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Safety services increase Main Campus security

February 8, 2011 by Brandon Baker

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Campus Safety Services is in the process of improving security with local police.

Following a string of highlighted criminal events in the past few months, the university has amped-up security on and surrounding Main Campus.

"[When deciding to hire officers], you look at the growth of the university between property and number of students and couple that with increased workloads, and more recently, criminal periods of activity, but they weren't what sparked this," said Carl Bittenbender, the executive director of Campus Safety Services



ALEX UDOWENKO TTN Security boxes, like this one outside Ritter Hall, are an example of security methods CSS takes to keep students safe. Currently, CSS is increasing security surrounding Main Campus.

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Campus Safety Services.

Bittenbender said the increase in security has more to do with the campus's growing size and student migration than the recent crimes.

"We're always looking at different patrol methods and technology," Bittenbender said.

Bittenbender said the university currently has seven officers in-training in the Philadelphia Police Academy, joining the 12 previously certified officers set to be hired and an unspecified number of security officers hired through the Allied Barton Security Officer Services.

"[Security presence] can change based on crime and migration patterns," Bittenbender said. "We look at crime and crime patterns every single day."

A recent evaluation of Temple and its surrounding areas, which houses 12,000 student residents, indicates the areas four blocks west and north of campus are to be the focus of new initiatives by the university.

The university is now paying the Philadelphia Police Department for seven officers to patrol these outlying areas. Currently, there are roughly 25 officers patrolling campus during the peak hours of the day.

"We adjust our patrol to match where criminal activity presents itself," Bittenbender said, adding that Temple's top priority is to protect its students, but there are certain limitations to what the university is able to do.

"We have limited jurisdiction," Bittenbender said. "There's a limit to what we do here in terms of the areas that we go. We won't be in Northern Liberties; we won't be in Fairmount."

Bittenbender added other efforts are being taken to assure safety while on and around Main Campus, including an enhanced camera system, as well as collaborative efforts with the Philadelphia metropolitan area.

"We're pursuing Philadelphia putting up a sub-station, run by Philadelphia police officers, west of campus," Bittenbender said.

Bittenbender said security measures are taken by the university in collaboration with both the Philadelphia Police Department and with students.

"It's a partnership," he said. "Students have a responsibility, anywhere, from making sure they have set up a burglar alarm ... to taking advantage of the TURDoor from the TECH Center," Bittenbender said.

Despite recent crime events, including a controlled domestic dispute in the 1300 residence hall during the

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weekend of Jan. 23, some students said they feel relatively comfortable.

"I feel pretty safe on campus," said Max Webber, a senior theater major. "Every now and then I hear a TU Alert or get an e-mail about something awful that's happened on the outskirts, but in general, Temple's campus is one of the few places in the city where I can feel safe at pretty much any time of day."

"I feel physically safe, but I don't feel like my property is safe on campus," said Gwendolyn Morris, a junior nursing major. "With that being said, I don't think that's necessarily Temple's fault. I think [hiring more officers] is an excellent use of money."

Bittenbender recommended staying alert through the chilling months even though crime tends to decrease during the cold weather.

"Never let your guard down. They know who you are," Bittenbender said, "but you don't know who they are."

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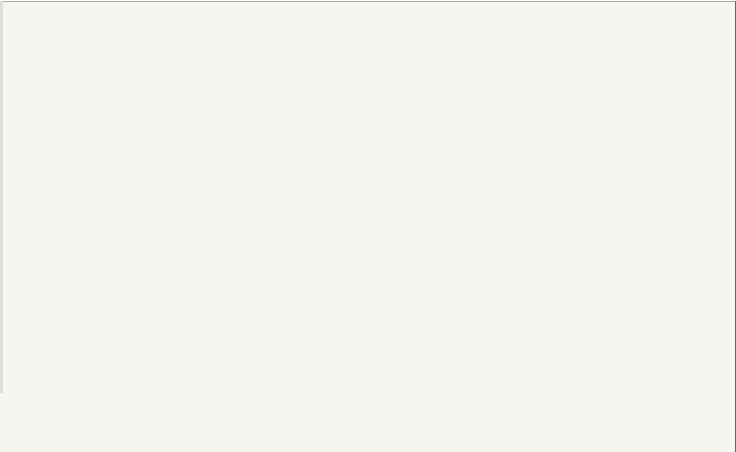
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