Community Policing on a College Campus [Part 1]

by Officer Andrew Ryan, Butler University Police Department - 4/20/09

For this installment of the Journal, we will present a paper submitted as part of the Master Instructor program. It has been edited slightly for length and divided into two parts for presentation in the Journal. Officer Andrew Ryan, of the Butler University Police Department, is the author and gives us his perspective on how community policing has come full circle in campus law enforcement.

Part 1 of this two part paper examines the historical development of today's campus law enforcement model. Part 2 will identify why campus law enforcement lends itself to the community policing model and how this can be implemented. Although campus law enforcement is a unique segment of the law enforcement community, many of the approaches Officer Ryan identifies can be used by other agencies as well.

Introduction

Community Oriented Policing is a philosophy whose precepts can be traced back to the ideology advocated by Sir Robert Peel who in 1829 founded, the Metropolitan Police force in London. Peel, whose motto was the "Police are the public and the public are the police," believed the police, must give full-time attention to the duties that are incumbent on every citizen. One hundred and seventy five years later, departments nationwide through the initiatives of Community Policing embrace the philosophy of Peel.

History of Policing

Policing in America began with a philosophy of community responsibility. Each individual citizen played a role in the enforcement of the law and meeting the goals of crime prevention, maintaining order, and apprehending criminals.

During the period from 1920-1980, there was a shift from the neighborhood policing philosophy of crime prevention to that of crime suppression. With the advent of the automobile and the two-way radio, the shift went from the officer walking a beat to patrolling a district. The interaction between the officer and community member became less frequent as the officer became more reactive rather than proactive. Departments became more centralized in command and the street officer had less of a voice in how policing was accomplished.

Starting in the 1990's, there was a transformation from reactive policing to proactive policing by means of a philosophy of community policing. Prior policing methods proved to be ineffective in combating increased criminal activity.

Community Policing

Community policing is a philosophy of policing based upon the concepts that police officers and citizens can work together to solve the problem of crime. Decision making authority is given directly to the street officer allowing for more discretion and freedom to work with the community. Community Policing brings back the ideology of Sir Robert Peel of service to the community. Community Policing can also be defined as the philosophy of involving a police officer in a specific section of the community. The key element is geographic ownership. The officer works to organize the resources of the community, the police department and other agencies, to reduce crime and meet the appropriate needs of the community.

The evolution of policing on a college or university campus was vastly different than that of policing a city or municipality. Starting in 1894 at Yale University, home of the very first campus law enforcement police agency, personalized customer service has always been the main focus. (Shoemaker, 1995 p. 27). This service came from the idea that the college assumes the role of the foster parent once the student arrives onto campus. The university establishes the basis for meeting the needs of the student as well as establishing codes of conduct and rules of acceptable behavior. Campus policing embraced that role by being responsible for the safety and security of the students. This holistic approach, in public safety, existed for several years.

At the end of WWII the number of students attending college grew with the formation of the GI bill. There now existed a melting pot of students ranging from the traditional student fresh out of high school, to those returning from wartime service, to those who were married with children working full time jobs and attending classes at night. The social and political ideologies of those attending college during the 1950s and 1960s fueled by the tensions of the civil rights movement and the Vietnam War caused the change in campus policing from a public safety methodology to a more traditional police force.

Widespread diversity changes within the student body that occurred on many campuses nationwide in the late 1970's and 1980s, resulted in an increase in crime. As colleges and universities continued to grow, so did the opportunity for crime. University police and security departments continued to approach law enforcement in a traditional manner. There began a period of isolation where university administrators followed the philosophy that what happens on our campus is our business and we will handle it.

This all changed with the passing of Federal Legislation entitled The Campus Security and Student Right to Know Act of 1990. (later renamed the Jeanann Clery Act in honor of a student who was raped and murdered on the campus of Lehigh in 1988.) This legislative mandate requires colleges and universities to report specific crimes that are reported in and around their campus. This report must include crime statistics for the current year and for the two proceeding years. It must contain the university drug and alcohol policies and list drug, alcohol and weapons arrests made by the campus police department. It must contain information on the type and number of crime prevention programs held and outline the law enforcement jurisdiction of the campus police or security department. The report is to be published and made available to anyone who requests a copy. The annual crime statistics must be submitted to the [federal] Department of Education (DOE), by October 31st of every year.

With the passing of the Clery Act, colleges and universities for the first time had to admit there was crime on their campus. Students, parents and more importantly prospective students could now use this information in weighing what institution of higher education they would be attending. University and public safety administrators once again looked at the ideology of community policing to help reduce crime and develop a relationship with the community it serves.

The philosophy of community policing is ideal for a college or university setting. The campus population is made up of students, faculty and staff who have commonality based on affiliation with the institution. The members of the community are more identifiable than that of a general populace. Campus boundaries and facilities are often easily identifiable. Subgroups within the institution can often be identified easily.

Community policing involves the ten following principles:

1. Community policing is both a philosophy and an organizational strategy.
2. Community policing's organizational strategy first demands that everyone in the department, including both civilian and sworn personnel, must investigate new ways to translate the philosophy into practice.
3. To implement true community policing, police departments must also create and develop a new breed of line officer, the Community Policing Officer (CPO).
4. The Community Policing Officer's broad role demands continuous sustained contact with law-abiding people in the community.
5. Community policing implies a new contract between the police and the citizens it serves, one that offers the hope of overcoming widespread apathy, at the same time it restrains any impulse of vigilantism.
6. Community policing adds a vital proactive element to the traditional reactive role of the police, resulting in the full spectrum of police service.
7. Community policing stresses exploring new ways to protect and enhance the lives of those who are most vulnerable; juveniles, the elderly, minorities, the poor, the disabled and the homeless.
8. Community policing promotes the judicious use of technology.
9. Community policing must be a fully integrated approach that involves everyone in the department. The CPOs act or serve as the specialists in bridging the gap between the police and the people they serve.
10. Community policing provides decentralized, personalized service to the community. (Virginia Department of Community Services, 1994)

These principles are easily implemented within a university police department. This foundation can be set by first establishing a community policing mission statement that reflects the philosophy of community policing.

The development of the mission statement should involve all members of the department to allow for ownership of the program and ease of implementation of programs and overall philosophy.

Part 2 of this paper, "**Community on a College Campus**", will be published here on the Journal page soon.