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## A More Visible Presence

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# NEWS

*Tuesday September 13, 2016*

## A More Visible Presence

University of Dayton Public Safety is rolling out a series of initiatives this academic year designed to increase its visibility on campus.

Perhaps the most immediately evident are continuously lit red and blue lights atop each cruiser to allow anyone in the student neighborhood to see them from blocks away.

"Students and parents are asking for more visibility of public safety on campus, and we've stepped up efforts this year with more walking and vehicle patrols. But if students are not looking out their windows or are otherwise distracted, they may miss them," said Rodney Chatman, executive director of public safety. "These 'steady beacons' add another level of visibility."

As an example, Chatman points out anyone standing at the corner of Brown and Kiefaber on campus will be able to spot patrol vehicles with its lights "all the way down Kiefaber and up Brown Street to Irving." He added they'll even catch the eyes of anyone who may be glancing at their phone or having a conversation.

"Industry leaders routinely refer to the steady beacons as a force multiplier for that reason," Chatman said. "And more importantly, the bad guys see this, too, and know we are there. It's a bad thing for me if criminals are not keenly aware of our presence."

Cincinnati; Richmond, Virginia, and Philadelphia are among the cities using steady beacons on police cruisers. No local municipalities use steady beacons atop vehicles, which Chatman feels is important for local residents to know who may wonder if they've run afoul of University public safety.

"Our lights will start flashing and/or we'll sound our sirens if we are in pursuit or have a traffic stop," Chatman said.

Other new University of Dayton public safety initiatives include:

\* Fair and Impartial Policing Training: University of Dayton Public Safety officers and supervisors and University administrators will participate in a workshop to understand how bias impacts perceptions and police business. The workshop also will provide tools to recognize biases and implement fair and impartial policing.

\* Diversity and Inclusion Recruitment Officer: University of Dayton Public Safety has hired Tanya Williams as diversity and inclusion recruitment officer. Williams has experience in human resources and as a police officer, formerly working in the Cincinnati Police Department assisting with its diversity efforts.

\* Citizen Policy Academy: During this five-week program, University of Dayton Public Safety will give faculty, staff and students a taste of its day-to-day operations. Sessions will include how public safety solves crimes and an opportunity for participants to "solve" a sample crime, go on a foot patrol and conduct a sample traffic stop.

\* Public Safety Substation: University of Dayton Public Safety will staff a house in the student neighborhood, 461 Kiefaber, at select times during the week and other high-activity periods like St. Patrick's Day.

\* Lexipol: This service provides University of Dayton Public Safety with the latest information to ensure Public Safety's policies and procedures are up-to-date. Lexipol will regularly examine the department's manuals to see what may be out-of-date or need updated because of new legislation.

\* Regular Meetings with Students: Chatman is scheduling regular lunches with students in the student neighborhood and regular meetings with student organization leaders. An officer will be in Kennedy Union during lunch for students to ask questions. Other activities, such as a public safety barbecue, bowling night and a self-defense workshop, are also on the schedule.

Chatman became executive director of public safety earlier this year, emphasizing relationship building and community policing.

"It's important for us to build community relations, build advocates on campus and learn different groups' perspectives. We need a framework to address concerns directly in a safe environment and a mechanism for following up on them," Chatman said. "We want to 'demystify the uniform' and better show this isn't *us vs. them*, but *we*."

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