GAPSA General Assembly Meeting
Penn Police Station
October 7, 2007

Exec members present: all
Student reps present: Lokman Tsui, Shawnika Hull, Roger Turner, Tim Shokair, Lucas Champollion, Stephanie Milk, Amy Fuller, Nikki Kabra, Prem Patel, Gina Calzaferri, Chris Thomas, Tyler Zimmerman, Jamie Ford, Nanda Srikantaiah, Meena Sharma, Lindsay Holmes, David Flynn, Christopher Morse, Jacqui Simonet, Tammer Farid, Katie Farrell, Carey Tamburrino, Page Crew, Nicole Izzo, Amy Lan, Ishan Chatterjee, Ray Edwards, Jennifer Akpapuna

Talk With Maureen Rush

Dan: What do we want to hear Maureen Rush talk about?
Bike Safety, neighborhood crime, monitoring video, status of collection...

Maureen: I’ve been at Penn for 14 years. I came in 1994 and I came as the Director of Victims Support and Special Services Dept. I was chief of police for 5 years, and in 2000 I was Interim VP for Public Safety, and now I am officially the VP for Public Safety. I joined the Philadelphia Police Dept. I am happy to say that there are 1000s of policewomen now. Worked in the anti-crime team, undercover burglary, open-air drug market. I was in the training bureau for a couple of years until I came to Penn.

Mark Dorsey: Chief of Police. I spent over 30 years in this business. 26 years in Philadelphia. I was in command of the burglary/robbery unit. We worked together in the anti-crime unit. I was the commanding officer in the patrol unit. I was hired in Ocean City, NJ....worked with bomb diffusion in the towns there...I’m a graduate of LaSalle University. I went there for a year to work. I got a call from the VP if I would be interested in working at Penn, and it’s been fast-paced and exciting.

Maureen: My masters is from school of arts and sciences – organizational dynamics...so I’m also an alum.

Roger: Bike Safety. I have some questions about what the dept. can do to make it safer for people to bicycle in. my concern is 40th and West.

Maureen: The city of Philadelphia controls the bike lanes. The undergrads have a big thing for 38th and Spruce. The bike lanes throughout the city are not the greatest idea in our opinion. People are opening their car doors and whacking bicyclists. Beyond 38th and spruce, we can hook you up with Bicycle Coalition. Louis Wendell – they receive some kind of a grant to work with the BC...who are going to be doing a bicycle safety. They’re sort of ambassadors for bike control. And BC is very active with the streets dept. and avid bicyclists, and they’re working with the penn police with some issues as well.

Neighborhood Crime.

Neal: Last year I was one of the few students at the business school who lived in West Philly, and recently I moved to Center City. Is statistically West Philly more dangerous than Center City? Can you give me some facts?
Maureen: There are people who live in Center City and they’ve had no issues at all. Specifically crime in West Philly (30th – 43rd, Market – Baltimore), there’s a slight increase in overall crime, but crimes against individual persons have decreased dramatically. So that’s something we’re proud of. Now there is a pattern that we just became aware of, I got a phone call from a parent that I knew...
Mark: where is exactly are you located?

Neal: The majority of the students I represent is just over the bridge, west of broad street.

Mark: Recently there has been some activities – robberies. 25th and South…our counterparts in Center City are aware of it. There was an incident on the other side of the Schuylkill, where people like to jog. Now fortunately no one has gotten hurt in this incidents. We are very fortunate that it hasn’t been in our patrol zone, but we are well aware of what’s going on around us. We’ve put some uniformed patrols in those areas to keep us a very visible presence.

The incidents are all really early evening. One was at 6pm.

Maureen: And that was not a robbery. They were juveniles on the track who smacked an undergrad on the butt and left, and then did that to another person. Unfortunately the juvenile population think this is cute, and they think they can scare people. And they did.

Mark: We keep track of everything that occurs. When the VP came back from Arizona, and we looked at some of the things that we could use to be proactive.

Dan: Now frequently we have to stay late on campus. What method do you suggest we get home if we live outside the Penn transit zone?

Maureen: Well you can take the Penn transit to its end and then take a cab.

What’s more important – going to a movie or catching a cab? That’s where the transportation runs at this point. Coming out of here, we want you to use walking escort. Actually up by 34% for October usage of walking escort. So good news is that people have been using the walking escort system. They’ll walk you to the subway, the garage, the transit stops. So if you are staying on campus late, call 511. 215 898 WALK.

Mark: I walk with the rest of my fellow students to where the cars are. I believe there’s strength in numbers. So if I am by myself, don’t feel uncomfortable to call an escort.

Christa: Do you know anything about the assault on the med school students on the bridge that happened on Sunday?

Maureen: No, do you? The escorts can cross the bridge, they can go underground into the subway stops. But I don’t recommend taking the subway at night. Stay above ground if you can.
Kara: The buses don’t run at 5am. So what do you suggest we take then?

Maureen: So why don’t you get me your email too and we’ll try to find a better solution for you.

Mark: We have blue light phones, and you can ask them to just have them watch you cross. The way I look at it is that you are our 2nd family, our daughters/sons, so we’re going to do everything we can to keep you safe.

Maureen: They have emergency phones down there at the SEPTA stations. So we respond to ERs called in.

Question: It seems that a lot of the crime around here is caused by juveniles. Do we have any programs that work with these kids?

Maureen: Philadelphia Police Athletic League has a center called the Tucker Center on 44th and Woodland – Wilson School. We have a female Penn police officer who is assigned there, and the chief and the police dept. we have people that volunteer, and we have fraternities and sororities that work with the kids to tutor them. The kids come and do the climbing wall at Huntsman. They go to the Phillies games. There’s a ton of stuff that the PAL program does. Plenty of opportunities for anyone interested. The purpose of them coming to Penn is that we want them to know that if they stay straight and narrow and keep studying... we have 3 scholarships for students who get into Penn who were PAL kids. We really believe that the future is in these kids. Some of these kids get adjudicated b/c you can’t lock a kid under 10 up. So then they get out and they participate in programs, and some of them don’t even know that what they’re doing is robbery. Case = You have an IPOD, and I don’t, and you’re all by yourself. I’m gonna take your IPOD. Same with cell phones. You’re on the phone, people think they feel safe b/c they’re on the phone with their mom or whoever, but that person on the phone can’t help you if you get robbed. It’s clear when kids are out of school, the crime stats are totally affected by their ability to be occupied or not occupied. There has to be more opportunities for kids in the inner city to be productive and to keep pace.

Alina: How can we as the student government work best with you to increase our students' safety? And can we work with you to get a self-defense class for students to enroll in?

Maureen: Crime maps are very fluid, and they’re used for police deployment. To say to somebody, here’s a map, don’t go into that area, and then next week there could be a crime in that area.

Mark: One of those things you can do is to look out for each other. This year we are tremendously up in thefts from buildings. I was at the library and I saw a pocketbook that was lying there for 2 hours, and I watched it for 2 hours, and it was lying there the whole time. I picked it up and brought it in.
Maureen: So here’s the other side of that. When we go out to community groups, they complain about Penn students. When the Penn students aren’t here, bad guys don’t come into the neighborhood. Penn students leave their stuff out, they get drunk. Sometimes we find bicycles with no locks! So there was a case where I took the bike out of the rack and brought it in. We got a call from the woman reporting that her bike was stolen. So we told her to come in and showed her how to lock up her bike. When you go to restaurants, ladies, don’t put your purse on your chair or even on the floor. If you have crumbs, you’re going to attract mice. We have mice in this city.

Maureen: CC TV cameras. We have 83 cameras. They go 360 degrees, they can zoom in and out. We can give you a tour of the center. When they’re not being operated by a human, they are on patrolled zone function. The camera continuously moves and stops and zooms into something. They are digitally taped. Anywhere from 16-28 days. They’re used for evidentiary purposes. If there was a crime, the first thing we do is pull out the tapes. We have a committee that approves the locations. The other thing we were able to do is the blue light ER phone. The closest camera will swing around and zoom in on you when you pick up a phone. One of the problems we have for our cameras, b/w 43rd and 40th, we don’t have fiber network. So we have some manufacturers to see if can get some out there. And we have additionally 500 cameras in different places in garages, buildings. But the 83 cameras are used for virtual patrol. 40th-33rd, 7 cameras also come in from Drexel University. And we’re trying to work with them to not just observe but operate their cameras as well.

Want to thank you for UPenn Alert. We had the alert on Nov. 1st, we had 6 members from GAPSA that participated. It went out 450 participants. We had a drill based on our crisis mgmt plan. We had 4 captains with clipboards. They met with the accountability officers. Unfortunately we were expecting a lot of press, but the officer died that morning, so the only press we got was the DP. The metric we were using for success, was how many 450 participants received alerts. 429 people received it. 4.7% did not receive it, the system documented it got a busy signal, and 19 people had problems with their cell phone carrier. 52% of students are registered. Compared to 24% faculty/staff. Students can register up to 4 people. We’re very happy with the success of that. We thank you, Dan, for arranging the participation.

Carey: I thought it was great. I got 4 missed calls and 4 text messages.

Maureen: so the next step is to have a system that when your professor is giving a powerpoint presentation/lecture, to have the alert pop up and interrupt the lecture. We’ve heard that a lot of professors don’t let their students have their cell phones on during class.

So here’s the criteria. we don’t want people to think that this is always happening b/c then they won’t notice it as much. It’s much like the policy although much quicker when school is closed due to weather. And there’s a whole flow chart we follow. On the UPenn Alert, it’s going to operate under the Crisis Plan. If it’s an active shooter, then we’re using UPenn Alert. If it’s something that’s under control, then we won’t use it. We’ll notify you via email. We’re happy to send you stuff that you all will want to know about.
Kara: How do you decide when it’s serious enough to use the system?

Maureen: We follow the federal guidelines. If we felt that there’s a compromising situation, then we’ll send out a direct whole university-wide email. We can use certain listservs, like GAPSA’s, for example. And if we see some kind of pattern, we’ll send it out using the listservs. It’s a constant challenge trying to communicate at Penn. They’re no doubt about it.

Lucas: Patrol zones. Tonight I’m going to walk 4 blocks west to get home. I understand you don’t have the resources to put up people beyond 43rd, but what should I tell people who live within that zone? I’m speaking of the graduate students who live in W. Philly on 44th street.

Maureen: That’s why Penn pays a $1.1 million to the University City district, and students can get walking escorts. As far as when people call 911 and get a delay, that is problematic. call 215 573 3333 – off-campus ER number; you should have this number in your cell phone, and save it under Penn Pub Safety. 511 you can call from any phone in any building. If you live beyond 43rd, then the first # you call is 911.

Let’s find out what the non-ER number is.

Dan: Penn Alert. The UA made a motion this past week to require all incoming Penn students to have actually opt out. And we were approached by the Safety Office if we want to make a similar motion.

Amy: I think it’s a good idea. Considering the school violence trends now, if students are going to be on campus, then they should know what’s going on.

Anne: Generally I would be careful b/c of privacy issues, and particularly for international students, I would see more issues with privacy. And I would not want the university to have my cell phone number.

Dan: Basically the idea would be that before you are enrolled in the university, you would have to choose whether or not you want to participate on CampusExpress or whatever. There’s no penalty for opting out; you just have to make a decision either yes or no. you can’t just not do anything.

Amy: Don’t we already have to have ER contact numbers right now?

Dan: Nope. There’s no slap on the wrist if you don’t have a ER contact number. You only have to 1 address in the system.

Carey: I think it’s a great idea. I think people aren’t participating b/c they don’t know about it.

Neal: So the motivation behind this is that we want to prevent Columbine, VA Tech, etc. This is like a no-brainer.
Dan: Anne can tell you more about the legal issues...

Question: How much info is up about this? On the website, etc? I want to know what the context looks like when you are asked to sign up for PennAlerts. It is crucial to know how these questions are framed, whether they are one question amongst many or stand out, etc. Framing and context matter because I would want to make sure that the student is aware of what s/he is signing up for, what the consequences are of signing up or not signing up, etc. I think we need to know this before we can decide whether we decide to support this or not.

Dan: I personally agree with you that they need to do a better job in educating students.

Tammer: It seems like we need to know what info is given, who has access to this information, and there should be info right there on the site on what the system is.

Christa: I don’t think it should be attached to registration.

Dan: It’ll be attached to enrolling into Penn.

Amy: What if you just include it in a flyer as part of an orientation package?

Dan: Paper tends to get lost.

Lucas: This is about opt-in vs. opt-out. This is about putting the burden of additional work on the person who wants to opt-out. The reason that this would benefit all of us is that the more people you see getting up around you and rushing out, it would still benefit you.

Dan: Does anyone want to make a motion about this?

Stephanie: Could we see what it’s going to say before we vote on a motion about this?

Dan: We can do that if that’s the general consensus. We can use the UA’s template. What’s the site look like today?

Is this the consensus of the group that we want to see what this looks like before we approve it? We’ll follow up with Maureen Rush about this.

OctoBus

Dan: The Octobus wrapped up on nov. 1st, and we’re analyzing the data on it. Administration has been mixed with their discussion on this issue. What we’re thinking about with the Octobus is working with the administration. We’re getting a lot of resistance from them, mainly about cost. We’re going to be sending out a survey, and email support. We’re trying to get many students to write an email to the President in support of the Octobus and safety.
Exec Reports

Henna: Thanks to those who turned in their personal photos for the directory. The directory is coming along well. Please keep sending me your photos!

Christa: I went to an Alumni Affairs Diversity/Equity groups event…

Jessica: 2 social events coming up. Karaoke at Cebu…on the 17th we are cosponsoring Saturday night salsa. There’s going to be food and free dance lessons.

Kara: We are working on the airport shuttle. It looks like there is going to be tremendous demand for the shuttle. So I’m going to be working with the UA to move this forward.

Anne: Andrew and I are going to a conference this weekend about research student issues.

Alina: I’m trying to keep up with the emails. I’ve got some good ideas from the Ivy Summit about how to interact and communicate with the administration.

Wenny: We’ve had a lot of good programs. Last week we had a dinner from Chris’s Jazz Café, and we’ve had a couple of our students go up and sing, so that was awesome. Upcoming program – Farmacia dinner sold out in 20 minutes, which is a record. Volleyball tournament on the 17th. We will also be cosponsoring with the GSC discounted tix to Phantom hockey game. Free massages during finals.

Victor: Money’s been well spent. We’re keeping track of it very well. There’s a committee in place to track the funds at each school.

Neal: Professional council split up into 4 groups. We approved a couple of travel grants. And the one we approved a couple weeks ago already has an article out in JAMA. The leadership group is planning an event to involve both research and professional students for a leadership event.

Dan: 2 weeks from now, we don’t have a meeting. We’ll have one after we come back from break. This has been a fast semester.

Katie: Motion to adjourn.
David: 2nd.

Break out into sessions 8:20pm