University Tests Lockdown Procedures

Donald Bergmann

We were again reminded of the importance of being able to quickly secure our campus while watching an active shooter incident unfold at Oregon’s Umpqua Community College on October 1, 2015. A heavily armed suspect was ultimately killed during an exchange of gunfire with responding officers, but regardless, the event served as a warning to all those in campus law enforcement. The shooting was reported to have started in one building, before the gunman moved to the school’s science building. Many of the commentators on the news questioned the gunman’s ability to quickly navigate campus, and why nothing had been done to prevent him from gaining entry into additional buildings and potentially save lives.

At the time, The University of Scranton had already been making strides to devise a better way to secure buildings should an issue arise on campus. Prior to this project, each individual building had to be manually secured by a Facilities staff member which would be extremely difficult to accomplish during an actual emergency. After extensive research on best practices at other Universities, UPD met with Patrick Mullarkey of IT and Mark Murphy of Facilities to coordinate a site visit at Mansfield College who already had the ability to remotely lock buildings through use of their Blackboard Transact system. Blackboard Transact is a system we also utilize at the University of Scranton, but due to the fact that our campuses have a slightly different set up, the visit was essential in verifying the project’s feasibility on our campus.

After multiple planning meetings, The University began improving security by installing locks on all classroom doors and installed the appropriate hardware on each residence hall entrance. We also worked with Ray Frey and Calvin Krzywiec from IT in order to facilitate the installation of video surveillance cameras at each residence hall entrance. Finally, last summer the University completed the access control project by installing appropriate hardware on all academic and administrative buildings. After some initial software issues and upgrades, we successfully tested our ability to secure all doors on October 9th 2017 during Fall Break. University Police are now able to restrict access to buildings on campus to Royal Card holders only, lock down an individual building, or completely lockdown all buildings by deactivating all card access remotely through the Emergency Communications Center. The appropriate level of access on campus would be determined based on the circumstances or seriousness of the threat, and can easily be adjusted based on the changing needs or the situation in a matter of seconds. It is a goal of The University of Scranton to stay up to date on trending security features, and we are grateful to those who made this project possible.
The University Police Department is constantly looking for ways to make campus a place where living and learning can flourish, and this academic year we did so by increasing our community policing efforts. Community policing is not a new concept at the University of Scranton, in fact, UPD has many long standing programs such as walking safety escorts, the Royal Ride, and basic crime prevention seminars. However, this year University Police intentionally added to, and augmented our programming efforts in order to increase safety and personal awareness on campus. One of our newest initiatives, ‘Coffee With Cops’, is an informal program that allows students, faculty, and staff to engage with University Police Officers, learn about UPD programs, and familiarize themselves with available safety-related resources. With nearly 400 attendees between the two offered sessions, we consider ‘Coffee with Cops’ to be a success and look forward to hosting this program on a regular basis in the future.

Building upon the theme of increased safety-related partnerships and programming, UPD joined the Office of Off-Campus & Commuter Student Life for a pop-up event on Mulberry Street during Alcohol Awareness week. This initiative, which took place just before Halloween, provided off-campus students with a plethora of information including the dangers of over-consumption, social hosting, and potential local ordinances fines. University Police also partnered with the Information Technology Department for an event entitled ‘Student Safety and Security: UP-IT’ to promote online safety tips and cyber awareness. Being that identify theft and security breaches are becoming increasingly common and effect both departments, it was an obvious partnership and one we will continue to offer to the community in the future. Another new addition to University Police programming is the ‘Refuse to be a Victim’ training. Refuse to be a Victim is a nationally recognized crime prevention and personal safety program designed to provide men and women with information that assists in the development of their own personal safety strategies. The program seeks to build confidence through an understanding of risk and personal safety strategies and has been specifically tailored to our University community in order to be more impactful. This program will be offered each semester, and like S.A.F.E., UPD’s intro to self-defense program, Refuse to be a Victim can be scheduled for you specific office or group by contacting University Police. As we make our way through the academic year, we will provide more opportunities for community engagement and will continue to look for ways to better serve and protect the community through the delivery of a caring competent police force.

The University of Scranton plans to offer a 28 passenger, handicap accessible, shuttle bus to transport athletes and spectators to and from the new Kevin P. Quinn, S.J., Athletics Campus, located along Broadway Street in Scranton. The new field will be home of the University's men and women's soccer, men and women's lacrosse, field hockey, and baseball and softball teams. The shuttle will begin operating on a normal schedule in the spring of 2018. This shuttle service to the new athletics campus will dramatically improve the quality of life of our student athletes who were previously responsible for finding their own transportation to and from practices and games.
University Police support fundraiser for SPD Officer

In early October University Police were made aware of a fundraising effort for Scranton Police Officer Chris Hallock, who was diagnosed with AML-Ft3, an aggressive type of Leukemia. Officer Hallock who is 33 years old, has only been on the City Police force for a few years becoming sworn in 2009.

Seeing that The University of Scranton Police department is one of the larger departments in Lackawanna County, we decided to start a collection and raise money to sponsor an item to be raffled off at the “Hallock’s Hero” benefit organized by the FOP auxiliary committee. Our officers were very generous towards the cause, and we ultimately were able to raise $300 towards the purchase of a crossbow. Additionally, because the purchase was going to such a great cause, Field and Stream of Dickson City graciously gave us a generous discount on the crossbow and also included accessories to make it a complete package. In total, 97 baskets and prizes were donated for the raffle, raising over $6,000 that will go directly to assisting Officer Hallock, his wife Angela, and his 11 week-old son Giovanni for the duration of his treatment. In addition, a GoFundMe account was set up to assist Officer Hallock, which has raised over $21,530 at the time of this article.

Many UPD officers were present for the event, and it is times like these that the true brother and sisterhood we call law enforcement is evident. I was honored to have been able to assist during this fund raising effort for Officer Hallock, and was very proud of the generous outpouring of support from my fellow Officers at The University of Scranton Police Department.

Balancing Cura Personalis and Cura Apostolica

I had the pleasure of sitting with Fr. Patrick Rogers at the Mission Priority Examen Open Forum where we engaged in conversation about Cura Personalis, and the potential conflict it poses for us as law enforcement officers at the University of Scranton. It was in this discussion that Fr. Rogers introduced me to the term ‘Cura Apostolica’ and the significance this term plays for University Police:

“Cura Apostolica- Care for the Apostolate or Work. In this case, it is the care we have to take concerning the overall vitality of The University of Scranton. Cura Personalis and Cura Apostolica are two values in the Jesuit world, and our vocations as managers and administrators is to keep these two core values in balance. Of course, we all desire to care for each and every student/staff/faculty in their individual need and circumstance. However, there are times when individuals disrupt our community and throw it out of balance. At times like this we managers and administrators have to consider protecting the good work of the university (cura apostolica) against the needs/desires of the individual….For example, I think it is a legitimate response to someone who has done damage to our communal property to be penalized and asked to make restitution to their colleagues and peers. This is Cura Apostolica in action, caring for the overall health of the university while maintaining the dignity of the responsible party as much as possible.”

-Fr. Patrick Rogers, Executive Director of the Jesuit Center

Cura Personalis IS a hallmark of Jesuit education, and an ideal that we often highlight here at The University of Scranton, but we must also recognize at times, especially in the case of wrong doing, that the overall wellbeing of the community must come before the individual. It is not to say that one is more important than the other, just that we must keep both values, the individual and the community, in balance to the best of our abilities.
Most members of the University community are familiar with the Student Officer Program. These are the students often seen walking around campus in their blue polos, black pants, two-way radio, with keys in hand. They are recognized for patrolling campus, supporting University Police with an active fire alarm, or assisting a community member who needs to gain access to their room/building. However, few understand the pivotal role SOs play on campus, and how much they assist the Police Department in maintaining a safe and healthy atmosphere for the University community.

Unbeknownst to some, Student Officers are on campus year-round and support University Police in performing many public safety functions such as traffic details, annual inspections of the emergency call boxes, and monthly fire-safety inspections on all university owned buildings. This task consists of visually inspecting all fire suppression apparatus and all Automatic External Deliberators (AEDs) to ensure they are in proper working order. In addition to this, SOs assist University Police answer questions from students and their families about campus safety during all First Year Orientation sessions, and help UPD by supporting the logistics of the event. Student Officers also assist in instructing “Active Shooter” Training to the incoming student class during their Fall Welcome.

Student Officers are of major assistance to University Police and Admissions staff during the Fall Open Houses and Accepted Students Day in the spring. Generally 12-14 SOs are positioned to guide guests to parking lots, and their assistance allows traffic to flow smoothly on and around campus. This supports the 3-5 UPD officers on shift for the event, and permits them to be available for other tasks and respond to emergencies should they arise. Student Officers are also vital to the University for Move in Day, where they too, manage traffic, direct families to designated areas, and serve as a point of contact for those students and parents requiring assistance.

On a regular shift, Student Officers patrol campus including academic buildings, the library, and residence halls, as well as maintain a presence at sporting and community events. SOs also respond to fire alarms and/or medical calls on campus, and are often the first on-scene to these events depending on the proximity of the incident to a designated patrol zone. Student Officers assist in building evacuations during the fire drills that are conducted each semester, and oversee parking enforcement during the day. Most significantly SOs are involved in community outreach programs run by UPD including ‘Coffee with Cops’ ‘Campus Safety Awareness Day’, Pedestrian Safety Events, and other collaborative programs hosted by departments within the University. These events often require additional hands on deck, and regardless of the task, we are happy to be able to support University Police in everything they do.