UTSA Police Receives CALEA Accreditation

The UTSA Police Department was recently presented with the certificate of accreditation from the Commission on Accreditation for Law Enforcement Agencies during a special ceremony on January 22, 2009 at the Retama Auditorium of the University Center Building at the 1604 Campus. The long process of accreditation began in 2005 with an initial application to CALEA. Since then, much time and effort has taken place in the implementation of General Order revisions and compiling proof documents to document the more than 1,000 standards the UTSA PD is required to follow. UTSA PD also went through a thorough six day on-site assessment by three CALEA assessors in September 2008 as well as a final review committee hearing during CALEA’s fall conference in Tulsa, Oklahoma. The UTSA Police Department was awarded accreditation on December 6, 2008.

Formed in 1979, CALEA was created through the combined efforts of four major law enforcement executive associations to develop a set of standards that meet professionally recognized criteria for excellence in management and service delivery. UTSA-PD joins more than 746 accredited law enforcement agencies in the United States and the only agency in Bexar County to be accredited.

CALEA accreditation is consistent with UTSA’s strategic plan toward becoming a premier research institution.

During the January 22 ceremony, Mr. Kerry Kennedy (Vice President of Business Affairs) remarked on the CALEA accreditation process and the number of standards required by the UTSA PD to follow.

Dr. Ricardo Romo (President, the University of Texas at San Antonio) spoke about how UTSA PD contributes to safety of students, faculty and staff and how that safety contributes to a successful university.

The keynote address was given by Dr. Theron Bowman who is the Chief of Police for the Arlington, TX Police Department and a CALEA Commissioner. Dr. Bowman commented on the accreditation process and how the UTSA Police Department was rated well above other police departments in the country.

Recognition was also given to members of the UTSA-PD Accreditation Section for their contribution in acquiring accreditation. The UTSA-PD Accreditation Section was awarded the Chief’s Commendation Award by Chief David Hernandez. The UTSA-PD Accreditation Section consists of Sgt. Robert Hudson as the Accreditation Manager and Administrative Assistant Gene Garcia as the assistant. Officers Melody Piepho and Mark Smith were temporarily reassigned from their normal duties for a period of several months to help complete the process.

In addition to the many UTSA officials who attended the ceremony, honored guests included chiefs and command staff officers from the San Antonio Police Department, Our Lady of the Lake University Police Department, the Alamo Community College District Police Department and St. Mary’s University Police Department. Several federal law enforcement agencies were also on hand including Mr. Ralph G. Diaz, Special Agent in Charge of the San Antonio field office for the Federal Bureau of Investigation.

Closing remarks were made by Chief David Hernandez who commented on how proud he is of all the achievements of the UTSA Police Department.
UTSA Weather Updates: What You Need to Know

Since the San Antonio area will face winter weather for another month or so, there is always the possibility that UTSA may temporarily close because of icy conditions.

A primary resource for UTSA weather-related updates is (210) 458-SNOW (7669).

At any time of the year, whether there is ice or excessive rain, there are three methods that UTSA administration communicates the operational status of the university:

- 458-SNOW
- UTSA Web sites: UTSA home page, UTSA Today
- Local media

UTSA faculty, staff and students can call 458-SNOW at any time for information about the Tri-Campus community regarding the status of classes and employee work schedules. The line accepts up to 138 calls at a time, but if there is a busy signal, please be patient and try again.

The UTSA Office of University Communications will update two Web sites (the UTSA home page and UTSA Today) with information on the university’s status.

Although University Communications attempts to distribute current information to all media outlets in San Antonio, the process can be difficult because of the large number of phone calls received by newspapers and radio and television stations during periods of severe weather.

UTSA makes every attempt to provide all media outlets correct information in a timely manner, but the university initially communicates with both WOAI Television and WOAI Radio.

When adverse weather occurs during the night, the UTSA Police Department advises the vice president for business affairs concerning weather conditions. The vice president consults with the provost and vice president for student affairs before advising the president, who determines whether or not to close the university. Officials attempt to make a decision about whether or not to close the campuses by approximately 5 a.m. Subsequently, staff members in University Communications work to change the message on 458-SNOW, update the Web sites and contact media outlets.

UTSA is committed to making the best decision relevant to the safety of all students, faculty and staff.

Employee Kudos: Go to Guards Sanders, Pearson & Smith for helping pedestrians cross from Lot 4 to the Business Building each morning this spring semester. Kudos also to Guards Smith and Bowen for their handling of a non-affiliated male who had mental issues and was non-cooperative. They kept the situation low-key and didn’t get frustrated with the man. Responding officers thought the situation could have easily spiraled out of control, but the two guards kept it from happening.

Way to go!

Campus Crime Alert: Recent Bike Thefts

The UTSAPD wants to alert the UTSA community about an increase in the number of bicycle thefts on campus that have recently occurred. Bikes that were stolen were either unsecured or not secured properly. Follow the tips below to reduce the chances of your bike getting stolen:

Keep your bicycle locked at all times, and use a strong lock. Use a case-hardened U-type lock. Make sure to fill up as much space inside the "U" as possible.

If you notice someone "hanging around" a bicycle rack, report this to UTSA-PD. Call 210.458.4911 if you notice suspicious people anywhere on campus.

Record your bicycle’s make, model and serial number and store this information in a safe place. In case it is stolen, you will have this information available.

Bicycle permits are required by Parking and Transportation Services. Permits will be issued at no charge and may be applied for online at www.utsa.edu/parking/bikeREG.htm.

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UTSA Office of Business Affairs: Your Partner for Successful Solutions!
“Safety Highlights”

UTSA and its Giant Voice

The University of Texas at San Antonio has an indoor and outdoor mass notification system at the 1604 Campus to augment UTSA’s emergency notification system. Called Giant Voice, the system features four outdoor speaker arrays that deliver recorded or live voice announcements that can be optimally heard within 1,600 feet of each speaker array mounted at UTSA.

“UTSA has built a rigorous, multi-layered and multifaceted notification system,” said Donovan Agans, UTSA Director of Business Continuity and Emergency Management. “Our Reverse 911, Giant Voice, closed-circuit TV and the Internet are all facets of an intensive effort to ensure UTSA has multiple ways to inform students, faculty, staff and visitors of emergency situations. We are not relying on any one means to inform our community of a crisis.”

The system is integrated into existing voice-alert fire alarms inside buildings and wirelessly activated from a central control system. As additional buildings are equipped with voice fire alarms, they will be integrated into Giant Voice. Research also is underway on systems appropriate for the UTSA Downtown Campus and UTSA’s Institute of Texan Cultures.

“Because of the broadcast range of Giant Voice, it is the right system for the 1604 Campus,” said Agans. “We will plan for appropriate and effective systems for the Downtown Campus and ITC that do not unnecessarily disrupt surrounding neighborhoods and businesses.”

“A Very Special Note:

On Wednesday, December 31, 2008 Ms. Rose Mendez, a beloved UTSA employee, collapsed outside of the University Center. The UTSA Police Department was called and Cpl. James Price was dispatched to the scene. Cpl. Price immediately began CPR and continued to administer CPR until paramedics arrived and took over. Ms. Mendez was rushed to an area hospital; however, she died on January 7, 2009.

Although everyone wished for a different outcome to this tragic event, Cpl. Price provided the necessary assistance that gave Ms. Mendez a chance to survive. Perhaps just as importantly his efforts, as well as those of the paramedics, gave the family a chance to be with her for a few precious days and a chance to prepare individually for the final outcome.

Ms. Mendez was known to many of us and many people at UTSA thought very, very highly of her. So, on behalf of the victim’s family, friends, co-workers and the entire university, thank you Corporal Price for responding so quickly and most importantly thank you for doing everything you could to save her life.

The UTSA Police Department wishes to express our condolences as well as our thoughts and prayers to the family of Ms. Rose Mendez in this most difficult time.
Secure It Keep It Campaign Launched for Spring Semester

The UTSA Police Department presents again the “Secure It, Keep It” program, an anti-theft awareness campaign. The purpose of the campaign is to decrease theft on campus by creating awareness among students, faculty and staff to secure their belongings and avoid potential theft.

A 2007 study of thefts that occurred at The University of Texas at San Antonio showed that 71% of all thefts were crimes of opportunity where the property was left unattended in an unsecured area for a specific period of time and where some action by the owner could have prevented the theft. The goal of the “Secure It, Keep It” campaign is to build awareness to decrease the potential for theft on campus.

UTSA-PD requested the assistance of Dr. Thomas F. Cannon, Department of Marketing, College of Business, to assist in the development of the awareness campaign. Dr. Cannon graciously accepted the task. During a mini-semester Tourism Marketing class, students were asked to create slogans and determine communication methods. Additionally, Captain Douglas Sonego and Corporal Geoffrey Merritt attended the class to share theft statistics and to listen to the students’ feedback on the designs.

Through a series of meetings with Dr. Cannon, a logo and slogan were agreed upon. The logo conveys the sense of awareness to secure belongings and avoid potential thefts while the words reinforce the visual of the logo.

Chief Hernandez said “Secure It, Keep It” is a great educational tool that will be utilized to make it difficult for those who come onto our campus looking to take what belongs to others. Captain Sonego, Dr. Cannon, and our Crime Prevention Officer, Corporal Geoff Merritt are to be commended for their efforts in creating such an excellent program. It is only when we work together, police, faculty, staff, and students that we can ensure that the good guys win! ”

The “Secure It, Keep It” campaign will run during specific periods of each semester to coincide with the historical increase in campus thefts that occur in September and April. Advertising efforts will include print and electronic media to promote the campaign.

Reference: Dr. Cannon’s “Secure It, Keep It” proposal

Chief’s Corner By Chief David Hernandez

Our New Mindset of Preventing Crime-Part I

The UTSA PD has continued to do all it can to address crime on all of our campuses. The last three years has brought a great deal of change to the department. From new technology to a new vision for the future, change is the one constant that we can depend on. Still change for the sake of change is of little value. Our emphasis on change is more than that; it is about becoming a police department that keeps the promise captured in our motto, “Protecting...your future today!”

How do we fulfill the promise to protect and serve all our customers and to do it today so that the promise of a bright tomorrow is a more certain one? We do it by addressing crime in a proactive fashion utilizing the input of all whom we serve. We do it by shifting our crime fighting paradigm to one that is more applicable to addressing crime in today’s world. That shift will focus on several areas some of which were recently captured by leadership guru, Dr. Steven Covey. (A Whole New Mindset on Fight Crime) Dr. Covey has rightfully called on all police professionals to attack crime from a different perspective, a new model. The model of the past, the one most law enforcement agencies find themselves falling back on is one where we react to crime. However, now more than ever we are obligated to resist being reactive and to focus on being proactive.

Proactive crime fighting means we must anticipate crime before it happens by analyzing past trends in order to take measures to prevent it from reoccurring. Sir Robert Peel, long considered the father of the concept of urban policing, stated over 100 years ago, “The police are the public and the public are the police and the test of police efficiency is the absence of crime and disorder, not the visible evidence of police action dealing with it.” What a powerful statement, you see policing is more about preventing crime than our presence in responding to the crime once it has occurred. Even more important is recognizing that preventing crime is not something the police can do without the help of the public, thus today more than ever we must join hands with our students, staff, and faculty if we are going to prevent crime from happening. It is our hope that each of you will join with us to help us prevent crime and make this the safest campus in the State of Texas! (Next month, I’ll share more on how we are moving towards a mindset of preventing crime verses reacting to it.)