

The Development of a Community Oriented Policing Program for a University Environment

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Abstract

This article identifies the steps that a university law enforcement agency should take to implement a community oriented policing program. The implementation of a community oriented policing program at the University of South Florida (USF) is described. The project encompassed establishing a departmental commitment to community policing (mission statement), surveying the public to determine its needs and expectations, and surveying the officers within the agency to determine their knowledge and commitment to community oriented policing. Additionally, the training, administrative support, and reinforcement strategies for a successful program are detailed.

Florida's State University System (SUS)

The nine universities in Florida's State University System have a total enrollment of 170,548 students and a total employment of 11,621 faculty and 20,742 staff. The three largest universities in the system are the University of Florida in Gainesville (31,569), the University of South Florida in Tampa (30,691), and Florida State University in Tallahassee (28,054). Each university provides services and facilities that parallel those found in any city or municipality.

Each of the nine universities maintains a law enforcement agency of sworn, state certified officers who meet all standards established by the Florida Criminal Justice Standards and Training Commission. SUS realizes that university police departments respond to the same needs and demands as any city or county law enforcement agency.

The chief of the university police department answers to a vice president. The command structure of each department differs based on size and the chief's philosophy. The number of sworn officers employed varies from 70 officers at the largest campus to 18 officers at the smallest.

Community Oriented Policing in Concept

Community oriented policing is a proactive, decentralized approach designed to reduce crime and disorder, and fear of crime. Development of a successful community oriented policing philosophy requires that the police and the community work closely together to identify and work toward the accomplishment of goals. This is accomplished by intensely involving the same officer in the same community on a long-term basis, so that residents develop trust and cooperate with police by providing information and assistance (Trojanowicz & Carter, 1988).

The police are one of few government services available 24 hours a day. This gives the police the opportunity to respond to a wide range of community problems and act as visible deterrents to crime, a role which inspires community confidence and a sense of security. The officer's presence can deter open drug sales, loitering, and acts

of vandalism. The community policing officer also acts as the community's link to other public agencies, the community's ombudsman/liaison (Trojanowicz & Moore, 1988). The officer can initiate contact with other public agencies to have street repairs completed or abandoned cars removed from an area in an effort to create an atmosphere of concern by the citizens.

Developing and Implementing a Community Oriented Policing Program

The development and implementation of a community oriented policing program requires distinct organizational approaches that are often counter to traditional procedures. The following are the primary areas of consideration.

Mission Statement

According to Moore (1991), an organization depends on the purposes of the organization, the environment in which the organization operates, and the particular ways in which the organization might best be used to deal with particular problems. This is done by defining the mission of the organization.

To set the ground work for implementing a community oriented policing philosophy, an agency must establish a clear statement of its mission and philosophy. The mission statement must reflect the intent both to continue traditional police responsibilities and to create a philosophy of community responsiveness and cooperative problem solving (Nila, 1990).

Administrative Strategies

The implementation of a community oriented policing philosophy requires a change in the fundamental way in which an agency is managed. It requires a chief who is committed to making community policing a success. The chief must understand what community policing means for the agency and be willing to commit time, energy, and money to achieve a total involvement by the department. It also requires that administrators not manage through command and control. Managerial approaches utilizing informal leadership and peer influences are prerequisite (Kelling, 1988). This can be accomplished by addressing three basic areas of management: participative management, identifying the values (mission) of the agency, and accountability to the community (Kelling & Wasserman, 1988).

Empowerment. Community policing requires a shift from the traditional bureaucratic structure of an organization. Decentralization of authority and a participative style of management are required. Collaboration between the ranks, task forces, and temporary organizations are essential (Barnett, 1990). Managers empower officers to use their knowledge, skills, and values to identify problems and work toward solutions. By empowering officers with the authority to make decisions as they see fit, managers are expressing the trust they have in the officers (Brown, 1989).

It also involves the officers within the agency participating in decision making that affects the agency. This not only makes certain that they feel consulted but it also helps to "get the cards out on the table" for a more open forum of competing viewpoints (Kouzes, 1990).

Hiring. A community oriented agency can only be successful through the success of the officers in the agency. The hiring process is a starting point for identifying officers

who would be successful in community policing. C. B. Fraser (personal communication, June, 1992) has identified several characteristics of a community oriented police officer which can be used to identify individuals who would make a successful officer. These characteristics include:

1. interest in the problems of crime and the broader role of the police in maintaining public order and in providing a wide range of services.
2. job satisfaction from seeing the benefits of labor and positive feedback from the job.
3. ability to adapt to a community/neighborhood perspective of law enforcement.
4. self-confidence and willingness to challenge conventional wisdom.
5. creativity and resourcefulness; organized and able to think constructively.
6. objective decision making skills based on data.
7. broad perspective based on prior work experience, education, and an understanding of diverse cultures.

Taking these characteristics into consideration, questions can be developed for the staff to use in interviews that will gauge a candidate's attitude towards issues which impact community policing and communication within the community.

Evaluations. An agency implementing community oriented policing should involve the concept and the characteristics in every aspect of the job. Characteristics should be identified in the job description, the hiring process, and evaluations. Rather than counting numbers and relying on quantity of work done, the agency should monitor performance quality based on the ability to solve problems and involve the community in the departments crime-fighting efforts (Brown, 1989). This can be accomplished by writing performance standards with statements about the quality of work. Such standards might encompass such attributes as the encouragement of problem solving, demonstration of an understanding and appreciation of community needs, and positive contact with the public.

Staffing

Patrol. A small percentage (10%), of a patrol officer's on-duty time is spent on crime related activity. The remainder of the time is spent handling service calls, traffic enforcement and control, information gathering, and uncommitted patrol time (Trojanowicz & Carter, 1988).

The distribution of manpower based on need is important to consider when developing community policing. The distribution of crime related and noncrime related activity in an area will determine the size and location of an agency's zones or beats. A review of incidents, total time on calls, and calls for service can be used to establish those zones.

In staffing the community oriented policing program, an appropriate fit between individuals and positions in the program must be made. Some officers possess special talents or weaknesses that allow them to function better in some assignments than in others. A survey of officers can help to identify those suitable for the program.

Support Services. The support services section consists of communications, records, and crime prevention. Each section plays an important part in the success of the patrol section in community oriented policing. The crime prevention section and its programs will play an increasingly important part in the community policing concept. Community policing and crime prevention are both striving to reduce crime and improve the quality of life in the community. To accomplish these goals, it will be necessary to make each officer knowledgeable about crime prevention programs available and also involve officers in crime prevention presentations for the public.

Investigations. The investigative division also plays an important role in community policing. Its direct involvement with patrol is important in keeping the community aware of what is happening in their area. Periodic briefings of patrol by investigators make the officers aware of any activity in their assigned areas that would be important in reducing crime.

One aspect of community policing is that police and the community work together to reduce crime. This premise makes it necessary to decentralize the investigative function (Brown, 1989). This places an investigator in a position of addressing crimes in a specific locality by assigning investigators to permanent zone or shift assignments. It also means assigning investigators to handle all crime in their zone or shift, to be a generalist investigator, and not a crime specific investigator.

Training. Formalized training is a major part of any law enforcement career. This training emphasizes laws, rules and procedures, and officer discipline. Under community policing all aspects of officer training will change. Training on the complexities and dynamics of communities and the importance of the police in the community will start at the recruit level (Brown, 1989). This will help develop skills in leadership, community organizations, and problem-solving procedures. Another major emphasis should be in cultural diversity.

Problem-solving skills should also be taught. Problem-solving is a tool that supports community policing by encouraging analyzing problems within the community as its fundamental strategy (Burgreen & McPherson, 1990). Training in this area should emphasize the essential aspects of problem solving to include addressing the underlying problems that cause incidents, relying on the knowledge and creativity of line officers to develop solutions to problems, and involvement of the public in developing the solutions.

Rewarding the Right Conduct. Rewards are a powerful motivator of employees (Kelling, 1988). In some organizations the administration has the flexibility to use many forms of reward including increased pay, job perks, promotions, special assignments, and recognition. There are several means of rewarding officer conduct in agencies which have limited resources. These include performance evaluations, meritorious awards, officer of the year or month awards, commendations, and opportunities to attend special training courses.

Measuring the Model. There are several ways in which an agency can conduct nontraditional qualitative measurements. One way this can be accomplished is by

periodically conducting a public survey. This will give the agency an opportunity to determine if the community's opinion of them has changed as the community policing philosophy has developed. Conducting the public survey every three or four years will insure that the agency will be kept up-to-date on these changes in opinion.

Another way in which this can be accomplished is through periodic internal surveys of employees. This can be accomplished by resurveying the officers using the same survey used initially. This will show if motivational levels or levels of job satisfaction have changed with time. Re-surveying can be accomplished every one or two years.

Studies have shown that police agencies should strive for a balance between qualitative and quantitative measures (Trojanowicz, 1988).

Community Oriented Policing at the University of South Florida

Although the University of South Florida Police Department formally began implementing community policing early in 1992, most of the aspects of the philosophy have been a part of the agency's philosophy for several years. In moving toward the development of the philosophy, the University of South Florida Police Department formed a committee to write a mission statement for the agency. The committee consisted of five members, both sworn and non-sworn, representing different ranks within the department. After completion of the mission statement, the command staff recommended minor changes and resubmitted the document to the group for consideration. After discussion the final statement was approved, broken down into key elements and value statements, and were submitted to and approved by the agency command staff.

Surveys of Public and Officers

As part of the implementation strategy, surveys were conducted of the public and department officers. An agency must consider public input to help satisfy public demands for more and better services (Trojanowicz, 1986). Additionally, determining levels of motivation of an officer and the extent of knowledge of the community and community oriented policing can best be accomplished by an anonymous survey of the officers.

Public Survey. The public survey should be used for setting agency priorities and developing organizational goals. Surveys can be interpreted to determine public expectation of the department and opinions for or against new, continued or controversial programs.

Another way the survey can be used is to not only provide information on perceived strengths but also to identify the factors which help in determining a citizen's perception of the agency. Citizens are more concerned about behavior that makes them feel secure than they are about the official's technical skills and crime solving abilities (Field, 1990).

The questionnaire developed by the University of South Florida Police Department initially consisted of questions used in three surveys: a National Crime Survey attitude questionnaire from 1975, a neighborhood survey developed for the Ocala Police Department and a survey developed by the National Neighborhood Foot Patrol Center for the Michigan State University Police. The questions chosen for the USF

questionnaire were then rewritten to address the university community's needs and the USF Police Department's capabilities.

The resulting survey was reviewed by the staff of the USF Police Department and additional changes were made in the questionnaire. A one-page evaluation form was developed that could be used by third parties to check for survey question clarity, bias, and conciseness. A pilot group comprised of two clinical psychologists, two representatives of Resource Analysis and Planning (RAP), one Administrative Affairs staff member, one Student Affairs staff member, and two students (non-criminology majors) completed the survey and made recommendations for improvement. Additional revisions were made based on their recommendations.

The public survey was conducted by the University of South Florida Police over a three-month period in the fall of 1992. The questionnaires were collected from a variety of student, staff, and faculty groups from various locations on the Tampa campus.

Of the total sample of surveys, 50% were female (n=479), 45.3% were male (n=434) and 4.6% were missing identifiers. The majority of the sample were white (61.1%), 12% were African American, and 9.8% were Hispanic. The remainder were divided among others, no answers, and Native American.

The majority of the sample were students (73.2%) and the staff represented 15.4% of the survey sample. The faculty comprised 5.5% of the sample with the remaining sample categorized as missing or other. Over half of the sample (55.3%) were not campus residents and nearly two-fifths (39.8%) were categorized as residents.

When asked about the importance of the service activities performed by the USF Police Department, the majority of the respondents indicated that almost all of the activities were either "very important" or "somewhat important". The service activities that were indicated as the most important by the majority of the respondents were investigating all accidents (95.9%), assisting stranded motorists (91.2%), assisting motorists locked out of their cars (89.1%), teaching crime prevention (88.9%), and checking on the welfare of residents (87.4%). Little importance was placed on conducting vehicle safety inspections (53.7%).

The respondents identified the priority criminal activity that should be discouraged by directed patrol were for robberies (98.8%), sexual assaults (95%), auto theft (89.1%), and burglaries (88.6%).

When asked to rank the types of criminal activity for concentrated investigative effort, crimes against persons had the highest rankings. Sexual assault ranked first with 50.7% of the respondents. Assault and battery ranked second with 11.4%.

The respondents' feelings about their personal responsibility in relation to dealing with crime showed that a majority felt they were responsible for assisting the university police. An overwhelming amount (93.7%) felt they were responsible for reporting crime on campus. Respondents (87.9%) also felt responsible for reporting suspicious activity and nearly the same proportion (87.7%) felt responsible for assisting victims who need help. Smaller proportions felt they were responsible for assisting police officers who need help (74.9%) or responsible for participating in crime prevention programs (63.5%).

Respondents were asked to rank nine services provided by the university police. The highest proportion of first place responses in this category were for motor vehicle patrol (20.6%) and drug enforcement (14.4%).

The respondents were asked a series of questions to determine victimization, if they reported the crime, and the helpfulness and courtesy of the officer responding. Only 9% of the respondents reported being victims of crime. A breakdown of the victims showed that more than half (55.2%) reported the crime to the police. Of the victims, 96% reported that the officer's behavior was "very" to "somewhat helpful". The officer's courtesy was rated as "very" or "somewhat courteous" by 90% of the crime victims.

When helpfulness of the officer was compared according to race of the victims, 62.5% of the African American victims, 57.1% of the white victims, and 66.7% of the Hispanic victims felt that the officers were "very helpful". Concerning the courtesy of the officer, 50% of the African American victims, 62.9% of the white victims, and 66.8% of the Hispanic victims felt that the officer responding was "very courteous".

Nearly one-fourth (23.4%) of the respondents reported having participated in a university police crime prevention program. Of those respondents who did participate, nearly all (98.5%) would recommend it to others.

Respondents generally rated the performance of the USF Police, compared to other agencies, as better or the same as other agencies. Very few (2.4%) rated the university police as worse than other agencies. In subgroups by race, whites and Hispanics were more likely than African Americans to view the police department as better than other agencies.

Over one-half of the respondents reported they did not know a USF police officer personally; although one-fourth (23%) indicated that they were acquainted with an officer.

More staff members tended to personally know police officers than faculty or students. Additionally, a higher percentage of African Americans felt they were acquainted with an officer than any of the other races.

There was support for the view that officers are accessible. This was true for males/females, different races, and residents/nonresidents. However, a large proportion of the staff rated the officers as very accessible (30.3%) compared to students (15.3%) and faculty (17%).

Surveying the Officers. As previously indicated, community oriented policing is a philosophy that incorporates certain concepts, strategies, and programs and must include all divisions within a police agency. Not only should all divisions be included, they must also buy into the concept. The expectation is that motivated police officers will improve upon police and community relations and the quality of the services they provide to citizens (Greene, 1988).

In order to determine the level of knowledge and motivation of officers within the University of South Florida Police Department, a survey was developed from material used by the Ocala (Fla) Police Department and the Aurora (Colo) Police Department to survey the officers within their respective agencies. The questions chosen from these surveys were rewritten to reflect the university environment.

The resulting survey was reviewed by the staff of the police department and additional changes were made in the questionnaire. The questionnaire was reviewed by a representative of University Resource and Planning (RAP) and additional revisions were made based on their recommendations.

The officers in the USF Police Department were surveyed in November, 1992. The survey was conducted anonymously and a total of 37 surveys, out of a possible 41,

were returned.

The majority of the sample were police officers (11=16) with investigators, sergeants, and corporals comprising the next largest group (n=12). Most of the subjects surveyed had been employed by the department for one to five years (n=19). The greatest number of respondents surveyed had been in policing for five to ten years (n=14).

The age group of 26-30 years had the largest representation (n=10). A large proportion of the officers surveyed had a bachelor's degree (n=17).

A majority of the officers surveyed (75.7%) felt that resident students underestimated the dangers that exist in the residential area. Seventy-three percent indicated that they "almost always" encourage citizens to formally report all possible crimes to the police. However, there was only moderate support that officers should be involved in noncriminal matters.

The respondents were asked to identify the university organizations that the police should work more closely with. A majority of the officers felt the agency should work more closely with the Housing Department (n=24), Student organizations (n=22), and the Department of Student Affairs (n=21).

Those surveyed were asked to identify the importance they placed on 10 of the service activities performed by the department. The officers ranked crime prevention as most important (n=25). Accident investigations and delivery of emergency messages followed with 24 and 21 responses, respectively.

When asked about the level of priority that should be given to specific crimes, high priority was given to burglaries (n=36), auto theft (n=34), robberies (n=34), sexual assault (n=34), and drug enforcement (n=32). Moderate priority was given to loud parties (n=23) followed by traffic violations (n=16) and auto parts theft (n=15).

The officers were asked to prioritize nine types of criminal activity to identify where the university police should concentrate their investigative efforts. The respondents ranked sexual assault first, and assault and battery as second, drug violations third. The officers indicated that not a lot of effort should be put into investigating alcohol violations and credit card fraud.

A comparison of the rankings in the public survey with those in the officer survey indicated that both groups placed similar emphasis on sexual assault, assault and battery, and drug law violations. The greatest amount of disagreement between the two surveys came with the ranking of theft. The public ranked the crime as the third most important crime to concentrate investigative efforts. The officers surveyed ranked its importance as seventh.

In ranking nine services provided by the university police, the officers ranked motor vehicle patrol (n=16) as most important and foot patrol (n=6) was ranked as the next highest priority. Crime prevention programs (n=5) was ranked third and drug enforcement (n=4) was ranked fourth. The officers did not place much importance on alcohol enforcement and assisting the public, ranking them as eighth and ninth, respectively.

A comparison of the ranking in the public surveys with those in the officer survey showed that the most obvious disparity was in the ranking of the category about assisting the public. In the public survey, the respondents ranked assisting the public as fifth but the officer's survey ranked the category as ninth.

The officers were asked to rate their feelings about their job by responding to certain statements about job task. The majority had positive feelings towards their work with only a few indications of negative feelings. Most of the respondents reported feeling there was support from the university police administration.

However, 11 officers reported that they felt deterred and prevented from performing their duties. In addition, 11 officers reported that to a "very great extent" they were performing duties that others should be doing.

Concerning interpersonal relationships, the largest number of "strongly agree" responses (n=32) came in response to a question asking if they should "recognize the needs of the victim". Teaching the university community about suspicious behavior was second with 27 "strongly agree" responses, and being accountable to other police officers had 25 "strongly agree" responses. The officers responded with the highest number of "strongly disagree" (n=20) responses when asked if they should keep a distance between themselves and the university community.

When asked about the importance of interpersonal relationships with fellow officers, the respondents indicated that assisting fellow officers in some fashion was important to them. All of the officers (n=37) felt that it was "very important" to help fellow officers in emergencies. Helping fellow officers with follow up investigations and talking over problems were also viewed as significant.

Respondents were scrutinized about their preference as to permanent zone assignments and the length of rotating shifts. The officers indicated overwhelmingly that they did not want permanent zone assignments. A large number of the officers (n=15) indicated they would prefer 17 week shift rotations which coincide with the length of a semester.

The officers were asked to specify how much time they spent in doing certain activities. These daily activity responses showed that the majority (n=27) spent a "great deal of time" in providing information/assistance to citizens. Patrolling/observing (n=18) had the second largest number of officers that reported spending a "great deal of time" on this activity, and officer initiated contact with citizens was reported a "great deal of time" by 14 of the respondents. Court appearances (n=13) and traffic enforcement (n=8) were reported most commonly as "almost no time" spent on these activities.

The respondents were asked to identify the activity they would prefer to engage in more often. The activities that were identified most often were solving community problems (n=25), investigating crime (n=21), field interviews and investigations (n=20), and patrolling/observing (n=20). Conversely, the activities the respondents least preferred were appearing in court and writing reports.

When identifying the importance that different kinds of training had in preparing each officer for daily work activity, personal experience in police work was chosen as most important. Field training and specialized training were also ranked as important; academy training was also viewed as vital. College education was viewed as the least important of training experiences.

The respondents were also asked to rate the effectiveness of training provided by the university police. Human relations skills training was rated as highly effective, general police skills were also appraised as effective. However, legal updates and liability issues were not rated as highly effective.

Assignment of Officers

The University of South Florida Police began its program by assigning three officers who had a history of demonstrated service orientation to the community to a squad assigned to foot patrol in the residential areas on campus. These officers had shown, through their actions, that they used their ability and knowledge to work with the community to improve the environment.

This "4th Squad", as it was designated, focused on developing a close relationship with residential managers (resident assistants and resident instructors) for each of the dormitories. They attended dormitory meetings and residential manager meetings in order to answer questions and brief them on any crime that was occurring in their areas of responsibility. The "4th Squad" also acted as a mediator for solving problems in the residential areas, problems such as needed lighting or repairs.

One aspect of community oriented policing philosophy that will be incorporated into the University of South Florida Police program is the idea that the same officer works in the same community on a long-term basis, so that residents will develop the trust necessary to cooperate with the police by providing information and assistance. In order to achieve this, the USF Police Department will assign officers to certain zones on a permanent basis. While assigned to the zone the officers will be encouraged to be involved in every aspect of the activity in that zone. They attend all crime prevention programs in the zone as well as being responsible for identifying problems in their zone and developing solutions to the problems. The agency plans to develop a hot sheet which is zone specific to keep the officer assigned to that zone aware of the activity and crime in that area. This will not only better inform the officer but give that officer information to be passed to the public in that zone.

Since the University of South Florida Police Department survey showed that a majority of the officers were not in favor of permanent zone assignments, the implementation of this program will be prefaced by a training program which focuses on problem solving. This training program will also emphasize assignment to the same zone over a short period of time.

As previously mentioned, this agency developed and distributed both the public and officer surveys as a means of identifying the needs and concerns of the university community and departmental personnel. This process is on-going at this time and will be instrumental in identifying the focus of the USF Police in the future.

This agency has developed a Quality Management Committee whose membership consists of officers and employees from the different divisions in the agency. They are responsible for identifying issues and concerns of the officer and developing recommendations for addressing the issues. The Committee works directly with the Chief, who attends the Committee meetings.

The USF Police Department is putting a lot of emphasis on training for community policing. Each officer with the agency has completed a 16 hour training program on cultural diversity and its relationship to community policing. This type of training will help the officers develop a better understanding of what the members of this community are concerned about. Additional training is planned in problem solving which should improve communications skills and enhance their understanding of the concept of empowerment.

The University of South Florida Police Department has put a three to five year time

frame for fully implementing the philosophy. The development of programs and the improvement of existing programs will be a continuous operation for the agency.

Lieutenant Johnson is currently a Patrol Commander with the University of South Florida Police Department. A 17-year veteran in the criminal justice field, he has served in a variety of positions. Robert holds an A.A. degree from Tallahassee Community College and a B.S. degree from Florida State University; currently, he is seeking a master's degree in Criminal Justice at the University of South Florida. He is married and has three children.

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