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Merrimack College Campus Community Policing Program

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Campus Community Policing Program

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Capstone Paper

Dr. Michael Stroud.

History and Development of Community Policing

On September 29, 1929 the first Metropolitan Police Force was formed in London by Sir Robert Peel as the first professional police agency in the world (Community Policing Consortium, 1994, p.2). Peel, who was influenced by the legal and social philosophy on English Philosopher Jeremy Bentham, is considered to be the father of today's modern policing. His concept of a police force was based on Bentham's ideas that should be a strong centralized, and politically neutral organization. His conceptualization also encompassed maintaining order, protecting people from crime and being a visible deterrent to criminal activity and disorder. This idea of a professional police force evolved into a paid group of professionals which became accountable to the public.

As the Metropolitan Police became established, it appeared to the public that the police was just another entity of the government which continued to oppress the people. As a way of developing a system of accountability, Peel issued each officer a "warrant card" which was used as a method of identifying an officer, which began to establish accountability within the ranks of officers. The success of officers was not measured in the number of arrests made, rather it was measured in how crime was reduced in the different "beats" of the areas patrolled. Peel developed and publicized what is known today as the Peelian Principles of Policing (Community Policing Consortium, 1994). These were ten principles established for police officers as a guide to practice ethical policing. Of the ten principles established, the one most utilized in today's modern policing, is the principle that "the police is the public and the public is the police" (Community Policing Consortium, 1994, p. 5) This means that the police developed a system of

checks and balances, along with accountability amongst the public for the services in crime reduction and protecting them from criminal acts, as well as holding the public to be law abiding citizens.

Peel instituted an idea of “beat” policing where officers were assigned to designated areas, and were held responsible for the prevention and suppression of crime in the boundaries of the beat assigned. Peel believed that officers assigned to areas would become known to the public and that the public would be more apt to speak with a familiar face. The officers become trusted by the public, and become familiar in their assigned areas with those who belong in the area, and those who don’t, resulting in better detection of criminal activity.

Peel’s ideas of policing were successful and served as a model of modern policing for several decades. However, the support for policing declined during the 1960’s (Ryan, 2009, p. 1). This was during a period of time where the professionalism of officers declined, due to factors which defined a decade, such as civil rights movements, riots, and the Vietnam War. New officers who were hired were more educated than veteran officers, and in some cases, officers had college degrees. This resulted in a divide in policing between the old and new officers, due to the lack of formal training in police work, no standardized way of conducting investigations, or any general research performed on any type of policing methods. It became evident during this decade the increased frustration by political, and community leaders directed toward the police for losing touch with the community as a reason for such turmoil.

Through the 1970’s and 1980’s, and into the 1990’s, police agencies were searching for ways to regain the trust and approval of the public. They were looking for ways to return to the

Peelian principles of policing to regain the trust and approval of the public, where the officers knew the community and the community knew the officers.

During the 1990's, the bureau of Justice Assistance published a framework for Community Policing. It developed three core components of community policing. The first component was to develop a community partnership, establish trust in the community, and the ability to maintain it. (Community Policing Consortium, 1994). This required law enforcement to develop a way of policing which would exceed standard law enforcement practices. Reverting back to the peelian principles of policing where officers having pride, placing greater effort into developing community relations, and going the extra mile when possible. Most importantly is the trust from the community served, if the trust is damaged, then policing in communities who have little trust in the police becomes difficult.

The second core component is community problem solving. This assumes, that crime and disorder can be reduced in small geographic areas by carefully studying the characteristics of problems in the area, and then applying the appropriate resources. (Plummer 2008). This encapsulates the thought that people make decisions based on what opportunities present themselves. In this instance of community problem solving, the factors which present itself that would cause a person to make a decision leading to criminal activity are reduced, then people will be less likely to make decisions leading to criminal activity.

The implications and flexibility of management and the organizational structure makes up the third component of community policing. Community policing programs typically place high values on the patrol officer. The patrol officers are the pipeline of information between the management and the community. Great responsibility is bestowed upon them to produce results

on the services delivered to the community. This autonomy given to the officer, allows them to develop an ownership and a sense of pride in the community they are assigned to.

Throughout the 1990's and into the early 2000's the core concepts of community policing remained the same. Police Agencies and Community Oriented Policing Services (COPS) began asking what was measured through community policing? If the reduction of crime was the end goal, then one would need to be cautious of how that can be measured. Measuring community policing is not a simple matter of implementing a given strategy to reduce crime. It involves defining a set of attainable goals for a set given period (Fisher-Stewart, 2007). Community Policing cannot be measured by the amount of arrests made by flooding an area of a community, rather it needs to be measured through how a problem is presented and understood, as well as how the response to the problem is going to result in a reduction of the problem.

During the 2000's police departments began creating mission statements, which incorporated vague goals of agencies. The purpose of a mission statement was to show the community the police were establishing a partnership to solve problems, and reduce crime. In conjunction with mission statements, departments which embraced the community policing concept, also set goals and objectives for their community policing units. These were goals which defined end results, and where the community wants to be. The goals were specific, and typically attainable over a period of time. More importantly they needed to be achievable, such as establishing different community wide programs in order to increase involvement of the community.

During the post-World War 2 era many students enrolled in secondary education through the use of the GI Bill. This is where a melting pot of students existed from the recent high

school graduate, to the working parent, to the Vietnam Vet returning home from war. During the 50's and 60's tensions ran high throughout college campuses, due to the Vietnam War, and various civil rights movements. This sparked widespread change, where colleges and universities, adapted more of a policing role, rather than a security role. During the 70's and 80's, a trend developed on campuses where administrators viewed crime on campus as campus business, and would be handled within campus. (Ryan 2009). After the Cleary Act was mandated, this required all higher education institutions to report specific crimes which occurred on campuses nationwide for the previous two years. It also requires the institution to publish its policy on alcohol and drugs as well as arrest statistics for the same violations.

Modern Community Policing

There are three types of community policing, which all have various approaches to the reduction of crime. The “traditional” approach is where laws are enforced throughout the community in equal fashion where there is no more attention paid to a particular area than another. Second is the “broken window / zero tolerance theory”. Developed in the early 1980's by Sociologists Wilson and Kelling, it became popular during the 1990's by New York City Police Commissioner William Bratton. “The theory suggests that officers enforce more of the less serious crimes such as public intoxication, vandalism, along with other minor offenses to create an atmosphere of lawfulness, leading to the prevention of more serious crimes”. (Bluestone 2008). The third approach which is the “community-oriented policing method, the oldest method of the three. The community oriented method, developed by Sir Robert Peel was later defined using a more modern definition by the U.S. Department of Justice in 1994 as a

“collaboration between police and the community that identifies and solves community problems” (Consortium 1994). This concept defines the police as partners with the community where the community becomes active in problem solving and taking an active role in preserving the safety and quality of life in their neighborhoods. In this concept the patrol officer initiates and takes an active role in the community they patrol, and becomes a pivotal member in the area they are assigned to in the facilitation in problem solving. (Jahangeer 2017). The police and community partnerships that are formed assist in the trust building process.

Literature Review

Community policing is broken down into different areas of the community which play a vital role in the support building of a community policing program. In order for to develop a successful community policing program, the support begins with the administration of the agency. The role of the administrators is to get the initial program up and functioning, which requires addressing areas which are agreed upon within five specific areas of framework which establish a solid foundation of a community policing program. The police administration also must understand the concept of community policing more so than anyone in the department in order to deliver and present the function of the program to the administration of the institution.. (Trojanowitz 1992). Administrators are tasked with the review of literature which recognizes strategy, and develops the understanding that the community policing concept is both an organizational and philosophical strategy as well. The administration is the key to the success or failure of the program. If the administration “buys into” the concept of the program, then community policing is headed in the right direction for success. It should also be the of the

understanding not only of the administration, but the department as a whole, that community policing is not a “cure all” for all community problems.

The department as a whole also plays a vital role in the development of community policing. All members of the department should experience inclusion to a degree in the program, especially at the command staff level, the rank and file officers, and civilian personnel. The efforts of community policing requires feedback from all levels of the department, and the realization that successes and failures will happen from time to time, but what is most important is that the department realizes that these successes and failures reflect on the department as a whole.

The remaining four groups are just as vital to the development of a successful program. The development of officers into a community policing program can often be viewed as a form of punishment by some, or a position which is not preferred as others in the department (Bromley 1988). Officers assigned to a beat should not be looked down upon, rather viewed as valuable assets, which will foster the success and effectiveness of the program. The everyday “beat cop” is the one who interacts with the community, acts as the liaison between the community members and can assist in facilitating services for those in the community who are unable to obtain the services on their own.

Support from the citizens of a town or city has tremendous value in the success or failure of a program. When an agency shifts focus to community policing, it can create dramatic change for those in the community who are law abiding. These members of the community live in perhaps the more crime ridden areas of a community, and become the largest supporters of a program, which will assist in the reduction of crime in their area. However, tax payers from

other areas of a town or city may develop resentment toward a program, because the amount of resources normally dedicated to their area, could be shifted to an higher crime area, resulting in less coverage and visibility of the police. Business owners could also develop the same sense of resentment toward a program in the same area. If an officer typically spends time in a business district maintaining a visible presence, the likelihood of criminal activity is less likely while the officer is present. However, if that same officer is reassigned to an area of higher criminal activity, then the area normally patrolled in the business district is susceptible to the shift from the heavily patrolled area to the less patrolled area.

Involving elected officials is another key element to the successful development of a program. First, the elected officials, can provide a valuable segway in the development of relations between the police and the community. They can pave the way to develop the trust and acceptance of a program which may be unfamiliar to a neighborhood, or has strained relations with law enforcement. It is paramount that the elected officials are as educated in the program as the administration is, to effectively convey the message of community engagement and partnership to their constituency. A factor which could prove difficult with the involvement of elected officials, is gaining non-partisan support for the program. The concerns of conservative minded officials versus officials who take more of a liberal stance could create roadblocks in how the program should be developed. Law enforcement officials must however be cautious of the line crossed between acting as a police officer and a personal servant to elected officials when performing the duties in neighborhoods. Often the elected officials utilize officers as their personal police officers and circumvent the community policing process and take more of a authoritarian role in the areas of the community they are elected to represent. This translates into

the elected officials realizing that the priorities and concerns of the community, must be set by the community and not by the political agendas of the elected officials, and those who do not have a community policing officer assigned to their area for one reason or another should embrace the concept as an improvement to the quality of life it brings to a community.

While there is not much literature available on campus community policing, there are differing perspectives whether community policing would be effective on college campuses. Some campus studies have been conducted on various topics regarding campus community policing, to include the overall satisfaction of campus police departments, the arming of campus police officers, victimizations on campus, and the overall safety of campus. Community policing on college campuses is more about fostering partnerships, and promoting safety on campus within the campus community, along with the continual evaluation of campus safety and education.

The difference between campus policing and municipal policing, is in the campus policing environment, it requires localized control over students through the use of student conduct boards in instances of institution policy violations. It is very important for campus police agencies to develop working relationships with the neighboring community police departments as well (if they have such programs). This can change the image often held by neighboring police agencies that campus police departments are nothing more than security guards. Moreover, developing relations within the community of residents who live close by the campus is also a way of further validating the program as on which is committed to partnering with the community. Colleges and Universities often have populations of small towns, and in some cases with larger institutions they can resemble small cities within themselves.

A study was conducted on the campus of West Texas A&M University (a population of approximately 6500). In the study a total of 577 students were asked questions in a survey in relation to their educational background, sociodemographic information, questions pertaining to victimization on campus, and questions pertaining to various levels of contact with campus police. The results were, out of the 577 people surveyed, 144 of them (25%) were victims of a rape on campus. Of that 144 surveyed 116 or 81% reported the crime to the campus police. Students who reported contact with campus police totaled 236, most of the students (76%) reported their contact was non-criminal contact. Most of the contact was in the form of conversation with an officer or dispatcher, or assistance with their vehicle. In the same survey, a series of questions were also asked regarding whether the community thought the campus was safe. Overwhelmingly 85% of the responses felt as though the campus was a safe place in relation to other campuses in the area. It also showed 86% of the responses believed that their campus police department cared about the well-being of the student community, and were also comfortable in calling them if the needed assistance (Griffith et al., 2004 p. 154).

A more recent study was conducted by members of the Political Science and Criminal Justice Department at California State University. The purpose of their study was to determine the level of knowledge of the their campus police department, and if they were viewed as “real police” rather than security guards. The survey included staff, faculty, and administrators, through the use of an online survey. In the study, there were a total of 1,484 students who participated in the survey.

Of the 1,484 responses, 1,237 of them were enrolled in the Political Science, or Criminal Justice program. The remaining samples were collected from students who were

enrolled in the three remaining schools on campus. “The first part of the survey conducted, asked for personal background characteristics. The last portion of the the survey consisted of a three-point Likert scale to determine the respondent’s perceptions” Questions asked on the survey pertained to the opinion of officers carrying firearms while on duty. It asked questions in relation to the awareness of the level of training officers must satisfy to become academy trained (Patten et al., 2016 p.572)

In their findings it resulted in approximately 80% of the campus community agreed with officers carrying firearms while on duty. The survey also showed that only about a third of those surveyed knew of the daily tasks campus officers perform, and only approximately 25% of those surveyed had any knowledge of the training officers received.

In their conclusion, they summarized in their findings that campus police officers are caught in a transitional phase, where the profession is predominately made up of 18-24 year old middle class white males. Patten et. al. explains that this could fuel the perception behind campus officers as “fake cops”. Additionally women were found more likely to want officers armed while on duty over males. This was attributed to a recent attack of a female student off campus, by a non-student. (Patten et al., 2016 p. 574). An interesting note regarding the survey, was that of all the women who responded to the survey, all of them were aware of the roles of the campus police, and their training requirements.

An explanation was provided for the perceived knowledge of campus police, was a program offered on campus called “Freshman Safe Start”. This program was designed to acclimate freshmen to campus safety concerns, and various crimes they could encounter as a student on campus. The education of topics was such, but not limited to: hate crimes, sexual

assault, and theft. The training was organized where females and males were separated, and the respective groups were program was instructed by the corresponding sexes to the group.

They summarize the reasoning behind the “fake cop” stigma, is the lack of communication between campus police agencies, and the campus community they serve. A solution suggestion to the communication gap, is for officers to begin interacting more with the community, by implementing foot patrols when feasible, and encouraging more engagement with the campus community. Another suggestion would be for campus police departments to offer an informal session to incoming freshman to introduce the agency to the class, and cover what services are offered through the department and resources available to them. This could pair well with the required title IX training on all college and university campuses.

These studies show that community policing has become more important on college campuses nationwide. Institutions are taking a more vested interest in providing officers academy training. Officers are tasked upon graduation from a formal academy in integrating themselves into the campus community. This can prove to be a difficult task, where officers are more lenient with minor misdemeanor offenses, and offer different methods of accountability rather than the local court system. It also requires them to work much more closely in the campus community than they would otherwise in a municipal law enforcement agency.

Over the years police departments have absorbed many of the responsibilities of various community agencies. Having the backing of community groups, as well as neighboring agencies, allows law enforcement to be evaluated of the strengths and weaknesses of neighborhoods, and also allows the participation on the development of solutions for the problem

areas of neighborhoods, which allows the participation in the development of solutions for neighborhoods with high crime rates (Johnson 1999).

Police officers are not nine to five employees, while most community agencies are. It would be beneficial for the community to have varying hours for the community to utilize. A simple alteration of hours of a service provided by the community, could significantly reduce the amount of calls for service to the department. A good way to alleviate the decentralization of police officers in a community would be to develop a center which could centrally house various agencies and services making them easily accessible for the community to utilize, and also could create a more centralized personal focal point of a neighborhood.

Police departments notoriously see the media as the enemy, in some cases the media will only report on the more controversial actions of police officers, however in the case where a community police program is developed, the media can be used as an asset. Holding press conferences, inviting the media to shadow community policing officers in the course of their duties, and recognize officers when they perform their duties above and beyond what is asked of them can be instrumental in changing the tense climate between communities and law enforcement (Johnson 1999).

Community policing programs in law enforcement agencies are resurging and becoming as popular as they were in the 1990's as a way to re-establish the relationship between police and community. College campuses have also seen a rise not only in community policing, but as recognized police departments as well. Research on campus policing, especially with regard to community policing programs on college campuses is rare. There is not much research conducted with regard to campus policing. The information is also minimal, due to campus

policing as police officers being a relatively new concept. However, campus policing dates back to 1894 when Yale University established the first campus police department. Although the research is limited in this area, the principles of community policing can be certainly be applied to campus police departments.

The development of a Community Police program at Merrimack college.

Merrimack College is a private Augustinian College located in North Andover, Massachusetts. Its enrollment is approximately 3700 undergraduates, and 600 graduate students. Merrimack college would benefit in developing a community policing unit. The development of a community policing unit would require the effort of the entire agency, by having specific individuals of the department act as liaisons between the department and the campus community. Examples of partnerships, specific to Merrimack College, would be choosing officers to take on the role of a community policing officer, as well as a supervisor to oversee the unit. The duties involved would require interaction with the campus community. An example would be to have officers adopt a residence hall, and familiarize themselves with the residence life staff, as well as students. This allows the residence life staff the ability to develop a partnership with the department, and validates their existence in enforcing policies of the school. This partnership also creates a direct link between the department, residence life, and students. The development of partnerships with other campus groups, should not be limited to residence life, but should include health services, student involvement, and honors, and scholars programs. The model that Merrimack College could follow in its community policing unit is tailored from original models

established in more modern policing in the early 1990's. The tailoring a program specific for Merrimack College could be challenging, yet rewarding for the students and college overall.

A question prospective students, newly accepted students, and parents of both, often ask is whether the campus is safe. Many students consider campus safety as part of their selection process when they are choosing a college. Students seek to have a feeling of safety on their campuses. A way to continually develop the feelings of safety on campus would be to establish a community policing unit here at Merrimack College.

The foundation of a community policing program should consist of a mission statement, and what does the department wish to achieve in its endeavor. The mission statement I would propose would state: *The Merrimack College Police Department's community policing services strives to embrace the mission of Merrimack College of enlightening minds, engaging hearts, and empowering lives, through partnerships between faculty, staff and students in order to create and insure a safe environment for all.*

The development of the program would have multiple partnerships, with its primary partner in the Office of Residence Life, as well as the Office of Community Standards. The partnership with Residence Life would consist of bi-weekly meetings with residence directors. The subject matter on the meetings would vary, however the focus of the meetings would be addressing any concerns or potential issues between students, campus groups, and/or general safety concerns of questions to be answered. It could also be designated to address any anonymous complaints from students regarding potential school policy violations and/or crimes.

The partnership with the office of Community Standards, which the department currently works with, would not vary much from its current arrangement. The current process used

between departments is such; where a student is written up by a staff member of residence life, or is facing any type of disciplinary issue, receive a hearing in front of a panel of their peers. Typically there are 3-5 students on the panels, as well as a faculty member, who also participates. The case is presented by the designee of the Chief of Police, and the accused student has the opportunity to ask questions pertaining to the incident. Once the accused has presented his side of the case, the Chief's designee has the opportunity to ask any questions. The panel then has the opportunity to also ask any questions of either the student or the presenter of the case. If there are any issues which need clarification, the representative from community standards also has the opportunity to ask questions of both parties involved.

Aside from the administrative side of campus, the students are a significant part of the population, therefore it would only be appropriate to include a voice and suggestions from the Student Government Association (SGA). This is the group where students can have a voice as to what transpires through feedback. The group consists of elected officials all of whom are students. The group meets weekly and are the liaison between the students and school administration. It is imperative that the police department has a functioning relationship with SGA, because it adds another layer of integration of the police into the campus community.

In order for to evaluate and sustain a community policing on the Merrimack College campus, it is vital that visibility is maintained by the community. Often times officers will drive around campus with the windows up in their cruiser, creating a barrier between them and the campus community. A way in which to increase visibility, is through the implementation through programs which involves the students directly. Programs which tend to be effective in interactions with the campus community are coffee with a cop, breakfast lunch or dinner with a

cop, and/or foot patrols in high traffic areas of campus. Often times simple programs such as these tend to remove the stigma associated with officers that they are not approachable. Programs such as these can certainly enhance the relations between the campus community and police. Once again as Sir Robert Peel quoted “The police is the public, and the public is the police. (Community Policing Consortium, 1994 p.5) is especially fitting for the campus environment. Creating different avenues of student involvement allows the students to develop a sense of ownership just as the police would in the assignments of the residence halls.

To continue the cultivation of a community policing unit, here at Merrimack College, we could institute a student campus security unit. This particular groups would not have any police authority, however they would be tasked with securing buildings, student safety escorts, as well as frequent checks of the the campus emergency phone system, located throughout campus. The position would be primarily a foot patrol, however in adverse weather conditions, a small golf cart type of vehicle could be used.

The idea of a community policing unit here at Merrimack College would receive tremendous support from the College Administration. The support would add an additional layer to marketing the institution to prospective students as a safe campus, with a highly visible and involved police department with the community. The way to develop the support needed to continually move the unit forward and grow, would to conduct a selection process which spells out the duties within the unit. The goal is to select officers who are somewhat like minded and have similar values, in that they take a vested interest in the campus community to insure the safety, security and well being of our community, while enforcing college policy in an unbiased

fair manner. The communication between all groups involved is paramount to develop a constant evaluation process of the program, by soliciting feedback in the form of student surveys.

Survey and Analysis

A developed quantitative survey was sent to students in an email form. The purpose is to measure the level of current satisfaction the campus community has in the services provided by the police department. It also measured whether the campus community would feel safer if a community police unit were established. This short 25 question online survey hopefully will measure the feelings of a safer campus with a community policing unit, and also provide valuable feedback in evaluating the police department in its current state, and determine if any changes are to be made to provide better efficient service to the community.

Results

In the survey which was sent out. I received 93 responses. Out of those 93 responses, over 95 percent of the responses indicated that students generally feel safe on campus as well as their residence halls. The majority of the community did not generally know the tasks performed by the MCPD. Most of the responses when asked to identify tasks performed by MCPD were regarding parking enforcement and breaking up parties. The community, by a large majority knew that MCPD are sworn police officers in the state of Massachusetts. When the survey asked about encounters with MCPD, most students had an interaction in one form or another. The level of satisfaction from those who responded was over 75 percent. Of the roughly 20 percent who were not satisfied, were those who often had their cars towed or ticketed for one reason or another. Generally speaking, the respondents feel safe and are satisfied with the level of services

provided by MCPD. However, this survey, which only a small sample of the community participated, give valuable insight as to how we as an agency can do a better job of educating our community. An example of this would be better education on what tasks the agency does on a day to day basis. Social media would be an excellent example of a tool to use in educating the community on what we do as an agency, and things the agency does in the community. Another event which could better educate the community, could be events such as “coffee with a cop”. This is a great way to connect with the community, by having informal question and answer sessions through conversation with the police. The community can become better familiarized with who MCPD is and what we do on a day to day basis.

Surveys such as these are an excellent tool to continue to develop the partnership with the community. In order for MCPD to become a better agency, we need to continue to strengthen our partnership with the campus community, by constantly evaluating the agency to see where we can be better. As Sir Robert Peel once said “The police is the public, and the public is the police”. We need the help of the public to be best agency we can be at Merrimack College.

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