

CRIME on Campus 2010-2011

BY Jeremy Vimislak Reporter

Does CWU have a safe campus? Crime happens. But where does it happen? What types of crime? What are the consequences for those involved? All valid questions. But who to ask?

PREVENTING CRIME

Crime will always happen. The only thing a community can do to try to prevent it. Over the last 15-20 years, CWU Police Chief Steve Rittereiser has overseen preventative crime programs boom. The police realize that on a college campus many students have their first interactions – good or bad – with police officers. These interactions sculpt how many young citizens view the police in the future.

So officers want to establish a connection with students on a personal level at the beginning of the college experience. This is done through several programs during Orientation where officers speak to students about being safe and protecting yourself from potential threats. Officers also help students move on campus into the dorms by walking around the campus, helping students and parents carry boxes, providing information or directions and introducing themselves. Officers also participate in many student life activities, such as the meet and greet Cops for Donuts, and various competitive athletic games with students – “not very well,” Rittereiser added with a smile.

Preventative patrols are completed during every shift, to ensure a police presence even in the tucked away areas of CWU’s campus. Crime statistics and environmental factors are taken into consideration during patrol planning. That is, when trends are observed through an increased police response to certain areas, the officer patrols are tailored to where they need to be. It’s called targeted policing, and it seems to work here at CWU.

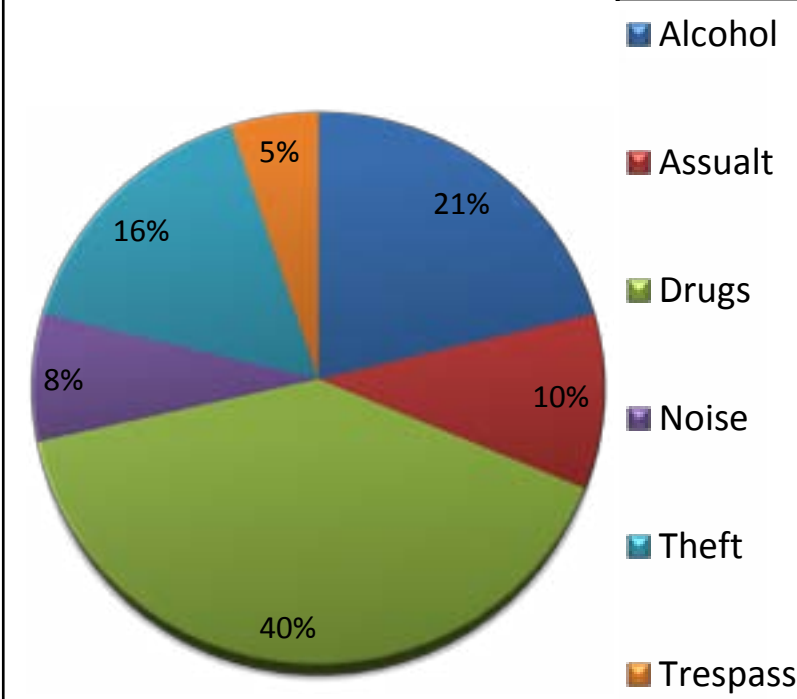
Other notable programs include the Rape Aggression Defense (RAD) training, and the Courtesy Assistance Team (CAT). CAT is a free service where students are trained by CWU officers to provide walking companions to students, staff and visitors, primarily during hours of darkness. RAD is a female self-defense course taught by CWU officers.

Senior Joanna Sharrett, elementary education major appreciates the CAT services. “I feel safe during the day but at night I don’t. I think the safety buttons are too far away from each other so if something happened I would have to run a long distance,” said Sharrett.

Senior Kelsey Sweet, family studies major took the RAD class and learned a lot. Not only did the class teach her defensive techniques, but also boosted her confidence knowing that she could handle any situation she got into.

“They told us not to show any guys we know the moves just in case they turn out to be the ones who attack us someday. Doesn’t mean I haven’t wanted to though ...”

Top 6 Crimes on Campus



THE CWU POLICE

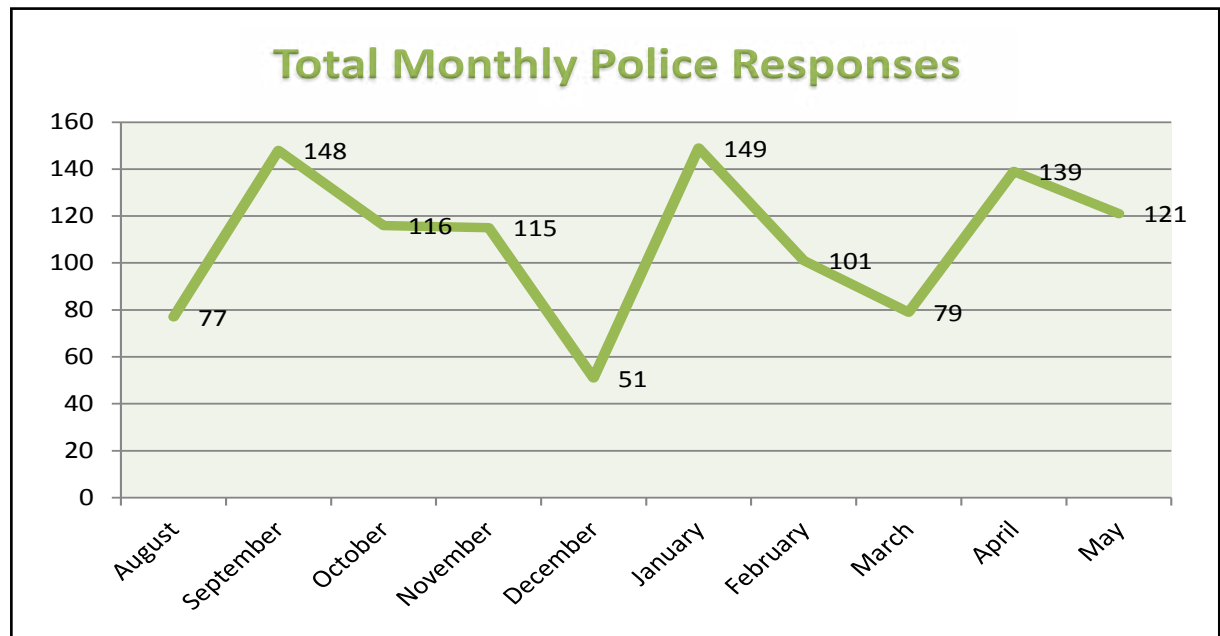
When an officer begins their shift, they are briefed about the occurrences of the previous shift, so that they can know about any large parties, events or other potential problems. They suit up, and strap on one of the few tasers that the department has. Next they make sure that their car is full of gas and ready to go. Then, they get out and drive around their area of patrol, looking for anything suspicious and taking their time to take in what has changed from a previous patrol they had in the area.

According to Officer Brian Melton, if students were to extend their right to going on a ride along with a CWU police officer, riders would basically just see students walking around campus. Officers don’t have a magical logarithm to predict criminal behavior. It’s simpler than that. Officers are vigilant and investigate oddities that go on in the night.

“Our job here is to be invisible,” said officer Melton. CWU police officers constantly must be cognizant of how many officers the city or county has on duty. “No one is staffed for crisis,” said Rittereiser. “You have to know your resources.”

According to Rittereiser, usually there are between two and three officers on duty, patrolling the campus. One night a week, there are six officers on an overlap shift. They do a lot of internal things during this time, such as follow-up on investigations, collecting evidence or department training.

The CWU police officers are fully commissioned, meaning that they are qualified to carry firearms and make arrests. CWU officers often get calls from city or county police forces asking for help in response to an incident. Last year, CWU officers completed 111 assists to local medical staff, local police, even picking up suspects that had open warrants for their arrest. There was even one case where a CWU officer transported a criminal in custody to Lacey, Wash. to hand them over to another police force. CWU officers sometimes handle extremely technical cases, such as handling DNA samples from the Richard Bunch case involving a sexual assault in the Japanese Garden in 2010. By Rittereiser’s own accord, “these officers are some of the best trained in the state of Washington.”



CRIME ACTIVITY: LOCATION AND TIME

“The beginning of the school year always has more activity,” said Jenny Day, Program Assistant for The Department of Public Safety and Police Services. This fact is proven through examination of the daily crime logs.

The most activity hands down goes to the areas around the Bassettis and the SURC. That is where the majority of students are, so that is where all the action is.

According to Rittereiser, officers try to be seen in parking lots, the Student Village and Brooklane. There is less of an emphasis on instructional buildings, as they are locked up and have more limited access compared to the residence halls. The need to patrol these areas of concern comes from observing what the crime statistics show, according to Rittereiser and supported by the data available. Rittereiser noted that usually students are not the ones prowling cars and committing break-ins. It’s often the juveniles from the community. Usually students

have more invested at Central, they’re part of the community - they’re not anonymous like in some bigger schools.

According to Rittereiser, at night, the nature of crime changes. Nighttime activity is more behavioral, and more often involves people in crisis. For obvious reasons, officers want to discover situations on their patrol before they get a tip from the public, such as a noise complaint or break-in. “At that point, it’s almost personal,” said Rittereiser.

According to DeShields, there aren’t really any hotspots of crime on campus. In fact, Living and Learning Communities (LLCs) have shown a decrease in crime; a statement that is reflected through the data. One possible explanation to this is that the students living in an LLC already have the educational motivation to self-select into a community where the goal is to learn around similarly minded, academically motivated peers.

WHAT THE DATA SHOWS

The 2010-2011 police activity daily log, available on the CWU police online website was used in these findings. Out of the many police actions seen on this log, only eight were chosen as encompassing crime, that is; in some cases several actions were recorded for each crime type used for this summation. The eight actions include: alcohol; assault/harassment/threats/ domestic disputes; drugs;

noise violations; theft; trespassing; agency assist/warrant arrests; and traffic. Other actions found on the log include civil work, such as unlocking dorms, locking educational buildings, helping students while on patrol and providing basic information to students. The extraordinary number of log notes concerning the civil work officers does would skew the data for these research purposes.

The top crime on CWU’s campus is drug abuse. That includes Violation of the Uniform Controlled Substance Act (VUCSA) drugs, including narcotics: Cocaine and opiates such as heroine, as well as marijuana, barbiturates, methamphetamine and hallucinogens. Second place is tied with both alcohol and theft. Next to that, domestic disputes, which include assaults, harassment, and threats.

The beginning of each quarter has a spike of crime, easily seen on the Total Monthly Police Responses graph. The highest crime dorms include Wendall Hill

Hall (as it is the largest dorm on campus), and Beck. That is likely because Beck is closest to the SURC, as well as flanked by a field and another Bassetti.

Under the top eight types of crime. Under the six highest police actions found on the daily log, there were a total of 1096 police responses during the academic school year or 2010-2011. Those actions pertain to most of the crime attributed on campus. The Total CWU Officer Responses graph easily shows how police spend most of their time, when taking into account the amount of crime, not the civil work that they do.

RESIDENT ASSISTANTS

The 3100 students living on campus not only have the immediate presence of the university officer patrols, but are also sheltered by the Resident Assistants (RAs), who are often the first responders at the scene of a crime – especially in a dorm. RAs coordinate training with the CWU police to deal with all kinds of scenarios, and depending on the crime, may choose not to contact the campus police.

“We’ve been doing cooperative training for 15 to 20 years,” said Rittereiser. “The RAs are mindful that the campus police

department is available for assistance – we don’t want them to get too deep into a situation they may not be able to handle.”

Students living off campus, however, may forget that their late-night antics may be met with stiff punishment because they are part of a larger community. That is why most universities require freshman students to live on campus; to act as a buffer as they acclimate to their newfound freedom from their parents. The campus police and RA staff are likely to be more lenient with smaller offenses and newer offenders for just this reason.

TYPES OF CRIME

According to Rittereiser, the overall crime rates are low compared to other university communities all around America. The biggest factor is the environmental aspect. According to Senior Director for University Housing and New Student Programs, and Senior Conduct Officer Richard DeShields, “other students that are getting in trouble influence their peers.”

“Anything after 10 p.m. is usually alcohol related,” said Rittereiser. Often that can involve sexual assault or other types of domestic disputes. This is where Chief Rittereiser and his

officers shine, as they have received numerous awards in sensitivity response and are renowned as leaders in crimes against women. Rittereiser himself has been invited to speak at national events on the topic of sensitivity.

“We also work with the wellness center on bias-motivated cases,” said Rittereiser. “We use the resources we have to determine whether a crime is a hate crime or not.”

Alarmingly, the only instance of sexual assault recorded in the log was simply recorded as being reported in October 2010, and a location was not labeled.

STUDENT CONSEQUENCES

Student education programs and RA policies are not meant to be punitive, but rather educational so that in the future, students do not make the same mistakes.

“We don’t want to just write a citation, we want to take the time to explain to the student why they are in that position and how it may have been avoided,” said Rittereiser.

DeShields explains that students come to college expecting Animal House-type parties, but that is just wrong. We’re not a party school, but we have our moments.

“When students make mistakes, they give me the power over their future - and that should never be given away,” said DeShields.

Sometimes, a lack of evidence or lack of manpower for follow-up investigations lead to a situation where the CWU police cannot pursue a crime in the judicial system, admits Rittereiser. They confirm this with prosecutors, and may then decide to simply go through the student judicial system. Students may think they are in the clear if there is little physical evidence against them, but the student judicial code is easier to continue a case, as circumstantial evidence is often enough to prove to the judicial board that a student be reprimanded for a crime they most likely committed.

Rittereiser explains, “It is helpful to have these two systems in the judicial process, because oftentimes in a city, the single system lets people down.” Punitive student ramifications for drugs or alcohol can range from a warning to expulsion for a grave or continued offense. After a first offense, whether the incident occurred on campus or not, students are required to take an eight hour interactive, educational class where they learn about the consequences of exces-

sive drinking or drug use. The class does not stress abstaining from drinking altogether, but safe drinking practices. After completion, there is a personal follow-up meeting with Gail Farmer, the Director of the Wellness Center in the SURC and teacher of the class. Usually between the incident and before they can take the class with Farmer, the student also has to hold a meeting with a student conduct officer, where the situation is explained to the student.

Jessica Bowman, junior psychology and law and justice major had to take the class after an alcohol violation in her dorm during her freshman year.

“I thought it was really interesting and it did make me cut back a little, but didn’t convince me to stop [drinking] completely,” said Bowman.

If a student imbibed to such excess that they require medical assistance, or if the police discover the underage student then further consequences may be involved.

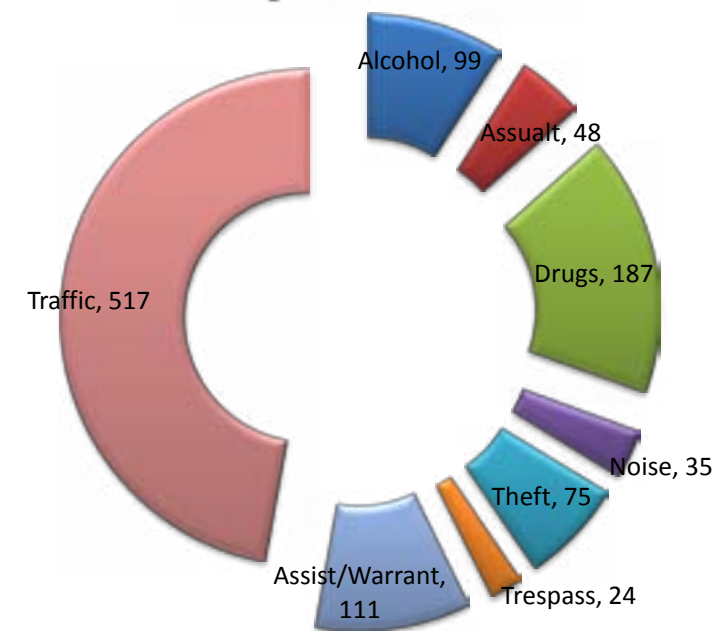
Regardless of the scope of criminal consequence, students involved in CWU athletics may lose their ability to play. The office of Intramural Club Sports do not check to see if a student has gotten into any criminal trouble, so short of getting suspended or expelled, no one will check.

Wildcat Sports team members, however, are held to higher standards.

According to Director of Athletics Jack Bishop, students may face probation, suspension or full dismissal from their team if they are in trouble with the law. Individual coaches have their own policies, as well as the blanket student judicial code which every student must abide by.

“We like to take the ‘innocent until found guilty’ side,” said Bishop.

Total Officer Response by Actions



Wellness Center Programs:

- SARC - Sexual Assault Response Coordinator. ASPEN partnered support of sexual assault victims
- Student Health 101 - online magazine about wellness
- Alcohol Wise - online alcohol tendency reflection education
- Green Dot - violence prevention, bystander involvement

Visit <http://www.cwu.edu/~wellness/safe.html> to learn more

Caught drinking?

By an RA

- Sign up for Prime for Life - an 8 hr class that teaches students about the dangers of drinking to excess
- Check your email - when your RA made the report, they emailed a student conduct officer who will go over the particulars of your incident and will talk with you about why you should not do it again
- Apologize to your RA! - you were in the wrong, and they were just doing their job

By the Cops

- Same as for the RA+
- Check your citation. There will be contact information for you to find out when you have your court date.
- Don’t miss court!
- Pay your fine(s)
- Do your community service on time
- Don’t get in trouble while you are on probation for the next year

Dorms: everything you need to know

Bassettis:	Beds?	Co-ed?	LLCs?
Beck	130	Yes, mixed	
Davies	130	Yes, mixed	
Hitchcock	130	Yes, mixed	
Meisner	130	Yes, mixed	Casa Latina, Students for the Dream
Quigley	130	Yes, mixed	
Sparks	130	Yes, by floor	

Alford-Montgomery	180	Yes, by floor	Music
Anderson*		Yes, mixed	
Carmody-Munro	160	Yes, by floor	
Green	35	Female only	
Kamola*	212	Yes, mixed	APIA, Education, DHC, STEP
Kennedy	35	Yes, mixed	Leadership LLC students only
Moore*	90	Co-ed in RM	
Munson	78	Yes, mixed	
North	100	Yes, mixed	
Stephens-Whitney*	170	Yes, by floor	
Sue Lombard*	102	Yes, mixed	Education, STEP
Wahle*	150	Yes, mixed	
Wendall-Hill*	476	Yes, mixed	Aviation, Music
Wilson*	52	Yes, solo RM	

Top 10 dorms (Total Police Response)

