

Community Service Officer Program established at UCSD

August 5, 1981

In an effort to reduce the potential for crime on campus, the University of California, San Diego has established a Community Service Officer Program. Under the direction of the campus police and in coordination with a campus-wide advisory committee, the program utilizes student employees to perform escort duties and other crime prevention functions.

The primary responsibility of the Community Service Officer Program is to provide an escort service from 5 p.m. until 1:30 a.m., including weekends. While the students are not law enforcement officers, they are equipped with two-way radios so they can communicate directly with the campus police.

"Our hours are going to be flexible, we might start an hour later if 5 p.m. is too early," stated Clark Martin, a sergeant with the campus police and one of the initiators of the program. "It's a new program and we're going to be flexible with it."

The program was initiated in response to campus concern and a desire for a nighttime escort service. The campus police department suggested a community service officer program, an effort which has been successful at UC Santa Barbara, UC Davis and UCLA.

"This program is a service to our students, staff, faculty and visitors," said George Himel, Materiel Manager at UC San Diego and chairman of the Campus Security Advisory Committee. "The program also broadens our communications efforts. Police response time should be considerably quicker."

During their nightly shifts the student escorts patrol a designated area of the campus performing safety checks, lighting checks and some parking regulation (such as handicapped parking and 24-hour permit zones). Since they are radio dispatched for escort assignments, response time is expected to be minimal.

The students are clad in easily identifiable yellow golf shirts or yellow windbreakers with "Community Service Officer" printed in bold blue lettering across the shoulders. During summer and holidays two students patrol nightly, but there will be at least four students on duty each night in the fall when classes are in session.

When visiting the campus at night all persons are encouraged to park as close to their destination as possible. After 5 p.m. permits are not needed to park at UC San Diego, except for specifically designated 24-hour and handicapped zones. Any staff, student, faculty or visitor wishing to use the escort service should call the campus police department at 452-HELP (university extension 4357).

Currently the university is recruiting a crime prevention specialist, whose job duties will include supervising the Community Service Officer Program. Campus officials expect to have the position filled by the time students arrive in September.

Monitoring the effectiveness of the program will be the Campus Security Advisory Committee. Comprised of student, faculty and staff members, this six-member committee was formed in the spring of 1981 to address the problem of crime on campus. In addition to the Community Service Officer Program, the committee is also studying the possibility of installing call boxes on campus to provide direct phone lines to the campus police.

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