

UC SANTA BARBARA

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UCSB Prof. Giles Honored by Santa Barbara Police Department

Howard Giles, professor of communication at UC Santa Barbara, was honored by the Santa Barbara Police Department as Reserve Corps Officer of the Year at a recent awards ceremony, the second consecutive year he has been so honored. Four awards in all have been given to the volunteer officer, who has devoted about 250 hours to the SBPD every year since 1996. A sergeant, he has full police powers and is involved in such activities as crowd control, traffic control, patrol, and even some undercover work.

"What makes the reserve officer award so meaningful is that it is voted on by the reserve officers themselves," said Officer Todd Stoney, reserve coordinator for the SBPD.

"Professor Giles goes above and beyond the duties we ask of him."

Giles, whose scholarly work is in the area of intergroup communication, said he marvels at how skillfully regular officers can talk a potentially explosive situation to a peaceful resolution.

Giles said the experience of working in the community as a police officer has given him insight into police-community interaction.

"They have to respond to a wide range of human behavior, including victims, witnesses, and alleged criminals," he said.

In 2002, Giles established a center at UCSB to study community policing, which is a relatively recent shift toward more proactive outreach by officers in the neighborhoods they patrol.

Named the Center for Police Practices and Community, the new academic endeavor is taking both an academic and practical look at how people perceive the police.

"We are investigating community attitudes toward law enforcement and the role of communication within that around the world, and in different regions of the USA," Giles said.

About UC Santa Barbara

The University of California, Santa Barbara is a leading research institution that also provides a comprehensive liberal arts learning experience. Our academic community of faculty, students, and staff is characterized by a culture of interdisciplinary collaboration that is responsive to the needs of our multicultural and global society. All of this takes place within a living and learning environment like no other, as we draw inspiration from the beauty and resources of our extraordinary location at the edge of the Pacific Ocean.