Officers Bridge the Gap
Dear Community,

I’m excited to share our spring quarter UCI Public Safety Magazine as it highlights our most recent news and notable accomplishments. In this issue, you will glean an insight into the hard work that the men and women of our department do every day to build positive connections within our community. Our officers and professional staff produce spectacular events that bring people together for fun social gatherings and educational workshops. Our S.A.F.E.R. (Standing with Anteaters to Foster Engagement and Responsibility) Program continues to play a strong role in building rapport between students and officers as the events are held each month between the different housing communities.

In a collaborative effort with our department leadership team, we have designed and implemented strategies, goals, and visions that will help guide us during the next several years as we expand and steadily progress towards our ambitions to achieve long term processes, relationships, and outcomes. Thank you for your continued support in our work because it makes a powerful impact on what we can all achieve together.

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Officers spent an evening mingling over dinner and casual conversation with young residents from VDC Norte. Giving a brief introduction of the S.A.F.E.R. (Standing with Anteaters to Foster Engagement and Responsibility) Program, Sergeant Sloan introduced Officer Bicomong and Officer Akingbemi while also speaking about the Program's purpose - to engage with UCI Anteaters in a fun, positive way. Each officer spoke about their history in law enforcement, how they came to pursue a career in policing, interesting situations they’ve come across at UCI, and even shared some humorous stories with the crowd. They gave students helpful pointers so they can avoid being victims of crime, especially property crime. “More often than not, property crime can be prevented by you”, said Officer Bicomong, “too often, we see students leave their laptops unattended at Langson Library while they take a restroom break. Don’t do that. Irvine is very safe, but don’t lower your guard.” He further explained that it’s typically not students who are causing trouble, but rather outside residents due to the University being a public entity. “Most of the time we arrest people who are not from this area or even part of this University.” The officers strongly urged the students to be alert and attentive when walking at night. “Criminals look for crimes of opportunities, so if you are on your phone and not paying attention to your surroundings, you become an easy victim”, said Officer Bicomong. The students absolutely loved the presentation as they laughed and asked intelligent questions.
“Criminals look for crimes of opportunities, so if you are on your phone and not paying attention to your surroundings, you become an easy victim.”

**Alex Bicomong**
Police Officer

questions while fully absorbing the material that was being presented. The officers invited them to sign-up for ride-alongs so they can see the University from a Police Officer’s point of view. They also encouraged them to say ‘hi’ to them when they see them patrolling campus. To conclude the night, the officers gave an in depth demonstration of the tools from their duty belt, including the Taser and their collapsible batons. Officer Akingbemi even posed for a few selfies to help expand our social media presence. •
Each officer took turns to provide insight into the fun aspects of being a police officer as well as the challenges they face. Students were given the opportunity to ask questions in an open forum style.

Having previously worked at UCLA Police Department, Officer Bicomong transferred to UCIPD in 2014 and shares his story with students on why he chose a career in law enforcement.
Officer Akingbemi joined the UCI Police Department in 2016 and has become a familiar face in the community. Always willing to pose for photos with students, he truly embodies the spirit of community policing.

Officer Akingbemi demonstrated the tools of the trade to students who were curious to know how each tool is applied in certain situations.
The Kettering Foundation recently invited representatives from the University Hills Community Safety and Diversity Working Group (CSDWG) and the UCI Police Department (UCIPD) to attend a cooperative research forum on community/police relations at their Dayton, Ohio headquarters. The Kettering Foundation, a research foundation, strives to empower civically engaged individuals to take ownership and tackle obstinate problems in partnership with those institutions who serve them. The Kettering Foundation then shares its research through a variety of publications.

Hobart Taylor from the CSDWG and UCIPD Lieutenant Anthony Frisbee joined community activists, public administrators, and academics from eight other cities from around the country in order to share their experiences, reflections, and best practices for building healthy community/police relations. The participants ranged from a South Dakota based tribal reservation police employee to community organizers who work with gang members in Connecticut, as well as a distinguished professor who serves as a consultant to the International Association of Chiefs of Police. Also present was a community member who has strenuously challenged the Falcon Heights, Minnesota police and civic authorities following the officer involved shooting of his best friend, Philando Castile.

Over the two days of the heartfelt authentic conversations, this diverse group of engaged individuals quickly arrived at a consensus on several conference and community/police principles:

- There is the need to create and maintain candid, unguarded, and consistent (ongoing) community/police conversations.
- These conversations require trust be established. Trust in turn depends upon mutual empathy and authenticity. Seminar moderator and organizer Dr. Kathy Quick from the University of Minnesota

Community Activists and Police Discuss Empathy and Communication

By Hobart Taylor and Anthony Frisbee

Anthony Frisbee and Hobart Taylor pose for a photo with Valerie Lemming, Kettering Foundation facilitator.
summarized key elements of trust using the term, “The Four ‘Cs’ of Trust”: Compassion – Competence – Communication – Consistency.

- Empathetic environments are fostered through open minds and attitudes. For instance, an empathetic environment can be supported by the police remaining open to understanding community fears, including fears based upon traumatic history of encounters with law enforcement. The community can support an empathetic environment by remaining open to understanding the stress and challenges a police officer endures, such as intense and highly charged incidents that require rapid decision making, risk and danger inherent to the profession, and being witness to severe human suffering and fatigue. Finally, one’s experience should not be valued more than another’s experience.

- The police and community must combat inherent implicit bias which can adversely affect our understanding, actions, and decisions towards one another in an unconscious manner.

Captain David Norris from the San Mateo, California police department emphasized the importance of transparency and pro-active involvement in community/police conversation “as a way to create trust in the community leading to effective policing.” Valerie Lemming, Kettering Foundation facilitator, shared true partnerships are built upon “complimentary acting and co-labor.” In other words, within a police/community partnership, the solutions are developed in partnership when the community “names or frames their concerns” so institutions can offer expertise and service(s) to meet the community’s needs through shared action.

The seminar provided us with an opportunity to apply some of the principles discussed to our own experiences at UCI. Hobart shared with Anthony that in recent years there have been traumatic events leading to serious misunderstandings between some University Hills residents and the UCIPD. The opportunity to travel with one another gave us the chance to move beyond our formal positions within the community and to learn more about one another as neighbors through authentic dialogue. We look forward to continuing the community/police discussions with the others at the Kettering Foundation’s next in-person cooperative research forum learning exchange meeting later this year, and here at UCI.

University Hills CSDWG Mission:
We, the Community Safety & Diversity Working Group, are Uhills residents who have come together to promote a safe, just, and friendly neighborhood by creating opportunities for residents to interact with each other and with law enforcement to build community. http://uhills.org/safety-and-diversity

UC Irvine Public Safety Mission:
To serve in partnership with our community, supporting a safe and inclusive University. http://police.uci.edu

Kettering Foundation:
https://www.kettering.org
Promoting Safety

Officers attend the International Student Resource Fair to educate students on best safety practices.

Photos by Cedric Young/UCIPD
UCI Public Safety constantly looks for ways to enhance our presence throughout the student community and campus resource fairs are the perfect avenue to accomplish this goal. Officer Green and Officer Soon participated in the annual International Student Campus Resource Fair to highlight some of the facts and resources that UCI Public Safety has to offer. Sharing brochures that covered a variety of safety topics, they informed students about campaigns such as our University’s ‘See Something, Say Something’ initiative, an extension of the Department of Homeland Security's mission to help keep our community - and country - safe. In conjunction with describing the purpose of the many emergency blue lights strategically installed throughout campus, the officers promoted the free Safety Escort service that our department provides on a 24-hour basis so students don’t have to walk alone - especially at night. The International Student Campus Resource Fair is an annual tradition that is not only entertaining, but informative. Participating students are motivated to visit each resource booth because doing so will offer them a chance to win a special prize. Each participant is provided with a green stamp card where a booth member can sign-off once the student has asked thoughtful questions in order to learn something new about a resource. Once the card is completed with all the stamps, they submit it to a staff member for a chance to win fantastic prizes and exciting UCI swag! •

With emergency phones strategically placed around campus, Officer Green explains how to operate the Emergency Blue Light Phones to two students.
A student attempts to walk in a straight line while wearing the Fatal Vision drunk driving goggles which simulates vision impairment at a blood alcohol content (BAC) of 1.5%.

Raffled prizes were gifted to students who actively participated in the resource fair.
Top Right: Peter the Anteater made a surprise appearance to take photos with students.

Right: Officer Soon asks a student about his career ambitions with his chosen area of study.

Bottom Left: Officer Green re-connects with a staff member at UCI.
Behind the Badge

An Education in Policing Practices
In partnership with UCI Staff Assembly, UCIPD hosted its second ‘Behind the Badge’ event exclusively for faculty and staff. We continue this series as a way of extending Chief’s vision of proactively reaching out to our community so they can acquaint themselves with our officers and professional staff on a personal level. Cedric Young (CSO Program Manager & Communications Specialist) and Alisa Reich (Business Services Specialist) partnered with Arielle Hinojosa and Megan Enciso, representing UCI Staff Assembly, to coordinate the event. While educating the audience was the primary objective of the day, providing a networking platform was also a secondary goal for the program. Following the same format as the first event, the learning modules were strategically subdivided into three categories: Administration & Investigations, Academy 101, and Patrol Operations. These three topics offered an overall representation of our department where community members can grasp the fundamentals of our operations and daily life as a police officer. Attendees were captivated with the stories in each module as they asked follow-up questions about certain protocols and procedures. By glancing around the room, it was easy to see the attendees gained a higher level of respect for members of our department once they discovered that working in a Police Department has many challenges that are not typically seen through the public lens. Overall, we wanted to re-assure our community that the UCI Police Department is a highly professional organization that serves the community in the highest regard every day. ▪
Top: What has now become a tradition, the panel of officers begin the event by entertaining the crowd with a fun trivia game.

Left: Dispatch Supervisor, Barbara Barry, talks about the Dispatch Unit and the role they play in the daily operations.
Top Left: Dispatcher, Sandra Bybee, talks about the Dispatch team and what the UCI community can expect when dialing 9-1-1.

Top Right: Officer Green leads the group discussion in the Patrol Operations module where participants are taken into a day in the life of a UCI Police Officer.

Right: Sergeant Acuna explains how he manages officers during a shift to ensure effective coverage of campus.

Bottom Left: Angela Lew, a staff member with Student Center & Event Services, is captivated by the operational standards of police officers.
Officer Ortega (pictured) partners with Sergeant Chiu to lead the module in the ‘Police Academy Life’.

From left to right: Police Department employees Cedric Young and Alisa Reich partnered with Arielle Hinojosa and Megan Encino from Staff Assembly, to organize this popular event exclusively for UCI Staff and Faculty.
Coffee with a Cop

Officers surprise UCI Medical Center staff with coffee and donuts
On a brisk January morning, UCIPD police officers and security officers set up a breakfast station at the UCI Medical Center, not only as a gracious gesture to the medical staff coming into work, but as a means to engage in casual conversation over donuts and hot coffee. Staff members did not hesitate to help themselves with free breakfast and an opportunity to ask officers questions including the recent announcement that the Orange County Sheriff’s Department will be clearing the homeless encampment along the two-mile stretch of the Santa Ana River Trail. With 500-1000 people residing in that area, staff members were anxious to understand how it will affect transients roaming onto the medical center campus. Lieutenant Frisbee assured them that the Police Department was well aware of the situation and would be staffing additional officers to ensure the safety of the community. Leon Roach, Director of Capital Design & Construction Projects, even made a visit to greet the officers and welcome staff members to the casual event. It was an incredibly successful morning because over 120 cups of coffee and 84 donuts were served. To continue forging strong relationships with UCIMC staff members, we will host more events in the future. •
Over 120 cups of coffee and 84 donuts were served at UCIMC’s inaugural ‘Coffee with a Cop’
Sergeant Chiu invites UCIMC staff members to enjoy hot coffee and donuts as they walk into work.

The UCI Police Department is beginning to establish the ‘Coffee with a Cop’ program to encourage positive encounters with Police Officers.
UCIMC Security Officers Ramos and Agramont joined the morning breakfast event and took the time to talk with staff members.

Sergeant Keller helped oversee the event to ensure donuts and coffee were well stocked for everyone to enjoy.
Mesa Court Basketball Showdown
Officers and CSOs challenge students on the court in a show of basketball prowess.

Photos by Cedric Young/UCIPD
The Mesa Court housing basketball showdown was an effort organized by our Community Engagement Officer, Benny Green, with the goal of fostering positive encounters with our department’s officers. Despite the promotion of healthy, organized fun, it’s never considered a party without pizza or soda being served, which Mesa Court staff members prepared on the sidelines as a treat after the game. To ensure we remained competitive, Officer Green organized the best basketball players from our department to challenge the students in the housing community. However, the students didn’t take things lightly either as they brought their A-game, showing off their remarkable talents as they dribbled, spun, and even dunked on their competition. With the number of people participating in the event, three separate games were played simultaneously, each playing on half a court. At one point in the evening, rather than solely making it officers versus students, officers mixed up the teams to intermingle with the students so that they would be on the same squad which created a new dynamic of play, making the game even more exciting. This basketball event is predicated on one of the core responsibilities of the Community Engagement Officer, which is to coordinate UCI Police Officers for collective participation with community events. These types of interactions are important between our staff and students as we maintain the development of a collaborative relationship with our community. After this event, we can only assume that Middle Earth housing students are next to play against our officers! •

With pizza and soda served at the end of the night, police officers and students had a fantastic time competing against each other in a friendly game of basketball.
Top: Officer Ramirez, channeling her inner Steph Curry, attempts a three point shot.

Right: Officer Liev guards Officer Doan in an intense game as some officers played on the same team as students.
Left: A student attempts to dribble past Officer Green.

Bottom: Lieutenant Reiss calls out plays to his team in an offensive strategy.
Top: Community Service Officer (CSO) Roger Galac tries to fake out Officer Green.

Left: Sergeant Acuna wore his favorite high top shoes to play against the students.
Top Left: CSO Barden came out to represent the UCIPD CSO Program.

Top Right: Officer Soon calls out plays as he assumes the point guard position.

Right: The students demonstrated their basketball talents as they moved quickly and effectively around the court.

Bottom Left: A student attempts a three point shot over the police officers.
“These types of interactions are important between our staff and students as we maintain the development of a collaborative relationship with our community.”
Top: At the end of the game, officers asked the students about their post-graduation plans and had a terrific time learning about each other.

Left: Knowing the strong basketball talents of students, Officer Keith visited the basketball court - AED in hand - to provide possible medical assistance to members of our department.
Emergency Preparedness

Staff and Faculty learn about UCI Public Safety’s personnel and operations

By Anne Widney | Photos by Emil Nguyen

Emergency Management Director, Anne Widney-LeSage, and retired Emergency Services Manager Linda Bogue, hosted an Emergency Preparedness Workshop for the UCI Center for Emeriti and Retirees on March 28th. A mix of retirees and current UCI staff members were in attendance. The workshop covered how to prepare yourself and your family for various types of emergencies common in Orange County including: earthquake, active assailant, wildfire, power outage, flooding, and tsunami. Participants worked in groups to develop a list of items for their disaster preparedness kit and were encouraged to go home and evaluate what items they currently have and what they need to purchase to complete their emergency kit. The training also covered how to customize your preparedness kit and plans for small children, elderly adults, individuals with disabilities, access, and functional needs, and pets. Last, but not least, the group discussed travel safety tips and how to be prepared while traveling domestically and internationally. For more information on personal preparedness visit: www.ready.gov •
“I was extremely pleased to have this opportunity to present on disaster preparedness in partnership with the Center for Emeriti and Retirees. I look forward to future collaborations.”

Anne LeSage
Emergency Management Director
As part of their regular visiting routine, the young children from the Early Childhood Education Center made a pit stop at our police station to meet their local police officer friends. Greeting the youthful and excited group, Officer Akingbemi and Officer Juarez arrived to hand out ‘junior officer’ stickers which the children proudly placed on their chests. As a special treat, the officers led the group to the patrol vehicles so they could explore and play with the lights and sirens, letting them live out their dream of hopefully one day becoming a police officer themselves. Clearly it appeared to be the highlight of their day as they were reluctant to leave when their instructors advised them that it was time to go home. These interactions with the young children will invariably be a timeless tradition between our department and the Early Childhood Education Center and we can’t wait for their next visit! ▪

Little Visitors at the Police Station
Young Children meet Officer Akingbemi and Officer Juarez

The young children are eager to sit in the driver’s seat of the patrol vehicle.

Photos by Cedric Young/UCIPD
With the help of CSO Fisher and CSO Puliafico, Sergeant LeSage led an informative training session for staff members at the Student Health Center. In the active shooter simulation, the CSOs were given the role of playing the aggressors while staff members watched in real-time to observe the signs and listen to cues that could possibly indicate that danger may be looming ahead. Throughout the simulation, Sergeant LeSage served as a play-by-play announcer to assist the staff with dissecting the situation in order to help them understand behavior that may be deemed suspicious so they can react appropriately to save themselves and other people in the building. He wanted the staff to observe the behavior of an individual deemed suspicious. “You can never tell what bad people look like because often times, they look normal”, said Sgt. LeSage, “if police can instantly profile everyone to be either good or bad, then we wouldn’t have any bad guys.” Ultimately when it came down to a violent situation, he urged the staff to save themselves because everyone is an adult and can make their own decisions. “I understand you have the biggest hearts out of everyone, which is why you likely chose this profession”, he said, “however, you must save yourself first so you can save others.” The staff members were attentive and asked intelligent questions about the proper ways to react to an incident based on hypothetical situations they posed. Sergeant LeSage showed professionalism and expertise by delicately balancing the seriousness of the course intermixed with humor to keep everyone focused and engaged. •

Photos by Cedric Young/UCIPD

Student Health Center Training

Sergeant LeSage shares lifesaving tips to Student Health staff
Top: All members of the department were required to participate in the training session. The two CSO 'actresses' walk down the hallway to the training scene.

Left: Chuck Adams, Student Health Director, organized the training for his staff to better prepare them for emergencies.

Right: CSOs Puliafico and Fisher begin the mock scenario by requesting to see a doctor.
Top: In the event of an active shooter, Sergeant LeSage urges the staff to save themselves first so they can save others.

Left: Staff members concentrated and asked thoughtful questions during the training.
Student TALENT

Recognizing the hardworking students of UCIPD
Comprising of Community Service Officers (CSO) and Front Desk Student Assistants, our nearly forty part-time student employees provide invaluable support to our department’s daily operations. From assisting with live scan fingerprints to conducting safety escorts, they always deliver a five-star customer service experience to students, staff, faculty, and guests from all around Orange County. Given the tailored job descriptions for some of our specific department functions, it’s the perfect opportunity for students to gain job experience while working in a law enforcement environment. We depend on students to complete important work alongside our full-time professionals.

Our current team of student employees represent a small elite fraction of individuals on campus because securing a coveted part-time position at the Police Department is no simple feat. With only six hires out of the 240 job applications we received last academic year, it’s an exceptionally competitive hiring process. Typically once the initial culling of applications has been completed, our hiring managers personally interview every applicant to ensure only the best are selected to represent our department. Although applicants from all areas of study are encouraged to apply, there are a few critical qualities we seek during interviews - confidence, poise, humility, integrity, and a strong career ambition. Granted that applicants should answer scenario questions with accuracy and sound logic, it does not hold the same weight as the aforementioned criteria because many aspects of the job can be trained - but character and self-motivation must be innate. By consistently cultivating an exemplary student employment model, we will always achieve the best results in our student hires. We as a department are extremely blessed to have these dependable and dedicated group of students working for UCI.
us. While they bring positive energy, we also value their perspectives and knowledge as students because it translates seamlessly into the work they do with the Police Department. We understand the rigorous demands of being a top tier student at UCI, so their ability to delicately balance their studies, social life, work, and extra curricular activities, is nothing short of impressive.

To all our student employees, we sincerely thank you for your service and dedication to our Department because it’s employees like you who make our team fun and dynamic. We couldn’t be more proud of your accomplishments and we look forward to always contributing to your personal and professional growth.

Top: CSO Shiva Taghdis shares a fun moment with Detective Legaspi.

Top Right: With a total of 31 CSOs in the program, our students perform a variety of assignments for the department and the campus.

Right: Being in the program for CSO Carlson has fueled his passion for helping others, a passion that he will pursue in his future career.
Top: Front Desk Student Assistant, Sama Tamer, works as our Lost and Found Lead where she regularly logs and organizes our campus’ lost items.

Left: Front Desk Student Assistant, Amber Gutierrez, is one of six front desk team members who assist customers every day with live scan fingerprinting.
Top Left: CSO Valenzuela registers a student’s bicycle during Middle Earth Move-In week.

Top Right: CSO Nobleza attempts to recruit students to join our CSO Program during a UCI Leadership Fair.

Right: CSO Vera serves as our department Vehicle Maintenance and Technician Lead where she’s responsible for regularly inspecting our department’s vehicles and coordinating needed repairs.

Bottom Left: CSO Sharma and CSO Johnson assist with our Police Officer hiring process as they wait for applicants to check-in for testing.
International Partnership

Sergeant LeSage and Officer Green hosted Patrick Kim, who comes from a small private South Korean University, as he toured our campus with the goal of learning about our laboratory safety and how our Police Department works in conjunction with lab protocols. For Patrick, we were one of the many stops in California as he had a tight timeline to visit multiple Universities to capture the best information he could to take back to his University so they could begin implementing the best practices.

Elizabeth “Beth” Backstrom joined the UCI Police Department as a Public Safety Dispatcher on January 16, 2018. Prior to becoming a member of the UCI team, Beth was employed with the Huntington Beach Police Department for 36 years. During her law enforcement career Beth served as a Reserve Police Officer, Communications Operator (Dispatcher), Communications Training Officer, Tactical Dispatcher, Communications Supervisor, and Communications Manager. She holds an Associate of Arts Degree in Criminal Justice from Golden West College and a Bachelor of Science Degree in Professional Studies from California State University, Long Beach.

Officer Appreciation

The children of Room 5 from the Early Childhood Education Center gifted Officer Bessolo with a beautiful handmade booklet where each page held a special drawing from each child along with a kind message. They enjoyed their station tour and look forward to future visits!
UCI Public Safety 2017

COMMUNICATIONS

- Dispatchers received 53,582 inbound calls (Campus & Med Center)
- 97.3% of 9-1-1 calls answered within 10 seconds
- 6,412 9-1-1 calls

PATROL RESPONSES

- Police Officers responded to 9,435 calls for service
- 1,170 crime reports out of 2,122 total reports
- Arrests: 42 felony, 272 misdemeanor

TOTAL 846 citations breakdown:
- 521 traffic
- 194 administrative
- 103 misdemeanor
- 28 other

TRAFFIC

- Officers initiated 3,355 traffic stops
- Only 521 received a citation
- 84% did not receive a citation

COMPLAINTS

- 5 complaints out of 41,120 contacts for the year

SWORN PERSONNEL

- 85% of UCI Police Officers have a Bachelor's Degree or Higher
- 33% are UCI Grads
- 10% of officers are female

SAFETY ESCORTS

- Community Service Officers conducted 1,021 Safety Escorts