

## Internship – University Police Department

My internship was performed at the University of West Florida police Department during the Summer term, 2003. I began May 6, 2003, and am currently still working, although I have completed my 200 hours. My duties as an intern varied greatly according to the needs of the department. I worked mainly with Officer Heather Bobe, the University's Crime Prevention Officer, and Sergeant David Faircloth of Investigations. I also worked in dispatch fairly often.

The first thing that I learned to do during my internship was building security surveys. Chief Ronald Seacrist asked that all of the buildings on campus be surveyed to insure that safety in and around the buildings was optimal. The security surveys were begun during the Spring 2003 semester by the interns working at the time. Myself and Dustin Crawley, the other summer intern, completed several additional surveys. The building security surveys involved a general description of the building being surveyed, including the location of the building, how many floors on the building, the amount of pedestrian traffic around the building, etc. A scale map of each building was attached to each survey. There was a section in each survey involving the lighting of the building, including the type of lighting, where the lighting is located, whether or not the lights were functioning at the time, and if the lighting that existed was adequate, or if more lighting needed to be added. Another section involved checking the number of doors and windows to each building and finding out what type they were, and any possible security threats involved. An example of a potential security hazard listed is an automatically

locking door on the rooftop of Building 13. A person could walk out onto the roof and get locked out there, with no other way down. One of the sections of the security surveys that I focused the most on was fences, shrubs, and barriers. This involved checking to insure that the shrubbery did not block out the lighting, that shrubs did not present a hiding place for someone who might commit a crime. After a security survey had been done, I went back at night, once it was dark, and checked the building again to make sure that the lighting was adequate in the darkness and not blocked out by trees or shrubs. Between myself and Dustin we completed roughly 12 surveys during the semester.

During the summer I went with Lt. Rex Brant to Search and Rescue Dog Training several times. Lt. Bryant owns a Bloodhound and is actively involved in Escambia County Search and Rescue, a volunteer organization. I went with him to several of the training sessions. Escambia Search and Rescue uses different types of dogs in their work, mainly Bloodhounds and German Shepherds. I got to see how the dogs do their work, and the differences in the way the Shepherds work as opposed to the Bloodhounds. It is fascinating to watch. The Search and Rescue workers would send runners out to make a trail, sometimes longer than a mile. The trail would lead through woods and buildings, across the street, etc. Once the trail had been run, the runner would stay at the end of the trail and wait. I got to follow the Bloodhounds several times as they did the tracking. Bloodhounds have to stay on a long lead in order to work; they cannot be let off lead as the German Shepherds can. The Bloodhounds follow the scent of the person they are trailing by picking up the person's smell through dead skin cells that are constantly sloughed off from people. Each person's scent is different, and even if three people have run a trail, the Bloodhound can follow one particular person out of the group. Often the

runners will split off from one another and then converge back together later. The bloodhound follows the scent of one individual, completely ignoring the others. In areas where there are hills or buildings, the wind moves the skin cells around. The bloodhound follows the scent in the direction that the wind took it in. When the trail ends (because this is not the trail, it is only the scent being moved around) and the bloodhound can no longer detect the scent, he raised his head up, which tells his handler that he has a “negative”; the trail does not go that way. The bloodhound then backtracks and picks the scent back up going in another direction. The main problem with the bloodhounds working in this area is the heat. Bloodhounds overheat very easily. During the training the dogs are periodically hosed off or allowed to get into water to help cool them off. Bloodhounds are also used to find dead bodies; this is called cadaver work. For training, cadaver material can be buried and the dogs brought back to find it much later. Another training tool when doing cadaver work is to take cadaver material such as clothing from cadavers and put it into a tennis ball, then send the bloodhound to find the tennis ball. The German shepherds are used much differently than the bloodhounds. They cannot do the scent tracking as the bloodhounds so. During one training session I was able to see a new shepherd working and get an idea of how the training begins. This dog, “Chip”, was a two-year-old German Shepherd that had been given to one of the Search and Rescue members to use for search and rescue. Chip had an obsession with tennis balls, which worked out quite well for training purposes. For training, a runner would take Chip’s tennis ball and go just out of his sight and hide. Chip would have to find that person in order to get the tennis ball. The German Shepherds are great to search a general area where a person or persons might be, but they cannot track someone by a scent trail as the

Bloodhounds can. Because of this, work with the German Shepherds takes longer if the area to be checked is large. When checking the woods for a runner, a bloodhound must go all throughout the woods looking instead of finding the person by scent alone. I enjoyed working with Search and Rescue and will probably continue to attend whenever possible.

Another area that I was able to learn about during my internship was background investigations. The University Police Department had just accepted several applications for three positions that were open; two officers and one lieutenant; and background investigations had to be performed on the applicants. This included contacting neighbors, family, previous employers, various police departments where the applicant had lived, etc. It was very interesting work. I also got to learn what immediately gets an applicant disregarded (problems with a previous employer, a conviction for domestic violence), and what causes the Department to take a closer look at an individual (being neat and orderly, thanking individuals for their time, politeness, etc.).

Beginning around the second month of my internship, I began to help out in dispatch a few days per week during my internship. While I was in dispatch, I was mainly answering the switchboard and the police line, routing calls through and helping individuals. The police line is a recorded line that is used for emergency calls, calls for vehicle, money, and person escorts, and also for individuals needing to speak with someone within the department. I also helped individuals with parking permits and appeals, directions to other buildings, etc. Towards the middle of July I began working in dispatch more, since the department was shorthanded. I learned to use the key log and the shift briefing book and how to look up policies and procedures in the Standard Operating

Procedures Manual. I have just recently been taught to use PoliceTrak to make case cards and log in found property, and to use the NCIC/FCIC database to look up license plate numbers, driver's license numbers, and vehicle identification numbers.

Occasionally during my internship I rode with a patrol unit on duty. The summer is a slow semester at the University of West Florida Police Department because there are not many students living on campus, so there isn't a lot to do on patrol. While riding with patrol, I got to see traffic stops for various offenses. I learned that when an officer makes a decision to "be nice" by writing a ticket for speeding less than someone actually was, or writing only one ticket when the person could have been cited for multiple offenses, the officer makes a note of that on the ticket under the "notes/comments" section. For instance, a ticket wrote for driving 39mph in a 30mph zone might have a note similar to the following "while raining heavily; drove around a 90 degree curve at 46mph." this is written so that if the person who gets the ticket goes to court to try to dispute the ticket, the judge can see that the officer was actually giving that person a break. If the person is found guilty, the judge has the option of assigning the additional costs, as well as court costs and costs for the officer's time, to the person in addition to the original ticket cost. Other common things I saw while riding with patrol were blue light activations, in which case a tamper alert or activation alert comes through to dispatch telling them which blue light to check. The dispatcher then sends an officer to that blue light to make sure that everything is alright. The officers are frequently asked to do escorts, such as the daily escort of money from the cashier's office to the bank drop. If someone is on campus that is not supposed to be there, that person can be given a trespass warning, which is a notice that they cannot be on the University's property, and escorted off of the campus. Trespass

warnings are often given to individuals who come one campus to verbally or physically harass someone, such as a person whose former wife or girlfriend attends classes or lives on campus coming on to campus to try to find that person. I have also seen solicitors and skateboarders given trespass warnings and escorted off campus.

Reported crime at the University of west Florida campus is low. Reported crimes include larceny of purses, wallets, cellular phones, nautilus cards, etc, disputes between room mates or people involved in some other type of relationship, and vandalism of buildings and cars. I was able to assist Sgt. Faircloth in the investigations of a stolen cellular phone, vandalism to a building, stalking, harassing phone calls, and the theft of a credit card. During the investigation of the cellular phone theft, I used a phone-finder website to look up phone numbers called and find out if they were regular phone lines (in which case I could get the name of the person the number belonged to) or cellular phones. Sgt. Faircloth then called some of the numbers and was able to confirm that one of our suspects had made the phone calls. For the building vandalism case, I made flyers about the vandalism and posted them on campus. In the case of a stolen credit card, we traced the purchases and attempts made on the card and contacted those businesses to get information about the person who had used the card.

I have thoroughly enjoyed my internship at the University of West Florida Police Department and hate to go. Although it was summer and a little bit slow, I feel like I learned a lot here, which will be beneficial to me when I begin to look for a job. I decided to intern at the University because I wanted to be involved in the actual police work that was being done, and I have been. Only occasionally was I asked to type, file, or copy as I would have done most of the time at many other agencies had I interned somewhere else.

I have also made several good contacts that I will hopefully be able to use later on when I look for a job.