

FBI Law Enforcement Bulletin

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*Lateral Entry
A Move Toward the Future*

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124516

Campus Security

The Mule Patrol

By
JAMES A. HUFF



Rumors of rape being committed at Central Missouri State University in Warrensburg, Missouri, created tremendous public relations problems for the university. And, even though subsequent investigations proved these allegations to be false, the rumors could not be quelled.

To counter the damaging effects, the Department of Public Safety initiated a series of public relations efforts. The department believed that meetings with the news media, the Neighborhood Watch Program, and crime prevention and rape awareness presentations would alleviate the problem.

Unfortunately, this was not the case. Despite all the public relations announcements and awareness presentations, the rumors prevailed and the university community wanted more. Students demanded that campus police patrol residence halls and parking lots more frequently. Faculty and staff members also made similar requests for academic and office buildings. But, because campus crime did not statistically increase in recent years, hiring additional officers could not be justified.

As a result, the administrative staff of the Department of Public Safety explored other alternatives. One viable option was to establish a student security patrol. A number of universities used student patrols to supplement their campus police forces with positive results. However, before initiating such a program at the university, several areas needed to be addressed:

- How would the security patrol be funded?
- What name would be given to the patrol?
- How would the student employees be identified as members of a student security force?
- What would their responsibilities be?
- How many students would be hired, and what would be their qualifications?

These questions needed to be answered before any further planning could continue.

Funding

In 1985 the Director of Public Safety received permission to implement a student security force to assist the campus police, with one provision. Because of fiscal constraints, no State funding could be used in support of the project. Funding would have to come from other sources within the university, especially those operating within the auxiliary budget.

One main area of the university that needed additional security was the 60 campus parking lots, in view of the recent increase of vandalism and theft from vehicles, especially at night. Therefore, funding for 50 percent of the student security force came from the parking lot operation, which is a budgeted auxiliary service.

The Department of Residential Life, which has responsibility for all residence halls, is also an auxiliary enterprise. And, because the students requested more foot patrols within the residence halls, funding from this source was also targeted. After realizing the benefits an added sense of security would project to the students living on campus, the Director of Residential Life agreed to fund the remaining 50 percent of the student security force. The biggest hurdle, funding, had just been cleared.

What's in a Name

Choosing a name for the student security force was the next consideration. The name selected had to be one that would lend an esprit de corps. After much deliberation, the student security force was named the Mule Patrol, since the university's mascot is the mule.

Identification

The university believed that it was important for Mule Patrol officers to wear uniforms, but the uniform had to be easily distinguishable from the navy blue uniform of the university police. The uniform selected for the Mule Patrol consists of a white shirt, black pants, and a baseball-type hat. Sewn on the shirt is the Mule Patrol patch.

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...a student security force acts as additional eyes and ears to the regular university police force.
”



Mr. Huff is the Director of Public Safety for the Central Missouri State University in Warrensburg, Missouri.

Responsibilities of the Mule Patrol

One critical question was, "What would be the job responsibilities of the Mule Patrol?" To arrive at an answer, university administrators asked various campus groups what security measures they would like to see implemented. The feedback revealed that high visibility on campus was the primary concern.

To define more specific responsibilities of the Mule Patrol, coordinators interviewed the student patrol force of another university campus. This student patrol force operated successfully for several years. However, what works well for one campus may not work at all for another. Fortunately, this was not the case. Many of the concepts and ideas of the veteran student patrol force were incorporated into the Mule Patrol.

The job responsibilities and regulations for the Mule Patrol were defined and implemented. Specifically, Mule Patrol officers:

- Do not carry weapons of any type
- Have no arrest powers. Their primary function is to observe and report
- Cannot leave their assigned patrol area without permission of their supervisor
- Are under the direction of the Department of Public Safety
- Must be courteous and professional at all times, especially with the public

- Must render assistance to everyone to the best of their ability

Mule Patrol officers are expected to adhere to higher standards as compared to other student employee positions on the campus.

Selection Process

To begin, the university set specific qualifications for Mule Patrol officers. First, the student must be enrolled at the university and have completed at least 30 hours with a minimum grade point average of 2.3. Also, a criminal justice major was not a prerequisite.

“
Mule Patrol officers are expected to adhere to higher standards as compared to other student employee positions on the campus.
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And, although not a requirement for the position, the Department of Public Safety preferred to hire students who demonstrated active involvement in college life, such as members of activity groups or residence hall councils.

After meeting the necessary qualifications, the student then appears before an oral selection committee composed of students, faculty and staff. This allows the committee to determine an applicant's

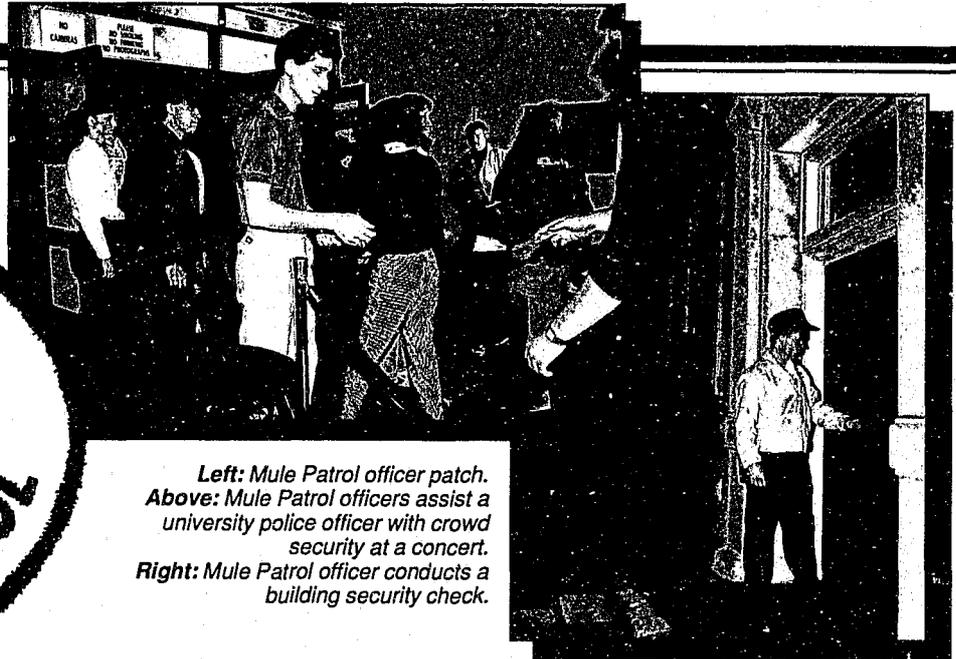
views about the position. It also provides insight into the applicant's personality, community service commitment and attitudes about the university and the public safety department. After the oral selection process, a background investigation is conducted on each applicant to assure that the applicant has not been involved in any illegal activity.

On Patrol

The Mule Patrol can be described as students protecting students. They patrol the academic buildings, residence halls and parking lots and report any suspicious or criminal activity that they witness. Their equipment consists of a flashlight and a two-way portable radio, which allows them to talk on the police frequency to the dispatcher, campus police patrol vehicles, and city police patrol vehicles. There are four Mule Patrol officers on duty each night when the university is in session.

Mule Patrol officers are assigned to one of four zones when they report for duty. Within each zone are specific buildings, parking lots, and athletic areas that they are required to patrol. If a particular area within the zones has a specific security problem, this information is noted at the beginning of each shift and relayed to the Mule Patrol officer assigned to that zone at the beginning of the following shift. Mule Patrol officers are also required to report any safety-related problems that they may encounter, such as hazardous materials improperly secured or stored and inoperative fire alarm systems or fire extinguishers. Mule Patrol officers

Photos courtesy of Jim Wiltse



*Left: Mule Patrol officer patch.
Above: Mule Patrol officers assist a
university police officer with crowd
security at a concert.
Right: Mule Patrol officer conducts a
building security check.*

also provide crowd control and security at concerts and major athletic events. Many times, they team up with police officers. Future plans are being made to have them assist in the dispatch centers as back-up dispatchers.

Mule Patrol officers do not write parking tickets or perform other such negative duties. The department believes that if the Mule Patrol officers are not given any negative responsibilities, the student body and the university community would view the project in a more positive light, an assumption proven to be correct.

Project's Expectations

The Mule Patrol project has been in place for a little more than 3 years and has met and even exceeded the department's expectations. Within the first few months, the rumors of rapes on campus were virtually eliminated. The entire campus community soon realized that there were people patrolling the campus on foot each night.

The Mule Patrol has also been instrumental in apprehending several automobile thieves who were working university parking lots. The Patrol has also gathered information that helped to solve a variety of crimes, such as burglaries, larcenies, and drug cases. The Department of Public Safety has also used Mule Patrol personnel on surveillance exercises, especially in parking lots, with excellent results. Mule Patrol officers also serve as excellent ambassadors for the department in its recruiting efforts for various positions. These procedures have reduced the amount of overtime required for police officers and, thus, have saved the university money and reduced officer burnout.

Currently, project expansion is under way because the Mule Patrol program has been so successful and beneficial. The university now realizes that a student security force acts as additional eyes and ears to the regular university police force. In fact, during the past academic year,

the number of Mule Patrol officers increased from 12 to 16.

Conclusion

Thorough planning and positive supervision have contributed to the success of the Mule Patrol. However, student security officers must know the importance of their jobs to the academic community, and that they are a vital part of a team. After all, they are not only representing the university and the Department of Public Safety, but most importantly, they are representing themselves.

The positive aspects of the Mule Patrol are clearly evident. The rumors of rapes on campus have been eliminated, and the campus community now enjoys a heightened sense of security. The Mule Patrol officers have become more personally involved and more serious about their responsibilities to the campus community. But, the most positive byproduct of the Mule Patrol program is that students are protecting students.

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