Orientation to the Office for Student Affairs

Vice Provost for Student Affairs and Dean of Students provided an overview of the Office for Student Affairs and noted that our units can be divided into three categories: student development and engagement, student support and advocacy, and health and wellness. She also noted some of her priorities, which include establishing an OSA leadership team, and enhancing student success and engagement for all students.

Crime On and Around Campus and Bike Safety -Greg Hestness, Assistant Vice President for Public Safety and Police Chief

Chief Hestness provided an update regarding recent crimes which have occurred on and off campus. He noted that thus far there has been 22 robberies since fall and only two were on campus. He noted that there is typically an increase in crimes such as robberies during this time of year, but agreed that there seemed to be more of them this year. Current crime statistics are posted on the UMPD website. He summarized efforts to increase police resources in the campus community which include overtime for UMPD officers, asking Minneapolis Police Department and Hennepin County Sheriff to provide additional resources in the U area. There was a brief discussion about 624 WALK and steps that can be taken to increase its use among students.

With regard to the size of the UMPD, the department is authorized to have 51 officers, but currently have 47 on duty (some are out due to medical/family leave). The UMPD is responsible for safety on the Twin Cities campus, including Minneapolis and St. Paul. Although they often respond to 911 calls for incidents that occur off campus, it’s not their primary jurisdiction. There are typically 4 officers and a sergeant on duty during a shift and in the evening there is an overlap of two shifts so there are typically 8 officers and two sergeants on duty. Compared to other schools in the Big Ten we are near the bottom with regard to the ratio of police officers to the size of the student body.

Chief Hestness highlighted some of the work that is being done to prevent robberies, including the creation of the Coordinated Response Team which is a small group of police officers who are assigned to problem situations, such as the recent increase in crime. The CRT also reaches out to student organizations to make presentations regarding crime prevention. The head of the CRT, Sergeant Nystrom, commented on how they go try to prevent robberies by observing “pre-robery behavior” and acting accordingly. Such observations have resulted in identifying several people with outstanding warrants and arrests.

There was a brief conversation about tickets for riding your bike on campus. Chief Hestness indicated that the amount of the fine is set by the Hennepin County District Court, not the University. He also indicated that the University receives many complaints from members of the community, including staff, faculty and students about the need to increase bicycle safety and enforce existing rules.
Student Group Updates

The Student Athlete Advisory Committee is planning to host a Dance Marathon in February in conjunction with several other student groups, including Greek organizations. More information will be provided for groups who are interested in participating. Here is a link to the event’s Facebook page.

Next Meeting

Our next meeting will take place on December 10, 6-7pm in room 530B STSS. One of the tentative agenda items will be: Transforming Single Gender Single Stall Restrooms into Gender Neutral Restrooms.