

UNIVERSITY POLICE SERVICES OPR PROCESS CAMPUS EVALUATION TEAM REPORT

May 2002

Campus Evaluation Team Members

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Methodology Used

The Campus Evaluation Team for the University Police Services OPR process met in April and May of 2002. Our primary goal was to provide feedback from the campus and community on the operation and perceived effectiveness of University Police Services. More specifically, our objective was to provide feedback related to the six stated questions in the OPR process.

Community input was sought in the following ways:

- From CET committee members who are each key stakeholders in University Police Services operations.
- Through the examination and evaluation of many documents such as position descriptions, organization charts, budgets, resource comparison with other UW System campuses, departmental goals and progress statements, mission statement, webpage, funding requests, workload statistics, crime and arrest reports, departmental procedures, and other pertinent documents.
- By conducting interviews with approximately 50 stakeholders, including personnel from University Police Services, Residence Life, Office for Leadership Development, Continuing Education, Young Auditorium, Recreation Sports, Student Affairs, Administrative Affairs, Whitewater Police Department, Whitewater Fire Department, Whitewater Rescue Squad, and students and faculty.
- Utilizing results of the customer satisfaction web-based survey conducted by University Police Services.

General Observations

The above efforts resulted in an abundance of feedback and, in general, the feedback was very consistent. Overwhelmingly, it was felt that University Police response to emergency calls has been outstanding, and that officers have been competent, professional, friendly and helpful in these situations. In addition, members of the campus community continually expressed the sentiment that they feel safer on campus in the presence of University Police. Many positive comments were also offered from city of Whitewater personnel regarding the relationship with officers during service calls.

Incredibly strong sentiment was also expressed about the need for a University Police Department. Due to the special needs of this specific constituency, it does not appear that other police agencies could adequately perform the necessary functions.

Concerns expressed from constituents are expressed in recommendations from the Campus Evaluation Team and categorized according to the stated OPR evaluation criteria below:

1. What are the major or measurable objectives of the office?

1. Develop and initiate action plan following OPR
2. Continue to focus on staff professional development and program enhancement, with emphasis on police patrol, investigative and crime prevention proficiencies.
3. Reconcile budget, funding and program array.
4. Plan for and respond to terrorist-related incidents/threats since September 11, 2001.
5. Recruit, evaluate, hire and train three full-time police officers and two LTE police officers.

Recommendations

- A. All members of the department should be involved in the process of formulating, implementing, and assessing progress on annual goals. Currently, not all staff are involved in this process and, consequently, they are not familiar with or supportive of the goals in all cases.
- B. Goals and objectives should be written with measurable components and regular assessment should be done related to the objectives.
- C. Goals should include a recognition of the fact that students are the major constituency.
- D. The Campus Evaluation Team feels strongly that a comprehensive internal OPR review should be conducted as a part of this overall process.

2. *What outcomes indicate whether these objectives are being met?*

Recommendations

- A. The current customer satisfaction survey provides much helpful feedback and should be continued on an annual or ongoing basis.
- B. A fair assessment of appropriate staffing levels can not truly be conducted until the department has been functioning at a fully-staffed capacity for 12-18 months, so the Campus Evaluation Team declines to comment on the current staffing level. Once the department has functioned in a fully-staffed manner for this period of time, the CET recommends that a comprehensive evaluation be conducted at that time.
- C. The current hiring process must be evaluated immediately and possible improvements made as soon as possible. The Campus Evaluation Team recommends that a task force be charged with assessing the process to determine what improvements can be initiated in University Police Services. It is strongly felt that this is a critical cause of low employee morale.

4. *Have personnel and financial resources been reallocated to meet the goals?*

Recommendations

- A. Again, the Campus Evaluation Team feels that personnel needs cannot be adequately evaluated until the department has experienced operating at full staff for 12-18 months. In the meantime, everything possible should be done to realize that goal (streamlining the recruitment and hiring process, “growing your own” through a CSO program, improving current staff morale and thus retention, etc.).
- B. Evaluate whether work study students could be used more efficiently (evening phone answering and reception, crime prevention programs, data entry, etc.)
- C. Financial needs and current resources should be examined by the Assistant Chancellor for Administrative Affairs. Expectations of University Police Services should be clearly stated and accompanying financial resources must be allocated.

5. *What improvements are necessary for the office to reach objectives not met?*

Recommendations

- A. There is an urgent need for a Policy and Procedures Manual to be completed and available for staff use as soon as possible. Lack of such a manual is a major frustration for many personnel.

- B. A system of internal performance evaluation and feedback should be established. Currently, the department suffers from mistrust and lack of communication. Staff members do not feel comfortable in offering feedback (to supervisors and to each other) without retribution, and a formal system for doing so would make this acceptable.
- C. Poor communication styles and interpersonal conflicts among personnel appear to be affecting employee morale, public image, and overall effectiveness of the department. These issues should be addressed openly as soon as possible with a skilled outside facilitator.
- D. It is recommended that the department explore more grant opportunities and consider grant proposals as a primary method to increase financial resources.
- E. Professional development plans (not just training opportunities) should be created with all staff members so that they can develop goals related to professional development. Efforts should be made to provide staff with the kinds of experiences that will help them reach appropriate goals. Proactive plans related to staff training should be made and shared with all personnel. Many staff feel that training opportunities and dollars are not equitably shared.
- F. It is critical at this point that the university administration make a commitment to the continued existence of University Police Services and examine and commit to the necessary funding. Campus personnel feel strongly that the institution must maintain University Police Services and the administration must thus commit one way or the other so that the department can move on and make necessary future plans.
- G. All position descriptions should be reviewed and updated (for example, the Lieutenant PD does not include supervision of the sergeants). All personnel should be included in this review and invited to provide feedback. Once position descriptions are finalized, all personnel should be thoroughly versed in the expectations and position descriptions of all staff.
- H. The annual budget should be distributed and discussed with all personnel so that staff members can plan for the year. (e.g. those responsible for planning training activities should know what they have to work with).
- I. Interactions with major campus constituents need improvement. Although positive feedback was consistent related to emergency calls for service, much dissatisfaction was reported about general relations with the department and individual interactions. An emphasis should be placed on improving customer service and communications skills. Some personnel (and consequently, the department) are increasingly viewed as inflexible and condescending. The department is seen in some instances as wanting to dictate campus needs rather than working together with other departments. The department is not always seen

as collaborative.

- J. It is strongly suggested that a professional review of the department be conducted.
- K. All department personnel should participate in diversity training specifically related to the needs, culture, and norms of under-represented populations.
- L. It is felt that University Police should be more visible at major campus events. Current campus feeling is that UPS will patrol certain events only if they are being paid extra to do so. At the very least, a PR problem exists here which should be addressed.
- M. In addition to providing training **to** other departments and offices, UPS should also solicit training **from** other campus personnel.
- N. The telephone communication system should be evaluated and changed as needed. It is currently seen as cumbersome and ineffective. Callers report that they often hang up rather than waiting to hear the appropriate link.
- O. Visibility in the current location is not optimal. Improved signage and moving the reception area to the front (south) end of the building are recommended.

6. What modifications of existing objectives or development of new objectives are made for the next five-year period?

Recommendations

- A. A five-year plan should be created as a result of the OPR process, which includes regular assessment to insure that objectives are being met and plans carried out.
- B. A long-term mission or vision that is created should be discussed and shared with all personnel. Currently, some staff report that they have “no idea where the department is headed”.
- C. Regular internal reviews of the department should be conducted.
- D. A method should be put in place to examine the current staffing structure and determine if it is the most appropriate use of personnel.
- E. A long-term plan to improve internal communication should be a primary goal of the department and should be included in annual goals and objectives.
- F. Departmental staff meetings should be held on a regular basis.
- G. The department should evaluate and determine if hiring additional LTE officers

could be an effective short-term solution to the staffing crisis. Presently, forced overtime and denial of vacation requests is creating a serious morale problem.

- H. Along with evaluation and improvement of the hiring process, strong consideration should be given to a stated goal of increasing staff diversity.
- I. The department should consider re-instituting the Police Advisory Committee, re-evaluating its purpose, and constituting it with key stakeholders.
- J. It is recommended that an evaluation be done to determine if Administrative Affairs is the appropriate “home” for University Police Services.