

POLICE

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Departments collaborate to improve Southside safety



JEFFREY JOH/STAFF

The Joint Southside Safety Patrol began three years ago when UCPD and BPD officers shared squad cars to increase patrol presence on Thursday through Saturday nights.

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Anjuli Sastry discusses the joint BPD and UCPD Southside patrols to curtail violent crime in the area.

With a new school year under way, UCPD and the Berkeley Police Department are teaming up to keep crime in check.

The Joint Southside Safety Patrol, which was launched last August as an effort to curtail violent crime and public nuisances, is a partnership between the two police agencies that patrol the streets together in neighborhoods directly south of campus. Police officers will be on the lookout in shared squad cars every Thursday through Saturday during the school year between 10 p.m. and 2 a.m.

The program unofficially started three years ago when police officers patrolled the streets together following the receipt of complaints regarding gameday parties, according to UCPD spokesperson Lt. Marc DeCoulode.

"During football season, we got some joint patrols after games ... it was successful but stopped due to budget and staffing constraints," he said. "This current patrol is not just about parties, but safety — we want officers to be looking for crime as well as neighborhood problems."

Though in past years the patrol has targeted noise violations stemming from student parties, Councilmember Kriss Worthington said the patrol's

highest priority this year should be violence prevention.

"There has been quite a focus on noise," Worthington said. "But the number of assaults that happen in the south campus area is the highest of any neighborhood in the city — we need to focus on educating people on how to prevent crime and having patrol to discourage violence."

Roland Peterson, executive director of the Telegraph Business Improvement District, said shop owners and residents on Southside feel the patrol is foremost about student safety.

"A lot of the issues in the past pertained to parties that got out of hand and students who became vulnerable to late-night robberies or other crimes," Peterson said. "As far as it impacts business, anything that improves the perception of safety is positive for business."

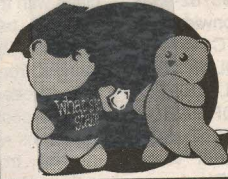
Residents and city officials say that the successful collaboration is in part due to the two police forces' recent changes in leadership — new chiefs were selected for both the UCPD and BPD last year.

"Any attempt at collaboration between two police forces is good for the community," said George Beier,

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What's at STAKE.

If you get caught using a fake ID, drinking if you're under 21, or having loud, late parties you face sizeable fines and campus as well as city sanctions. Berkeley police regularly share information about student violations with the Center for Student Conduct.



Party Safe



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partysafe.berkeley.edu

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president of the Willard Neighborhood Association.

Beier said that although students are frequently blamed for disturbances, the majority are caused by a few "outliers in the student community."

"There is a misconception among neighbors that students are partiers, but by and large students are focused on academics and want a peaceful community," Beier said. "A couple of rowdy students give a bad rap that isn't earned — most students and neighbors just want a quiet place to study or raise fami-

lies."

DeCoulode said the program will not expand beyond Southside neighborhoods for the remainder of the school year since that is historically where most activity occurs.

"We will definitely heighten patrol and have as many officers as we can out during welcome week, since a lot of freshmen come in not knowing the area," DeCoulode said. "If (students) are out there with a little too much to drink, they become crime or casualty victims." ■