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UC San Diego

# UC San Diego News Center

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By Bryant Lim      Feb 28, 2013

## Behind the Navy Blue and Gold Shield: An Inside Look at the UC San Diego Police Department

Two dogs, family photos and a Ronald Reagan quote, "It Can Be Done" are what characterize Orville King's office. The balance between compassion and duty are what characterize the University of California, San Diego Police Department (UCSDPD). With nearly 43 years of experience in law enforcement, Orville King has spent the last 11 years here as chief of the UCSDPD. Despite his extensive involvement, he also has experience in the classroom, having taught social sciences and criminal justice at the high school level. No stranger to either the academic or law enforcement world, King enjoys the rewards and responsibilities of his work.



Although a university police department, the UCSDPD has all the qualities of a full-fledged, municipal police department—and more. Having to attend to a campus with a mid-day population of students, faculty and staff upwards of around 50,000, the department is responsible for the security, enforcement, investigation and crime prevention of essentially a small city.

Despite running like a typical city police department, UC San Diego's police team is cognizant of the fact that this is a "transitional time" for students, most of whom have had few real-life experiences.

"They deserve that time," King said. "A big part of what we do is education and listening to what the students have to say, and getting them where want to be, safely."

Able to devote time to preventative measures, the UCSDPD coordinates with other university entities including the Sexual Assault Resource Center (SARC) and Facilities and Management to address campus lighting, shrubbery and vandalism. The department holds various programs such as Rape Aggression Defense (RAD) and Active Shooter presentations to prepare students, staff and faculty. Aware of other campus risks, the UCSDPD also implements procedures and protocols such as Responsible Action Protocol (RAP), which encourages students to call in for assistance with alcohol-related emergencies without fear of conduct sanction the first time.

One of the reasons that the UCSDPD might be more understanding of student life and more devoted to campus safety is that the staff consists of a number of UC San Diego alumni. With 15 of a total of 67 employees calling UC San Diego their alma mater, the department finds itself connected to the campus in many ways, but seeking, first-and-foremost, to educate.

“We enjoy a nice handful of alumni here at the department,” explained Captain David Rose, a former UC San Diego alumnus himself. Neither revenue-based nor prone to large hiring seasons, the department is able to promote a community environment and select new officers who, as Rose says, “understand what this community is about.”

Though relatively safe, the campus community is by no means an impervious bubble. Police department dispatcher and UC San Diego alumna Leone Posod knows this and is always attentive to incoming callers. “I always err on the side of caution when receiving reports of suspicious activity,” says Posod, who works the graveyard shift. At times, these scenarios can escalate to a more serious degree.

Investigating and controlling potentially harmful persons is one of the many tasks on the campus police officer’s to-do list, as Pat Dobbins knows. A 1999 UC San Diego graduate, Dobbins has been with the Police Department for 11 years and exemplifies the department’s connection with the university and its commitment to ensuring campus safety. There is no typical shift for Dobbins, but on a recent evening he received a call concerning a suspicious person and arrived at the scene. Along with fellow officers, he approached a transient who allegedly attempted a break-in with questionable activity in the Warren Housing area. Just as they finished with their report, Dobbins answered another call—all in a night’s work for the UCSDPD.

Aside from university duties, department personnel also volunteer and help raise support for a variety of off-campus organizations and events—-independent of university funding. During the Christmas season, officers participate in the “Shop With A Cop” program in which disadvantaged children are accompanied by officers to SeaWorld and Target to purchase gifts for themselves and their families. Officers donate their own money to the program. The department also provides impounded bicycles to the Donovan Correctional Facility, where prisoners refurbish them to donate to disadvantaged children living in San Diego County.

Likening the campus security mentality to a neighborhood watch, King notes that it’s a special environment of “people who care for each other.” Comprised of staff members and alumni, the UCSDPD are a part of the group they serve, and they serve it with vigor. As King puts it “The police department is here to serve the community – that’s our calling.”

To learn more about the UC San Diego Police Department, visit [police.ucsd.edu](http://police.ucsd.edu). For general assistance or to report a crime, call (858) 534 - HELP.

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