UAPD starts program to curb campus crime trend

By Holly Wells
ARIZONA DAILY WILDCAT

The University of Arizona Police Department is launching a new Campus Watch program in hopes of increasing communication on campus and reducing crime. The program is based loosely on Neighborhood Watch and will provide presentations on safety and security to the campus community, recommend changes to buildings to make them safer, and now a campus crime report to all departments and provide statistics on crime trends.

Officer Chris Schwengler, a crime prevention specialist, said the program was not as responsive to a question as specific, but came out about a grant UAPD received that was geared towards establishing a program like Campus Watch.

Sgt. Eugene Mejia, UAPD spokesperson, said the department has wanted to have something like Campus Watch for a long time and said the grant made it easier to establish.

"We're trying to increase the flow of communication and expect a reduction in crime," Mejia said.

Schepper described the program as a formal network of communication geared toward the academic and business portion of campus.

He said the program deals mostly with employees concerns, because students are the focus of other programs.

To reach out to students, UAPD created the campus liaison program, which assigns an officer to each residence hall and concentrates on a specific house each month.

Colleen Chavez, an enrolled freshman and resident of Graham-Greenlee Residence Hall, said she wasn't aware of the campus liaison program, but said she thinks Campus Watch is a good idea.

"I went to a program at orientation about crime prevention tips and learned a lot from that," she said.

Schepper said UAPD wants to be able to easily inform campus departments of crime trends and possible suspects on

Garages safer than Zone 1 lots

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Three 18-year-old men were caught stealing from cars in garages Nov. 11, but Zone 1 lots remain the most prone to theft, according to UAPD.

Miguel Santa Cruz, Santiago Esparza, and Luis Flores were all arrested after witnesses saw Santa Cruz and Esparza break into a white Honda Civic around 11 p.m. Nov. 14 at Cherry Avenue Garage, 1441 E. Lisa Drive. UAPD reports stated.

A total of five cars were broken into that night. Four parked in the Steward Street Garage, 1340 E. Second St., and one parked in the Cherry Avenue Garages.

Santa Cruz and Esparza were charged with two counts of third-degree burglary, larceny, and were charged with possession of burglary tools. Flores was charged with conspiracy to commit burglary.

Sgt. Eugene Mejia, UAPD spokesperson, said car thieves are usually hard to catch.

"We caught someone in the act. Normally with car break-ins, you don't hear about it until after the fact," he said.

But Mejia said even with the recent arrests, garages still have less crime than Zone 1 lots.

Between January and November this year, 16 cars have been stolen from Zone 1 lots and three stolen from garages. During the same time period there were 17 cases of break-ins of cars parked in Zone 1 lots and six cases in garages.

From September 2011 to September 2012, the south side of campus had the greatest amount of vehicle theft and vehicle crime. Honda Civics and Ford Fit were among the most commonly stolen cars.

Lauren Mayes said her car was stolen into the night from the three men were arrested. She said she was parked in the Second Street Garage.

"I had gone shopping earlier that day and all the bugs were in my car. They took everything from my trunk," she said.

Mayes said one of her windows was broken and there was glass all over her back seat.

"Although many of Mayes' things were returned after the arrest, she said she no longer feels safe parking in the garage.

"It's no reason I choose a garage. I paid a ridiculous amount of money because I thought it was more secure. Now I'm thinking about trying somewhere else," she said.

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CAMEO: EMILIE/Artesia Daily Wildcat

Students head to their cars in the Tumamoc Avenue Garage last week. Despite a number of recent break-ins at campus garages, UAPD claims they are still safer than Zone 1 lots.