as racist or stereotypical, including the false reporting of a rape, the university commits itself to deal with the pain and anger of all persons hurt by the event."

Larry Williams, assistant director of the Black Cultural Center, said he is glad the students took the initiative to do something about the falsehood Yentes created.

Cynthia Rawls, a junior from Cincinnati, said, "I wanted to come to the march and to help take a stand with other African-Americans."

The Black Association for North Campus Students and other black student groups plan to follow up on the actions made by the university following the march, Smith said.

At the end of the rally, David Harrison, program coordinator of the Office of Minority Affairs, said, "United, we become strong."

false report made to campus police on Oct. 4 in which an OSU student said she had been raped by a black man on her way home from the Main Library.
Letter pledges continued vigil against racism

Editor’s note: The following letter was sent by Frederick Hutchinson, vice president for academic affairs and provost, to the Black Association of North Campus Students addressing their concerns about a recent alleged false rape charge the students believe furthers racism.

April 11, 1990
To the leadership of The Black Association of North Campus Students and all African-American students at The Ohio State University:

This institution and those who lead it abhor and reject any action or activity that is intended to or results in an increase in mistrust, mistreatment, or violence against any person or group. We abhor and reject the stereotyping of any person or group, and we recognize the pain incurred by those persons victimized by stereotyping itself.

When an individual member of the Ohio State community acts in a manner that can be construed as racist or stereotypical, including the false reporting of a rape, the University commits itself to deal with the pain and anger of all persons hurt by the event.

Today there are at least two groups for us to think about and to assist.

To African-American men and women of the Ohio State campus, we deeply regret any pain this incident may have caused you and pledge to work with you to end such stereotypical behavior.

To all women of Ohio State, we recognize that recent events may have hardened the fear in some of you that rape will not be considered the intolerable evil that it is, and will not be treated as both a crime and an invasion of your privacy and your rights. We want to assure you that this is not the case.

I am aware that issues have been raised in the African-American community regarding the use of Crime Alerts. I want to assure you that Crime Alerts are issued only after a thorough review and in a non-discriminatory manner. The University Police have handled the investigation of this incident in a complete and professional manner.

This University is committed to preserve and protect the rights of individuals and groups, to seek justice, and to create an environment of understanding and support for all its members.

To these ends, we have filed a criminal charge against an individual, and the University Office of Judicial Affairs also has instituted appropriate proceedings under the Code of Student Conduct. Concurrently, we are committed to work with you to whom this letter is addressed to combat the derogatory and stereotypically slanderous image of African-American males, and to continue dialogue with you on this and other related matters of your concern.

Sincerely,
Frederick E. Hutchinson
Vice President for Academic Affairs and Provost