

## 2008-2009 Unit Action Plan

Division: Administration and Finance

College/Unit:

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Department: Department of Public Safety

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### Significant Areas of Success:

- ***Campus Community Emergency Response Team (C-CERT)***

Universities are a particularly good place to begin preparing citizens to care for themselves and their local communities in matters of emergency preparedness. Important too is the fact that universities are certainly not immune to disasters that occur anywhere people are. DPS is training a group of people, primarily FSU students, as a Citizen Corps of volunteers to serve the campus community while here and as Department of Homeland Security Citizen Corps volunteers in their future communities.

- ***Emergency Operations Center Manager***

The FSU Safety Coordinator has been assigned extra responsibilities in the area of emergency operations. Emergency response capabilities are centered in the Department of Public Safety, in the Emergency Operations Center, at the time of a critical incident. One of the lessons learned in the analysis of the Virginia Tech shooting is that we need to move away from too many emergency tasks for Public Safety personnel while they need to be engaged on locations. For this reason the EOC is opened and activated by the person assigned in this blended position. This member also acts as the alternate to the Emergency Messaging Technician mentioned next.

- ***Emergency Messaging Technician and Fire Service Liaison***

The University Cable Television Technician has been assigned extra responsibilities in the area of emergency messaging and mutual matters in the fire service of Big Rapids. Lessons learned in the review of the Virginia Tech shootings include the importance of effective emergency messaging university-wide. These technologies and prompt activation are being perfected by and with the technician identified above. This person also acts as the alternate for the EOC Manager mentioned above.

Another important opportunity with this employee is to benefit from the skills, training and resources of the Cable Television Technician because of his part-time profession as a fire chief. He is an excellent interpreter of the actions and needs of our fire service agency, and he teams with FSU DPS leadership to confer with Big Rapids personnel at the meetings documented next.

- ***Campus Fire Services Improved***

A series of important meetings were initiated by FSU DPS to significantly improve fire services to the University. The Director of Public Safety for Big Rapids and his new assistant have been engaged in a number of conversations on ways in which we can improve his team's response

capability and our University support for mutual benefit. This is resulting in training opportunities and significant safety enhancement in matters of fire prevention and suppression.

- ***Pedestrian Safety by Traffic Flow Engineering***

Two critical areas of the campus were given special traffic flow attention by adding traffic control devices and incorporating methods that greatly assist in pedestrian safety. The Arts & Science crosswalk to FLITE had stop signs and “No Stopping, Standing, Parking” signs placed to give pedestrians a break in vehicle traffic and an improved clear vision area. Vendor and passenger deliveries were moved to the rear of the building and the rear drive gate removed to allow an easy flow for these redirected vehicles. The cut-off drive in front of the Center for Student Services building was initially barricaded, then an “in lane” new sign was placed to cut the vehicle traffic challenges to pedestrians essentially in-half.

- ***Police Cadets***

A significant, proven staffing enhancement is being realized in the newly appointed police cadets. There have now been a total of five cadets appointed, two at a time, to upgrade our service to the community and improve workforce diversity. The cadets are civilian, police trainees who are both well-educated and well-trained individuals progressing along in their pursuit of professional police careers. Police cadets serve the community well while in their assignments, but more importantly they are kept in our midst, available to be promoted to police officers in our agency. Too often, Ferris produces excellent police recruits who are quickly hired in other jurisdictions and we have no position open for them. When a position comes available with FSU DPS the superb candidate will be ready for the best possible chance at the job and we will have them available to us.

- ***Parking Resource Management Program***

An impressive milestone was reached in our program to significantly improve parking at Ferris last year and the trend continues. The accomplishment of cutting in half the number of parking violations issued in the preceding four plus years is still moving in the right direction. That is, to further reduce ticketing as compliance and resource availability takes the place of widespread ticketing.

Another great gain has been made in the ongoing effort for fairness and justice in the ways that appeals are handled. We have recruited Ferris students interested in serving on an appeals board to hear and act on parking violation appeals. A DPS staff member or other Ferris employee works with the students hearing appeals to answer any of the students’ questions about points of law or proper procedure. The students’ decisions are final on the individual appeals and their suggestions for signage or procedural changes are offered and most often incorporated.

- ***Criminal Offenses Continue in Decline***

The total incidents of criminal offenses recorded annually show an impressive 15% decline overall in 2007. Of particular note is the reduction in the past 10 plus years, with a steep reduction in the past five, a time when record enrollment is occurring.

- ***DHS Region Six LE Representative***

Captain Jim Cook, Assistant Director, continues to represent area law enforcement agencies in our county where decisions are being made on the expanded role of these agencies relative to homeland security issues. This is the committee which reports on policy and spending priorities of grant monies from the US government for homeland security.

Allen Sutherby has been selected as the primary [voting] member of the Region Six Governing Board. This is significant in that there is only one in our county and Ferris Emergency Management has Sutherby in a position of influence and decision-making.

- ***Chairman of the Board of Directors—CMET***

MJ Bledsoe continues as the Chairman of the Board of Directors of the regional drug investigations group, the Central Michigan Enforcement Team (CMET). A design is being put in place to have this unit expand its mission to include crime detection saturation based on robberies and burglaries since they are so closely tied to narcotics use and sales. The team is being credited with adding much to controlling greater Big Rapids and Mecosta County crime.

- ***MACLEA President***

MJ Bledsoe serves on the executive board for the Michigan Association of Campus Law Enforcement Administrators—MACLEA in the capacity of Vice-president in 2007 and is serving as President for the organization in 2008.

## **Ongoing or Proposed Significant Activities:**

- ***Security Infrastructure Assessment Team***

The Virginia Tech shootings of April 16, 2007 have often been referred to as higher education's 9-11 (comparison made to the terrorism of 2001). Upon the mid-year release of the internal and external reports on VT lessons learned our team was developed at the direction of President Eisler. Our team joined two others reviewing topics of student issues and messaging methods to report on our needs and capabilities as a guide to Ferris going forward. Significant recommendations exist within our report and will be followed up on once the list is reviewed, considered and put in the context of the many others to be implemented by priority.

- ***Public Safety Office Improvements Reviewed***

The physical surroundings in the public safety offices need some attention for the sake of privacy and efficiency. People arriving at our building are first viewing a loading dock and large dumpster, then walking to a side door that has directions affixed that send the person to a door opposite the street we are situated on. This is awkward and unattractive.

Once inside, people do parking permit and ticket business at a counter where privacy is non-existent. They give personal information about themselves or attempt to offer reasons why they should not be held accountable for a parking violation in the immediate presence of many others. Everyone at that counter can hear several phone conversations coming from the cubicles beyond. The very sensitive conversations include details of police investigations, including actions and identities of reporting persons, witnesses and victims, and suspects. Add to this the inevitable discussions that can spontaneously begin about personnel matters, not for public consumption, and the need becomes more compelling.

## Public Safety

### Operational Efficiencies Completed or in Progress

**Opportunity 1:** The effort to diversify the workforce in public safety is an ongoing challenge.

*Solution:* There have now been a total of five cadets appointed, two at a time, to upgrade our service to the community and improve workforce diversity. The cadets are civilian, police trainees who are both well-educated and well-trained individuals progressing along in their pursuit of professional police careers. Too often, Ferris has produced excellent police recruits who are quickly hired in other jurisdictions when we have no position open for them. When a position comes available with FSU DPS the superb potential candidate, our cadet, will be ready for the best possible chance at the job.

**Opportunity 2:** Accelerate our methods and capabilities for notifying the campus community of a present or expected disaster or incident to help them protect themselves and each other.

*Solution:* Lessons learned and shared in the Virginia Tech shootings after action reports make it clear that emergency messaging is a vital tool in keeping the campus community safe during an incident. In that spirit, the leadership of the FSU Emergency Response Team has met to review report summaries and apply practical methods to our needs. A committee spawned by this concern has met many times just following the VT incident in April to understand our vulnerabilities and develop our capabilities.

### Accomplishments

- Total incidents of criminal offenses declined 15% in 2007 (continuing to trend down)
- Pedestrian safety initiative results in no serious pedestrian injury again this past year
- Parking Resource Management Program milestone is and surpassed with violations being reduced by 50% this past year when compared to four years ago and continuing to trend lower.
- State Homeland Security Grant: City Watch emergency messaging technologies brought on campus with DHS monies in excess of \$50,000.
- Assume a leadership role among Michigan's university public safety agencies as the President of the Michigan Association of Campus Law Enforcement Administrators (Bledsoe).
- Expand and enhance our involvement in matters of fire prevention and suppression by a series of meetings with the Big Rapids DPS Fire Division. This has resulted in excellent sharing of ideas and training of both Ferris personnel and the firefighters and their leadership.
- Gains realized in emergency preparedness by making two blended assignments. These efforts are to cover Emergency Operations Center management during a crisis, fire department liaison, and matters of emergency messaging.