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Beyond the call: UCPD earns leading international accreditation

UCSB Staff

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With over 75 years of experience serving and protecting the campus community, UC Santa Barbara’s Police Department (UCPD) has grown into a modern agency that includes community outreach, a therapy canine unit and a team specialized in interpersonal violence-related incidents. And, as of this year, they received a prestigious international accreditation awarded to only 10% of university police agencies nationwide. Fewer than 100 agencies have earned this distinctive recognition.

Issued by the International Association of Campus Law Enforcement Administrators (IACLEA), the leading authority for campus public safety, the accreditation signifies UCPD’s commitment to excellence in every aspect of its operations — from increased accountability to consistently upholding the highest standards of professionalism and safety.

Even better, UCPD not only fulfilled the mandatory requirements for accreditation, but exceeded expectations after achieving a rare “highly recommend” remark following their on-site assessment.

Accreditation is no easy feat. For three years, UCPD thoroughly reviewed, edited and aligned its policies with 227 standards — standards that serve as benchmarks for professionalism and accountability within campus law enforcement. IACLEA assessors spent five weeks dissecting UCPD’s performance across key areas, including operations, investigations, dispatch, community engagement, crime prevention, training, property and evidence, and records. The end result has led to enhanced operational efficiency and improved community trust, all the while demonstrating the department’s commitment to safety, transparency and integrity with the campus community.

For the campus community, UCPD’s excellence is reflected in their approach: being a *part* of the community. The officers and command staff are Gauchos to the core — with one third of the team being UCSB alumni. They know the campus, understand the community and care for the wellbeing and safety of all Gauchos.

“I value the opportunity to build trust with the community. Some of my most fulfilling relationships at UCSB began when people trusted me enough to share their concerns with me about law enforcement,” said Officer Gary Gaston of the UCPD Community Outreach team. “Community policing is a policing philosophy and strategy that emphasizes building strong, collaborative relationships between police officers and the communities they serve. This ability to connect, collaborate and break down barriers is my most favorite part of serving this vibrant community.”

Corporal Ariel Bournes, also of the UCPD Community Outreach team, said that policing is about service and care. “Having a service-oriented attitude ensures I lead with compassion and attentiveness in all my interactions with the public. It means that I am committed to hearing the voice of the community, and I am equally committed to implementing their feedback. [We are] fully committed to serving the community, not through lip service, but through authentic partnership.”

Being a part of the community also means proactively supporting campus safety. UCPD extends their knowledge to faculty, staff and students through trainings and events, including hostile intruder training, space safety assessments and the [annual Lighting and Safety Walk](#), to name a few.

If you’re interested in getting to know the team within UCPD, join their [upcoming open house on Nov. 6](#) — open to faculty, staff and students.

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