

SENATE COMMITTEE ON STUDENT AFFAIRS  
MINUTES OF MEETING  
FEBRUARY 7, 2007

[In these minutes: Department of Public Safety Update]

[These minutes reflect discussion and debate at a meeting of a committee of the University Senate; none of the comments, conclusions, or actions reported in these minutes represent the view of, nor are they binding on the Senate, the Administration, or the Board of Regents.]

PRESENT: Maria McRae, chair, Kendre Turonie, Amelious Whyte, Jean-Marie Del-Santo, Jennifer Engler, Andy Howe, Catherine Solheim, Jessica Arett, Eric Brown, Maureen Kunkler, Jeffrey Wencil, Olga Zakharenko

REGRETS: Jon Ruzek, Kim Roufs, Hilary Ploeckelmann, Caroline Younts, Gabriele Schmiegel

ABSENT: Nathan Pelzer, Carolyn Nayematsu, Ian McConnell

GUESTS: Assistant Vice President for Public Safety and University of Minnesota Chief of Police Greg Hestness, Deputy Police Chief Steve Johnson, Director of Central Security Bob Janowski, Director of Emergency Management Terry Cook and Vice President for University Services Kathleen O'Brien.

I). Maria McRae called the meeting to order and asked those present to introduce themselves.

II). Ms. McRae welcomed Chief of Police Greg Hestness and members of his staff to today's meeting. Chief Hestness was invited to provide the committee with a campus safety update, noted Ms. McRae. Highlights from his presentation included:

- The Department of Public Safety on the Twin Cities campus is made up of University Police, Department of Central Security and Department of Emergency Management. The Department of Central Security and Emergency Management also serve the coordinate campuses.
- This past year there have been a series of ongoing, sporadic, near to campus robberies of persons. Fortunately, there have not been any serious injuries reported as a result of these robberies.
- The University's Department of Public Safety falls under the purview of University Services, which Vice President Kathleen O'Brien oversees.
- Chief Hestness has worked at the University for approximately 4 years, and came here after retiring from the Minneapolis Police Department where he worked for over 28 years. Chief Hestness is a University of Minnesota graduate.
- Other Department of Public Safety personnel include:
  - Steve Johnson, deputy police chief.
  - Bob Janowski, director of Central Security.

- Terry Cook, director of Emergency Management.
- The University of Minnesota Police Department serves the Twin Cities campus, but has a relationship with UMM and UMD police. Central Security and Emergency Management not only serve the Twin Cities campus, but coordinate campuses as well.
- A majority of funding for Public Safety comes from central funding, or, in other words, tax dollars and tuition.
- The Police Department has been on campus for approximately 70 years. The Twin Cities campus currently has 47 officers.
- With roughly 270 buildings on campus and approximately 70,000 people on campus everyday, the Police Department relies heavily on partnerships and crime prevention and education.
- Central Security uses 800 cameras to monitor the campuses. Not only does Central Security monitor the Twin Cities campus but UMM and UMD too. Soon Central Security will be monitoring the Experiment Stations and Research Outreach Centers.
- Emergency Management has been on the Twin Cities campus for roughly 50 – 60 years. Emergency Management has updated the University's Emergency Operations Plan. This plan has been approved by the State of Minnesota, and has been used by other municipalities as a model.
- Public Safety has 3 primary objectives:
  - Make sure people on campus are safe.
  - Make people on campus feel safe.
  - Treat people on campus with fairness and respect.

Public Safety uses a variety of strategies to meet these objectives, e.g. strategies that increase training opportunities, strategies that enhance partnerships and communication, and strategies that enhance the University's security infrastructure to name a few.

- Earlier this year there was concern about personal safety on campus, some of which was not substantiated but other incidents that were clearly able to be substantiated. Over the past couple years there has been an increase in Minneapolis crime rates, e.g. property crimes have risen by 11%, Part 1 crimes increased by 15% and violent crimes have risen by 34%. Chief Hestness pointed out that these are serious numbers, but noted that the City of Minneapolis is faced with reduced policing resources, e.g. loss of 160 officers. The City is trying to increase the number of officers it has on staff. Until the City of Minneapolis Police is adequately staffed, the University Police Department will leverage its resources to help make the University and surrounding community safe.
- The single most frequent crime on campus is theft. There were 715 thefts on campus last year.
- Examples of initiatives the University of Minnesota Police Department are undertaking in order to reduce crime on and near campus:
  - Direct student and staff education.
  - Use of crime alerts and website.
  - Expand patrol into neighborhoods frequented by students, handling more calls and doing more proactive work.

- Cooperation with off-campus neighborhood and business associations.
- Increase use of surveillance cameras in public areas.
- Increase the visibility of officers on campus.

Chief Hestness concluded his presentation and opened the remaining time up for questions and answers. He also welcomed members' ideas in terms of how the Department Public Safety can communicate more effectively with students.

- The Como neighborhood is notorious for property crimes/robberies, will there be an increase in the number of officers patrolling this neighborhood in the future? Deputy Chief Johnson noted that above and beyond the work that the police can do, it is particularly important that neighborhood residents band together to reduce crime in their neighborhood. The biggest challenge faced by UMPD is educating residents before they become victims about getting to know their neighbors, and the importance of working with the police and community organizations as a means to thwart crime. Deputy Chief Johnson welcomed ideas from committee members on how the police can do this better.
- Does UMPD recommend that students and staff carry mace or pepper spray? In Chief Hestness' opinion, most people are not in the right state of mind to effectively use mace or pepper spray; they are not psychologically prepared when they are caught off-guard and being victimized. Additionally, if an aggressor has a weapon, the use of mace/pepper spray will likely increase the risk that someone will be injured. Chief Hestness does not believe that weapons are as good of a defense mechanism as some people purport. Rather than carrying mace/pepper spray, Chief Hestness recommends not traveling alone.
- Are screech alarms an effective defense mechanism? According to Chief Hestness, screech alarms work as long as someone responds to them. The one thing that screech alarms are good at doing is calling attention to a situation, which may stop a crime in progress, but it also might have the opposite effect and aggravate an already bad situation.
- Is it true that one should look people passing by in the eye and walk with confidence in order to prevent an attack? Chief Hestness stated that when choosing a victim an aggressor typically looks for someone that is disconnected/distracted. It is for this reason that Chief Hestness tells students when they are walking down the street not to be using an iPod, not to be talking on a cell phone, but to pay attention and be aware of their surroundings.
- Future enhancements to myU Portal include a feature that will give students the opportunity to receive the same information they receive via email in a text message format, e.g. crime alerts, etc.

Ideas generated by the committee on how the police can more effectively communicate with students about public safety issues:

- Hold mandatory house meetings at resident halls in the spring as students contemplate where they intend to live in the fall and provide students with information they need to consider if they plan to live off-campus. Both Chief Hestness and Ms. Turonie noted that informational sessions such as this are offered, but they are not mandatory.

- Invite UMPD to speak to parents and students at orientation about campus safety issues.
- Put public safety notices and crime alerts on myU Portal. The new myU Portal platform will be able to display critical alerts as necessary.
- Initiate a marketing campaign similar to the University's Driven to Discover campaign with a focus on public safety. People will definitely stop and take notice.
- Display posters in restrooms, resident halls and the libraries containing public safety messages.
- Provide students with more visual information concerning public safety tips rather than reading materials. Students already have so much material to read for classes that any non-required reading materials get tossed.
- Put public safety alerts on the electronic bulletin boards that are in the process of being developed for resident halls. It is being conceptualized that each floor will have its own page.
- Involve parents more in terms of the information that is it shares with students. While students may just throw information away, parents will often communicate information about University resources with their children.

Before departing to attend another meeting, Vice President O'Brien thanked the committee for inviting staff from the Department of Public Safety to receive an update and to learn more about the department. It is very important that student leaders be informed about public safety issues impacting the University community.

Lastly, the committee learned that a template exists on electronic PORTFOLIO (<https://portfolio.umn.edu/portfolio/index.jsp>) called "Valuables Registry". This tool allows University students, faculty and staff to report lost valuables via a template. To learn more about this tool visit <http://www1.umn.edu/police/safetytips/portfolio.pdf> and/or <http://www1.umn.edu/police/prevention.html>.

III). Members unanimously approved the December 6<sup>th</sup> minutes.

IV). Hearing no further business, Maria McRae adjourned the meeting.

Renee Dempsey  
University Senate