Each year our nation loses between 140-160 law enforcement officers in the line of duty. National Police Week in May is dedicated to honoring America’s law enforcement community, and National Law Enforcement Appreciation Day is celebrated January 9th. Both are an opportunity for individuals to stand with law enforcement agencies in order to foster police-community relationships and to express our gratitude for their bravery, especially in a national climate that can forget those sacrifices. For The University of Scranton, September 20th served as our relationship-building event when we held the first Annual Campus Safety Awareness Day. University Police and several other partners from within Student Formation & Campus Life assembled in order to offer crime prevention tips, information on alcohol awareness, fire safety skills, and other personal safety advice to students and employees of the University. The event served as an opportunity to promote our programs collectively and in collaboration with many University partners including the Jane Kopas Women’s Center, CHEW, the Office of Equity & Diversity, Off-Campus and Commuter Student Life, and Student Government. At the Office of Equity & Diversity’s table, students were able to take a pledge to stand up to, and speak out against sexual assault. The Office of Environmental Health and Safety displayed an automated external defibrillator (AED), promoted fire safety, and provided digital fire extinguisher training. Students had the opportunity to try on “impairment goggles,” which distort the wearer’s vision to simulate the effects of heavy alcohol consumption on the body. While wearing the goggles, students struggled to walk in a straight line and had problems driving a golf cart in a closed course. Pennsylvania Liquor Enforcement, Scranton Police K-9, and the Lackawanna County Sheriff’s Office Mounted Unit only added to the excitement. Although the event was primarily educational, it was designed to improve the relationship between students and law enforcement officials, to promote safety, and demonstrate to students that we are available and see ourselves as partners, as we believe that safety is a shared responsibility. Thank you to all those who participated, and for all of the hard work that went into planning this event. We look forward to hosting this event on an annual basis and will continue to work with our University partners and colleagues in local law enforcement in order to provide our community with opportunities to live, grow, and learn.
Evacuation Maps

In an effort to better educate the University community on emergency evacuation principles, the Office of Environmental Health & Safety, in conjunction with University Police, updated and revised community-wide Emergency Evacuation Maps. Maps have been posted in the lobby of each residence hall and will be posted in all academic and administrative buildings by the Spring of 2017. Evacuation maps provide students, faculty, and staff with invaluable information that should be used during emergent situations including the closest exit point, stairwells, and Areas of Rescue Assistance. These maps also provide the location of the designated Rally Point (the area in which individuals should report to during an evacuation) for each specific building. If you have any questions regarding Environmental Health and Safety (EHS) issues, please contact University Police.

PA State Trooper Meet and Greet

This semester Student Officers were afforded the opportunity to meet with members of the Pennsylvania State Police in order to discuss the application process, eligibility requirements for admittance to the PSP, and what to expect upon graduating from the academy. Many of our SOs join the program because they hope to pursue a career in Law Enforcement and were grateful for the ability to speak candidly with recruiters on a personal level. We extend a special thanks to Christina Whitney, Director of the Center for Career Development, for organizing this meeting and providing a chance for our students to grow professionally.

UPD Swears in Two Officers

On August 5th, 2016, Ofc. Susan Laguzzi, Ofc. Matthew Baux and Derek Fozard, the Dispatch and Communications Supervisor, were sworn in as University Police Officers by Judge Vito Geroulo of the Lackawanna County Court of Common Pleas. Ofc. Laguzzi, a 2010 graduate of the Lackawanna Police Academy, is the newest Per Diem Police officer to join UPD. Susan also currently works part time for both the U.S. Marshals and the Dunmore Police Department. Ofc. Baux, a 2016 graduate of the Lackawanna Police Academy, currently works for UPD in the capacity of a Service Officer and now, due to his newly sworn status, will be able to fill in as a Patrol Officer when needed. Disp. Supervisor Fozard comes to UPD after retiring from the PA State Police with over 25 years of service. During his tenure with PSP Derek worked as a patrol officer, a criminal investigator, and most recently was the supervisor for the Area 2, Computer Crimes Unit. Congratulations to all three of our newly sworn UPD officers, as we welcome them to The University of Scranton.
S.A.F.E. Training

On November 7, 2016, University Police hosted a S.A.F.E. (Self-defense Awareness and Familiarization Exchange) instructor training attended by various police/public safety agencies from the tri-state area. S.A.F.E. was developed by the National Self-Defense Institute (NSDI) for the purpose of helping teenage and adult women reduce their risk of exposure to violence by providing valuable information and a familiarization with certain physical aspects of self-defense. While not an in-depth self-defense program, S.A.F.E. provides women with a solid foundation of personal safety awareness information that can be easily incorporated into their everyday lives.

The core philosophy of S.A.F.E. is that "90% of self-defense is awareness, risk reduction, and avoiding confrontation; and only 10% is physical," accordingly, the program focuses on risk reduction and awareness as the key components to avoiding potentially hazardous situations.

The class is comprised of two parts: The first is a 30-minute information-session centered around the 12 individual topics highlighted in the program (see image above) and also includes many other safety awareness tips for common activities. These tips outline best safety practices while at home, in parking lots, while shopping, and when utilizing social media. Since 90% of self-defense is awareness and good decision making skills, the information in these tips are the strongest tool for protecting yourself against an attack before it even happens. To cover the remaining 10% of self-defense, the S.A.F.E. program provides a 1 ½ hour familiarization with basic physical self-defense options, stressing that there is no ‘one-size-fits-all’ approach to defending yourself. As such, “the final decision about what to do in a particular situation must rest with the person who is actually confronted”. It is important to recognize that you are your own best defense, and being both physically and mentally prepared for any situation is a great starting point for protecting yourself and increasing your chances for survival.

In the coming months UPD will be scheduling multiple sessions of the 2-hour class for any women interested in augmenting their personal safety skills. Classes may also be scheduled at the request of clubs/organizations on campus. For more information on the S.A.F.E. program please visit: www.nsdi.org
I learned of the Student Officer program during freshman orientation just prior to the start of my collegiate studies at The University of Scranton. I remember the Chair of the Criminal Justice Department mentioning it as a possible opportunity for introductory experience, but it wasn’t until I spoke with the Lieutenant of the SO program at the time, DJ Yetrespsky, that I felt truly encouraged to join the program. I knew it would be a great opportunity for me to get my foot in the door while building upon the skills necessary for my future career in law enforcement.

An average day as a Student Officer starts with a brief meeting where the SO supervisors relay any necessary and beneficial information to the rest of their squad, including any special events, postings, or required duties for the day. SOs are then assigned to ‘rounds’ throughout the residence halls, academic buildings, or other areas in and around campus. These patrols serve as our main duty, and is the reason that Student Officers are often referred to as the “eyes-and ears” of the Police. During our patrols we report anything out of the ordinary or potentially hazardous such as: non-working lights, unlocked residence halls or academic buildings, and any other suspicious behaviors. Aside from the aforementioned duties, Student Officers also assist University Police in enforcing parking regulations throughout University surface lots, and stand with police in directing traffic during busy days such as Open House, Preview Day, and student Move-Ins. All student Officers are certified in CPR/First Aid and AED application during our Academy Week, so we too respond to any medical emergencies occurring on campus when needed.

In my capacity as a supervisor, I have been a member of interview panels in charge of hiring new Student Officers and the selection processes tasked with promoting students from within our ranks. I have also facilitated and supervised the training of new Student Officers, both in Academy Week and in scenario-based trainings which has proved to be one of my favorite aspects of the job. Serving as a role model to my fellow classmates is such a rewarding experience for me personally and professionally, and I dare say I would not have been afforded such opportunities had I not been part of the Student Officer Program. I have known since I was a small child that I wanted to be a law enforcement officer, and my tenure with this program has only enhanced my desire to enter this field. Being that I am someone who is currently applying for jobs, I can confidently say that I feel as though I have a leg up on my competition as a direct result of my participation with this program. Both the skills I have obtained, and my experiences as a ranking supervisor have given me the knowledge, skills, and abilities to be successful in the line of work I wish to pursue. My goal is to one day come back and give the department a patch of the department I work for. That way, I can join the many other Student Officers who are gainfully employed with many great municipal, state, and federal agencies who, like me, feel as though this program is, was, or will be the reason they are successful in their line of work.

Throughout my years as a Student Officer I have gained countless necessary skills, built great relationships, and taken advantage of the many opportunities UPD has offered to me. Both the University Police Officers and the SOs alike have turned out to be great mentors, connections, and friends, and I hope I can maintain them forever. I am incredibly thankful to be a part of such a great program, and look forward to building off of my experiences and translating them into my professional life.