

Student Life Committee Minutes November 27, 2002

Members attending: Kris Bartanen, Heather Douglas, Betsy Gast, Duane Hulbert, Diane Kelley, Kurt Walls, Carrie Washburn

Guest: Todd Badham, Director of Security

Betsy Gast called the meeting to order at 8:10. The minutes of November 13 were approved as submitted.

As discussion opened, Todd asked the purpose of the Student Life Committee. Kris provided a brief overview of committee responsibilities and the process by which the particular charge related to students' relationship with Security Services came to the committee. In response to her comment that there is confusion regarding the jurisdiction of Security Services being limited to the campus, Todd explained that Security does go into the neighborhood to provide escort service. When Security Services staff members are providing escort, they are attentive to situations in the neighborhood and would respond to situations where they perceive a civic duty to do so (e.g., observing a student vehicle being broken into). Escort service provides rides for students to and from campus at night in about a mile and one-half radius. Escort service is a lower priority than some other situations that may arise on campus, so students may have to wait 10-15 minutes if Security staff members are responding elsewhere. Security Services also provides short-term assistance to students, in coordination with Ivey West and John Hickey, in cases where an injury (e.g., broken leg) requires temporary accommodation such as transportation to and from classes.

Kris asked about responsibilities of professional staff and student staff members. Todd explained that, in addition to himself and Assistant Director Danette Smith, there are now seven full-time professional staff members. This team works 24 hours/7 days per week; each officer works four ten-hour shifts per week and rotates through a four-week day/swing/graveyard schedule. In contrast to the past, student staff members now are used on a more limited basis and are not asked to respond to potentially volatile or dangerous situations. Student staff duties include foot escort, lock-up and unlock, building checks, and light medical aid (e.g., bumps and bruises). Professional staff members also share a roster of administrative duties, such as regular updating of campus first-aid/disaster response supplies, monthly fire and burglar alarms checks, statistical reporting required by law, managing the student staff schedule, and—in development—proactive crime prevention programs for campus residents.

Training of Security Services staff is ongoing, but complicated by the difficulty of taking staff away from shift duties. There are not quick seminars available to which staff can simply drop in. A majority of officers join the staff with law enforcement experience; Todd and Danette work with staff on campus-specific training and other issues that arise. The recent gunshot incident on campus is an example of a situation that has generated new training issues.

Duane asked about Security Services protocol for respecting students' privacy and entry into their residences. Todd explained that the Residence Policy, published in the Logger, outlines the importance of respecting student privacy and the responsibility that Security Services has for student safety. In life/death situations, everyone would want Security to enter a student residence. In less immediate crisis situations, Security staff brings more people (e.g., Student Development staff) into consultation in deciding whether to enter a student's room. Heather asked about the 24-hour notice provisions in the Residence Policy, noting that the exceptions seemed broad. Todd and Kris discussed situations that might require immediate entry (e.g., a broken pipe with water flowing, a malfunctioning fire alarm) vs. situations that might be appropriate for 24-hour notice (e.g., upgrading of computer hubs or a short in an alarm system that is not creating immediate danger or disruption). Heather suggested amending the policy to say "student requested or non-routine" maintenance. Todd affirmed that in any situation where 24-hour notice can be given, Security will provide that notice.

Carrie returned to the topic of professional staff training and asked whether new officers receive training about working with independent-thinking, young adults. Todd explained that job announcements express a preference for college security experience, but that applicants with such experience are rare. Job interviews include a set of questions about working with situations in campus situations. Once hired, officers receive regular daily training and feedback from Todd and Danette. One adjustment officers need to make is that our campus conduct process is more educationally-based than a law enforcement process.

Diane asked what Security Services perceives is students' perception of their office. Todd responded that there are, and will probably always be, a small number of students who have gotten into trouble who are unhappy with Security Services. Heather asked about Security Services' perception of the Student Integrity Code and process. Todd responded that the process tends to be on the lenient side and that a great proportion of campus resources are put into a very small group of student troublemakers. Security Services supports the value of giving students a second chance and an opportunity to learn, but there are also times when a "tough love" stance is reasonable and appropriate.

Duane asked about student staff members who work graveyard shifts and the impact of that work on their academic performance. Todd explained that the move to professional staff was made, in part, for that concern. Student officers now work only four nights per week (Thurs-Sun) and the schedule is adjusted to accommodate their tests or other class demands. Student dispatchers work only four or five hour shifts and can negotiate their scheduling as well.

Todd provided the additional context that he worked as a Security Services staff while a student at Puget Sound and, thus, brings over twenty years' perspective on the evolution of safety and security on the campus. Heather asked what he would like to see improve over the next decade. He suggested that staffing will continue to be an issue, as it is still difficult to recruit students for all the shifts that are needed; that advancing technology will be important to maintain; and that the Director's day-to-day time needs to shift from field work to greater ability to build relationships and attend to administrative responsibilities.

Kris distributed results from the 1999-2002 ACUHO-I Resident Surveys, an annual nationally-normed assessment of students' residential experience. On questions related to campus security, our students report significant satisfaction. Campus security ranks in the top set of results relative to other campuses.

The committee expressed a wish that Todd join the December 11 meeting in order to continue conversation on questions and issues. [Betsy confirmed this arrangement by subsequent email.]

The committee adjourned at 8:50.

Respectfully submitted,

Kris Bartanen