Public Safety

Q: Could you please tell us a little about what your departments do at Saint Mary's?
A: Public Safety provides.... Public Safety! Seriously, we have staff on duty 24/7 to help keep the campus safe. We staff the Front Gate and we are also responsible for parking management. Parking is the most fun, of course.

Q: The last time I was on campus, I noticed that the residence hall door was propped open with a brightly painted brick. This may be convenient for students during the day, but how is the building secured at night?
A: Public Safety does foot patrols of the residence halls and we work with Residential Experience to make sure Residence Assistants (RAs) are paying attention to this as well.

Q: What are some easy tips you have for students to ensure they keep their belongings safe on campus?
The most important thing is to keep things with you or keep them locked up. The good news is that we have a low crime rate on campus. The bad news is if there is one theft, and you are the victim, you don't care what the overall crime rate is.

Q: Is there a parking fee? If my student has a charge from Public Safety, what would it be for?
There is no fee to park, but there IS a fee if someone parks in violation of the campus rules. A parking violation is typically $40. If they do not pay within 2 weeks, it doubles to $80 and goes on the student account.

Q: Are there code of conduct offenses that also are reported to law enforcement by Saint Mary's? Or is this recourse the responsibility/decision of the victim?
A: We may give the local agency some information, but the decision to report rests with the reporting party.

Q: Christmas break is approaching, what things do I need to be sure I tell my son about doing on campus before he leaves for a few weeks (ex. valuables, keys, etc.)?
A: Public Safety would like people to secure their highly valuable items and take things like personal jewelry with them when they leave. Each room should have an area that only the resident has a key for, and they should take advantage of that to secure their valuables. Please be aware that housing for Christmas is different than previous years. Residence halls close on Friday, December 12 at 9:00a.m. For the first time, any student remaining over Christmas Recess will be moved to one residence hall. We encourage all residents to take home with them any valuable over the recess. We change locks on the exteriors of doors and take extra safety precautions.
Q: Do you encourage students to secure escorts by Public Safety officers if traversing the campus late at night or early while alone?
A: Our crime numbers and the fact that there is only one-way in-out in a vehicle mean that our campus is fairly well secured. Of course people can call, and we like for folks to walk in pairs or groups when possible, but the risk (based on our history) is quite low.

Q: Are there still animals such as large deer, bobcats, bears, raccoons and others on campus late at night?
A: No bears (other than Cal alums) that I know of. We have had the others, along with cows, turkeys, goats and frogs. The albino raccoon on campus is an unofficial campus mascot...and the occasional coyote...

Q: Do students feel like there is adequate transportation to and from campus? Should there be more shuttles available?
A: No and yes. Students would like more mass transit. I would love to have a shuttle that goes from the Ascot/Donald Drive area of Moraga to campus, and a regular shuttle to the Safeway/CVS complex. Unfortunately, those resources are expensive and not currently available. We do have an enhanced service that runs from SMC to Lafayette BART every night until the last train arrives.

Q: Perhaps a once weekly shuttle at a specified time to Safeway/CVS is feasible, for example, Saturday at 10:00 a.m. publicize it, try it for a 6 week period, and if not utilized by students, quit. My student needs to get to CVS pharmacy often and this would enable her to do so.
A: We've explored this and would love to be able to fund it. The good news is that it's only about a mile away, so not having the shuttle isn't quite as isolating.

**Community Life**

Q: Could you please tell us a little about what your departments do at Saint Mary's?
A: The Office of Community Life is responsible for educating all students regarding Saint Mary's Code of Conduct. Our office hears cases, oversees a group of peer conduct officers, and provides training to faculty about the discipline process.

Q: Who are the hearing officers and why would they be hearing officers? And what offenses trigger a hearing?
A: Hearing officers are SMC faculty and staff members who are trained volunteers. Their responsibilities include meeting with a student who has allegedly violated the student code of conduct. Violations include underage drinking, sexual assault, vandalism, as a few examples.
Q: If my child gets in trouble by violating the Code of Conduct, how long does that stay on their record?
A: If a student is found in violation of the code of conduct, violations remain in their record until 4 years after their graduation or anticipated graduation.

Q: Does sexual assault result in a greater punishment?
A: A sexual assault responsibility finding would result in expulsion.

Q: What can students expect when they have a disciplinary hearing?
A: A student will be notified of a hearing via email. During the scheduled hearing, the student can expect to read and comment on any reports received regarding the alleged incident. The hearing officer will explain the allegations, possible sanctions, and ask the student if there is any additional information not included in the report. The student may also bring an advisor.

Q: Do most assaults occur between people who know each other?
A: Yes and it is for this very reason that education of your students as to potential outcomes of offensive behavior is critical, especially an understanding that situations are subject to more than one point of view. The intent is to try that during our incoming programming and throughout the years. We have increased our programming resources for the residence halls, and have launched an overarching "Saint Mary's Cares" campaign to get people to understand that we all have a role to play.

Q: What are the most common violations of the student code of conduct?
A: The most common violations are alcohol and marijuana related. These include underage drinking and/or being in the presence of alcohol if you are under 21.

Q: Could you talk about the Peer Council and the leadership opportunities within Community Life?
A: The Peer Conduct Council is currently a group of 16 student leaders who hear lower-level conduct violations. A student with alcohol allegations, for example, may go to a hearing with 3 trained peers. Students apply and interview for positions on Peer Conduct Council (PCC) each spring. This year, we are excited that our PCC will be taking the same leadership class as the Resident Assistants and Orientation Leaders! March 4 is the next session and will include information on the housing process.

Q: Are there Library book fees for books that are not returned?
A: Yes, if books are not returned the student's account would be charged.