UC SANTA BARBARA
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Jim Logan

A Safety First

As part of its ongoing commitment to promote safety and security on campus and in Isla Vista, UC Santa Barbara's Community Service Organization (CSO) will for the first time set up permanent operations in the adjacent community.

In partnership with the Isla Vista Community Services District (IVCSD), the CSO will set up safety stations on weekend nights during the academic year. The Isla Vista Safety Station program, established with $47,000 in funding from the IVCSD, will provide escorts and assistance during high-activity hours in IV. The funding is part of UCSB's 2017 contribution of $200,000 to the IVCSD in support of programming and operations.

The program launched Friday, Oct. 27, in Little Acorn Park.

Dustin Olson, chief of the UC Police Department on campus, said Community Service Officers, who are students employed and trained by the department, will be posted at safety stations where they'll be available to serve as safety escorts for students who request them.

Originally established as a liaison between UCSB students and the Police Department, the CSO has become a professional unit within the Police Department, continuing that liaison function as well as providing safety and security for students, staff and faculty. With the additional service dedicated to Isla Vista, the number of CSO officers serving the campus and the Isla Vista community will reach more than100.

According to Olson, having CSO officers stationed in Isla Vista will help “speed up our services and make them more efficient and more use-friendly to the community. I hope the additional presence will bridge any gaps or perceived gaps that exist, and I see it as a good, strong effort to show them we really, really care about the safety and the welfare of the Isla Vista community.”

The location of the safety stations will vary based on need, Olson said. “That just allows us some flexibility from day to day or weekend to weekend,” he explained. “This is the first of its kind, so we’re going in with that ability to adjust and adapt as needed.”

Olson expects the CSO will partner with UCIV, volunteer program run by the Associated Students Public Safety Commission. “The CSOs are not an enforcement group,” he explained, “while the UCIV are volunteers, and they deal with low-level complaints, like a noise. They’re actually this intermediate piece between police and the students and the community. We hope they’re going to take advantage of these safety stations and we can work together.”

The safety stations are the fruit of the first joint effort between UCSB and the new IVCSD to boost security in the community.

“I’m very pleased to see the launch of the new Isla Vista safety station program,” said Ethan Bertrand, IVCSD president. “This program is the result of strong collaboration between the IVCSD and UCPD to make Isla Vista a safer place. In addition to helping people get home safely on high-activity evenings, I’m also very excited to see the impact that this has on improving community/police relations. The IVCSD is very excited to work with UCPD to expand community-oriented policing services in Isla Vista.”

Olson called the program “a real collaborative effort, and I would say that IVCSD has been a real pleasure to work with and I look forward to a lot more of this type of work with them in the future.”

The CSO got underway more than 30 years ago, and over the years CSO officers, all students, have provided safety escorts 24 hours a day as well as patrolling the campus and reporting crimes, emergencies and safety hazards.

“It’s been a real shining star of the UCPD for decades,” Olson said of the organization. “In the last five to eight years we’ve really worked hard to be more focused in the efforts on campus and in Isla Vista and on the work that they do and

try to be more responsive to our community's needs.

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.