CAMPUS POLICE ISSUES:
Policing in an Age of Litigation

Presenter:

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Introduction

The campus environment is appreciably different from the environment that serves the general population. The successful administration of a higher education community today requires a unique blend of politics, keen interpersonal skills, and effective communication. Competence of the law as well as intentional efforts put forth towards the formation of positive working relationships among key campus constituents is vital.

Program Format

This program is designed to illustrate the need for positive working relationships between campus police, student affairs, and university legal counsel. An interactive role play format will be utilized. It is important to note that the role plays do not accurately represent the thoughts and convictions of the players. Rather, these role plays have been developed to depict common challenges experienced among many institutions of higher learning across the nation.

Enhancing Relationships

Chief Anthony Purcell has addressed the importance of effective working relationships between campus police and student affairs from a police perspective, and he has defined
the importance of embracing the philosophy of community policing on campus in his paper. Sandra McMullan has analyzed the campus policing “hot spots” ripe with opportunity for litigation. Therefore, the duration of this paper will be devoted to practical tips for enhancing relationships between departments.

PRACTICAL TIPS

1. Read police literature—many journals and publications are available to increase knowledge of the role of campus police. The *Campus Law Enforcement Journal* is published by IACLEA.

2. Join IACLEA—The International Association for Campus Law Enforcement Administrators is a primary professional association for campus law enforcement personnel.

3. Offer in-service training—to educate staff regarding the precarious nature of campus police work.

4. Devise an effective on-call system—developing a system to ensure effective communication in times of crisis is paramount to effectively managing the campus environment and any public relations challenges that may arise. Relationships will grow stronger if departments work together towards a common goal and realize that they can call on one another when problematic situations arise.

5. Develop a joint Crisis Management Team—A Crisis Management Team consisting of representatives from the campus police department (a female officer for cases of sexual assault), student affairs staff, and a mental health/counseling professional can set the tone
in responding to the initial crisis in a caring and compassionate manner.

6. Develop an advisory committee—an advisory committee composed of representatives from the campus community, including students, can offer insight into strengthening the effectiveness of respective departments.

7. Meet weekly and communicate openly—Structured time set aside on a routine basis ensures that student affairs administrators, campus police and university counsel have the opportunity to communicate on a regular basis in order build a sense of trust and respect necessary to an effective working relationship.

8. Provide for social opportunities—providing opportunities for staff to interact in a setting outside of the work place allows individuals to learn more about one another in a non-threatening environment.

9. Ride along with patrol officers—organizational behaviorists suggest that the most effective manager is the person who has the ability to get along with people. Taking time to ride along with patrol officers is an effective means of getting to know them and to communicate a positive regard for their work. Observing problematic student behavior first hand at the actual “scene” of the incident can be very enlightening. Empathy towards routine police interactions with students may result from direct observation.

10. Produce a campus safety poster series together—identifying problematic behavioral patterns on campus and designing proactive programming efforts in concert with the campus police is an effective means of enhancing the relationship. A poster series on the legal ramifications of using or manufacturing false identification cards is but one example.

11. Program in the community together—the joint sponsorship of programs designed to
raise awareness and target problematic behaviors such as alcohol awareness week or sexual assault awareness week is a great way to form collaborative working relationships.

12. Host an annual orientation kickoff—introduce new staff from the campus police department and department of student affairs to get the year off to a good start.

13. Provide a staff roster and organizational chart to the police—often times, people fail to communicate because they do not know each other and they do not understand the formal chain of command. Making staff accessible by providing the information necessary for effective communication is of great importance.

14. Identify a department liaison—in larger universities, it may be difficult to form relationships with a large number of individuals. Designating a “point person” responsible for the care and nurturing of the relationship with campus police may be beneficial.

15. Go on a retreat together—getting away from campus may be extremely valuable in forming or enhancing relationships.

16. Have a representative from the campus police department attend student affairs staff meetings.

17. Invite university counsel to attend student affairs staff meetings annually.

18. Develop annual service awards—people have a basic need to be stroked from time to time. The simplest form of recognition for a job well done can have lasting effects on positive working relationships. For example, many people have saved in their desk drawer or displayed in their office a simple note of thanks that they may have received from extending their efforts. Public recognition such as plaques and awards are other examples of items one may treasure.
19. Clearly define departmental goals and missions—sharing departmental goals and mission statements can be very enlightening. It is important to discuss the philosophical similarities and differences that may exist between departments. For example, campus police officers may have attended a police academy emphasizing the law enforcement aspect of their role. When they arrive to a college setting however, a candid discussion needs to occur regarding the issue of the exercise of their discretion in affecting arrests on campus.

20. Attend conferences together—professional development opportunities such as the Association for Student Judicial Affairs annual conference and the Stetson Law and Higher Education conference, provide for opportunities for student affairs administrators, campus police personnel and university counsel to attend a program applicable to each area of expertise. Opportunities also exist in making presentations together at national and regional conferences (like we have done today!)