“One of our top priorities is pedestrian safety,” says Officer Patrick Saunders. Wayne State officers patrol a roughly 4-square-mile area on and around the campus.
Officer Patrick Saunders has his eyes locked on a pedestrian crosswalk outside of the School of Medicine. Saunders, a member of the 39-officer Wayne State police department, is content to see motorists slowing down to stop as scores of students, faculty and staff hurry across the street.

“One of our top priorities is pedestrian safety,” says Saunders, taking a swig of water from a plastic bottle, “so we monitor the areas that are most crowded in the morning and afternoon.”

Safety checks are an important part of each officer's shift, and on this warm late-summer morning it's no different. They're just one of many things that Wayne State police do on a given day to ensure the safety and security of the university's 33,000 students and 8,400 faculty and staff.

In addition to making periodic checks of the 100 buildings on Wayne State's 203-acre campus, the police also take part in 24-hour foot, vehicle and mountain-bike patrols, keeping an eye on pathways and sidewalks and responding to calls that emanate from 193 blue-light emergency phones.

As the stream of walkers begins to wind down, Saunders puts the patrol car into drive. "Time to check some buildings," he says.

Building checks and pedestrian safety, albeit hardly glamorous, are essential components that take up most of the hours officers put in on a daily basis. Repeated patterns of watching help law enforcers focus on anything unusual.

For Saunders, this late-summer morning begins as most do: roll call, then meeting with the officer in charge, checking the radio and handgun, gassing up the police car and checking on an alarm that accidentally was activated by a staff member.

On this day, Saunders' first call involves pulling over a young man who rolls through a stop sign. It turns out the driver, a Wayne State student, was playing a video game while driving; he had taped a video-display screen to the top of the speedometer, keeping the joystick in his lap so he could play while at the wheel.

That was a new one for Saunders, who says police work often entails hours of monotony followed by a burst of activity.

"Each shift has its own flavor," Saunders says. "On days, we do a lot of building checks and neighborhood patrols around the campus. On afternoons, things start to pick up in the area around us as some folks start to drink and cause a little trouble. Midnights are usually pretty quiet, maybe a bar fight or an assault, usually off-campus."

Wayne State officers provide around-the-clock police service in a roughly 4-square-mile area that encompasses the campus and sur-
We encounter highly educated people, eccentric people, homeless folks, the mentally disturbed."

—Officer PATRICK SAUNDERS.

rounding neighborhoods. Its "soft boundaries" extend from the Lodge service drive to the west, the Detroit Medical Center to the south, the Chrysler freeway to the east and West Grand Boulevard, where TechTown is blossoming, to the north.

Wayne State officers have full arrest powers and often are called upon to assist Detroit officers in nearby neighborhoods.

“I think one of the craziest situations I was involved in was a man holding a knife to his son’s throat in some crack house, yelling ‘I’m going to shank you.’ We ended up chasing him for two blocks before we caught him,” Saunders says.

He stops on Cass Avenue to walk through the Community Arts Building, where he checks the hallways and the auditorium before returning to his vehicle.

Saunders then guides the patrol car down Warren Avenue and turns north along the John C. Lodge service drive. The car quietly loops Adams Field, where football players are practicing. Walking by, a couple of young women look up.

As he slowly drives past the buildings, Saunders turns his head one way, then the other, keeping an eye out for anything unusual.

“We get a little bit of everything out here,” he says, nodding toward a group of homeless men sitting in the shade under a tree. "We encounter highly educated people, eccentric people, homeless folks, the mentally disturbed."

In addition to its 39 officers, the department uses a number of unarmed cadets who act as "eyes and ears" while walking around the campus. It also provides dignitary protection for special visitors coming to one of America’s leading research universities.

In his second-floor office at the headquarters on Hancock Street, Chief Anthony Holt, Lib.Ars ’70, says high police visibility com-
bined with high levels of personal awareness are the keys to keeping the campus safe.

Although the university is located in the heart of what is often considered one of America’s most dangerous cities, Wayne State has fewer crimes reported than either Michigan State University or University of Michigan, according to the 2004 annual crime reports compiled by Michigan State Police, the latest document available.

In terms of assault-type crimes, Wayne State also has a lower rate than many local communities. For example, Dearborn has a rate of 11.2 assaults per 1,000 residents, while Sterling Heights has 2.03 and Canton Township has 1.27. Wayne State’s rate is 0.31 per 1,000 residents, according the report.

More specifically, Wayne State had 13 assaults in 2004 while Warren had 825; Sterling Heights, 258; Dearborn, 1,099; Canton Township, 104; Southfield, 1,071; St. Clair Shores, 155; Troy, 100; Farmington Hills, 146; and Clinton Township, 349.

Royal Oak, which has a roughly similar population to Wayne State (58,840 in Royal Oak vs. 41,539 at Wayne State), had 203 assaults in 2004 vs. the 13 at Wayne State.

Further, Royal Oak had one murder, 42 robberies and 136 vehicle thefts in 2004, while Wayne State had no murders, eight robberies and 56 vehicle thefts.

Especially with international students studying around the clock, the officers never stray from walking through buildings, looking in corners and staying in sight.

“When kids from up north come here and they’ve heard all about the crime in Detroit, we want them to feel secure and we do that with a high degree of visibility,” Holt says. “We’re on foot, bikes and in cars. You might see one of our people three, four times a day and that may make you think we’ve got 18 officers out there. That’s my vision of visibility.”

Holt, who joined the force as an officer in 1977, has forged a relationship with the Detroit Police Department to help out in the neighborhoods immediately around the campus. Often, Wayne State officers arrive at calls for help before Detroit’s overworked personnel can respond.

In fact, Holt is the only outside agency head allowed to attend Detroit’s senior management meetings to review operations.

Detroit Deputy Police Chief James Tate, FPCA ’98, says his department has a “great working relationship” with Wayne State officers. “We collaborate on a daily basis to stay up to speed on what’s going on,” Tate says. “They’re a separate entity, but there’s a list of incidents that cross both of our paths and we often end up involved in an investigation or response.”

Holt says his department has been fortunate enough to clear many of the serious crimes that do take place on campus, such as armed robberies. They’ve also discovered a novel way to recover cell phones taken in robberies.

The plan calls for an officer, posing as the phone owner, to call the cell phone and tell the person answering that they’re willing to
pay for the return of the phone because it has personal numbers in it. When the thief shows up at a designated meeting spot, he’s arrested.

“We’ve made lots of arrests like that,” Holt says. In other cases, the officers work the case just as a municipal police agency would: take a report, collect evidence, talk to witnesses.

“If we have a carjacking, we drive around the streets and ask the hookers and the dope men if they’ve seen someone flashing a new car. Someone usually has seen something that can be helpful,” he says.

The department also has a dog, named Goran, used for detecting explosives and following the scent of a suspect. Goran and his master, Officer Andrew Grimm, comprise the department’s canine unit.

After the day’s shift, Goran goes home with Grimm; like other law-enforcement canines, Goran lives with his master, who is responsible for raising the dog.

He’s helpful in breaking-and-entering cases when officers can announce to the suspect to give up or they’ll send in the dog. Also, considering the climate caused by political terrorists, Goran is trained to detect explosives.

“After 9-11, all universities have to consider how they will respond to a major threat such as a bomb threat or terrorist attack,” Holt says. “That’s why I was looking for a multi-purpose dog such as Goran. He’s quite an asset to our department.”

In a cramped section of the detective bureau, the crime calculator is at work.

Detective Lt. Larry Scott is putting together the next edition of Campus Watch, a thorough report of monthly crime statistics and tips that goes out via e-mail to students, staff and The South End student newspaper.

Even though Wayne State’s main crime problem is larceny – usually from students leaving their property unattended only to return and find it’s gone – police want all of the facts of all of the crimes made public.

Scott says it makes “good business sense” to disclose the crimes so everyone can be better informed and know what steps to take to avoid trouble.

“If I raise awareness and keep it up, hopefully I can keep crime down,” he says. “This isn’t a closed campus with a wrought iron fence that closes at night. We have our share of incidents.”

In addition to tracking campus crime trends, the department emphasizes to students to be aware of their surroundings at all times and keep their residence halls locked to strangers. Even the bathrooms at the Purdy Kresge Library carry a sign taped to the door warning students to pay attention to what’s going on around them.

Those efforts appear to be paying off: A local television news crew last year conducted surprise visits to several Michigan university campuses to determine how easy it was to get into residence halls. Wayne State was the only one the news team could not penetrate.

“Our biggest problem is the kids view themselves as invincible,” Scott says. “Their parents read the crime reports and tips but the kids don’t.”

Officer Robert Hack types a report at the police station.
Back on the streets, Officer Saunders is sizing up traffic at the intersection of Anthony Wayne and Warren, where the city recently installed several “No Left Turn” signs to cut down on accidents at the corner. Yet it seems few people either notice or obey the sign. One motorist makes the turn, while the following driver goes right through a red light. “Take your pick,” Saunders says to himself. “I’ve got one who ran a red light or I can go after the lady who ignored the No Left Turn sign.”

He pulls over a woman who disobeyed the sign. During a brief conversation, she tells the officer that she had just left a funeral and wasn’t thinking. He lets her off with a warning.

As soon as he returns to his car, Saunders sees another driver making the illegal left turn and promptly activates his overhead lights to make the stop. There are three men inside, and the driver sticks his head out to look back at the approaching officer.

Saunders casually touches the left rear tailgate. “Just in case something happens, my fingerprints will be on the car and they’ll know I was there,” he later says of the car.

After speaking with the driver and collecting a license, registration and proof of insurance, Saunders heads back to the car to write a ticket. The driver continues to stick his head out the window, as if he’s impatient to get going.

After writing out the ticket, Saunders gets out of his car, walks to the motorist and hands him the citation. “Have a nice freaking day,” the man yells as Saunders walks away, smiling but ignoring the rude comment.

Saunders returns to his vehicle. He tenses momentarily as the police radio crackles with a report of gunfire. He puts the car in drive, but the radio quickly reports back that it’s only firecrackers.

Minutes later, he encounters a homeless man named Larry, who is holding a cardboard sign with a message scrawled in blue paint: “Homeless, please help.”

There is a state law that prohibits begging for money, Saunders says, slowing to speak with Larry. “C’mon Larry, you know the rules, give me that,” Saunders says as Larry grins and hands over the sign.

“I’m in shock, I just didn’t know,” Larry responds, grinning.

Saunders then is called with several other officers to respond to a panhandler at the Law School.

Once they arrive, a homeless man is outside. He explains to police that he is from Taylor and is trying to get home. As other officers arrive, a radio check finds the man has a warrant out for his arrest; he promptly is handcuffed and placed in the back of a squad car.

If I raise awareness and keep it up, hopefully I can keep crime down.”
—Officer PATRICK SAUNDERS.
“Man, I’m just trying to get home,” the man pleads.

The man is taken to the station, and Saunders is called to Woodward near the Detroit Public Library. A man suspected of shoplifting from the Barnes & Noble bookstore has fled an officer on a mountain bike. As Saunders pulls up, other officers have caught up to the tall and slender suspect who is putting up a fight.

During the struggle, one of the officers unleashes a blast of pepper spray.

The suspect is handcuffed, but the pepper spray’s remnants linger in the air and Officer Robert Hack suffers the consequences.

“There’s a tingling in my eyes and my nose is running,” Hack says, his eyes watering.

“You’ll be okay,” Saunders says. “We’re done for the day.”

Saunders pats the officer on the back and assures him he’ll be OK.

They climb back into the patrol car and head back to the station to finish their reports for the day, where Saunders will unhook his gun belt and return his weapon and radio to the shift commander, a reversal of the day’s beginning.

“They’ll do it again tomorrow,” he says.

◆

Mitch Hotts writes about crime and courts in metropolitan Detroit.

what law enforcement pros say about Wayne State

Criminal justice graduates from Wayne State and officers who have served at the university’s police department have gone on to fill an impressive variety of enforcement positions as well as roles in the private sector. Here’s what they remember about their time at Wayne State.

“Getting my degree at Wayne State, attending classes and meeting the professors all gave me a good foundation for what I’m doing now. I took a part-time job as a cadet with the Wayne State police department and got the law-enforcement bug.”

-- STAVROS ANTHONY, 1980 criminal justice graduate
Captain of personnel at Las Vegas Metropolitan Police Department

“Creating the law enforcement career with Wayne State was the best career choice I could have ever made. They have a very strong feeling about what they’re doing and that drive has helped me extend my abilities beyond what might be considered typical. I absolutely owe much of my success to that department.”

-- JOHN KUPREVICH, Director of corporate security for IKON Office Solutions
Wayne State police officer, 1970-81

“Taking classes at Wayne State gave me the discipline to do the research and reading needed to pass my tests, which made it easier to take promotional exams in the real world.”

-- MARK HACKEL, 1991 criminal justice graduate
Macomb County Sheriff

“They’ve always set the benchmark high at Wayne State. Even to apply at the police department you had to have an undergraduate degree. I don’t think that existed anywhere else at the time; it was visionary.”

-- JAMES HATCH, FEMA comptroller, U.S. Department of Homeland Security
Member of the Wayne State University Police Department, 1974-82

“Being with Wayne State was such a reputable school helped me get hired right away. The courses touch on all the different aspects of criminal justice and taught me about law theory as well as the practical stuff I face on an everyday basis.”

-- ELIZABETH DARGA, 1986 criminal justice graduate
20 • FALL 2006

Police department gets new headquarters

The Wayne State University Police Department will have a new headquarters when it moves into a renovated structure on the north end of campus near TechTown.

The 39-officer department late next year will move to a former Wayne State business and operations building on the corner of Burroughs and Cass. The two-story structure was designed by renowned architect Albert Kahn.

The existing station at 76 W. Hancock between Woodward and Cass was constructed in 1941 as a commercial retail building and later housed an insurance office before the police department moved in 1973.

Plans call for renovating the Burroughs building into a 32,000-square-foot police station that will house all of the department’s functions, including an electronics repair shop and secured covered parking. It will also contain additional holding cells, a training facility and gymnasium. Currently, suspects arrested by campus police have to be transported to Detroit police facilities because the Wayne State lockup doesn’t meet state standards for housing prisoners.

The Wayne State Public Safety and Police Academy also will move to the new headquarters.

The new station will include an electronics repair shop and secured covered parking. It also will contain additional holding cells, a training facility and gymnasium. Currently, suspects arrested by campus police have to be transported to Detroit police facilities because the Wayne State lockup doesn’t meet state standards for housing prisoners.

The new station will include an electronics repair shop and secured covered parking. It also will contain additional holding cells, a training facility and gymnasium. Currently, suspects arrested by campus police have to be transported to Detroit police facilities because the Wayne State lockup doesn’t meet state standards for housing prisoners.

The new station will include an electronics repair shop and secured covered parking. It also will contain additional holding cells, a training facility and gymnasium. Currently, suspects arrested by campus police have to be transported to Detroit police facilities because the Wayne State lockup doesn’t meet state standards for housing prisoners.

The new station will include an electronics repair shop and secured covered parking. It also will contain additional holding cells, a training facility and gymnasium. Currently, suspects arrested by campus police have to be transported to Detroit police facilities because the Wayne State lockup doesn’t meet state standards for housing prisoners.

The new station will include an electronics repair shop and secured covered parking. It also will contain additional holding cells, a training facility and gymnasium. Currently, suspects arrested by campus police have to be transported to Detroit police facilities because the Wayne State lockup doesn’t meet state standards for housing prisoners.

The new station will include an electronics repair shop and secured covered parking. It also will contain additional holding cells, a training facility and gymnasium. Currently, suspects arrested by campus police have to be transported to Detroit police facilities because the Wayne State lockup doesn’t meet state standards for housing prisoners.

The new station will include an electronics repair shop and secured covered parking. It also will contain additional holding cells, a training facility and gymnasium. Currently, suspects arrested by campus police have to be transported to Detroit police facilities because the Wayne State lockup doesn’t meet state standards for housing prisoners.

The new station will include an electronics repair shop and secured covered parking. It also will contain additional holding cells, a training facility and gymnasium. Currently, suspects arrested by campus police have to be transported to Detroit police facilities because the Wayne State lockup doesn’t meet state standards for housing prisoners.

The new station will include an electronics repair shop and secured covered parking. It also will contain additional holding cells, a training facility and gymnasium. Currently, suspects arrested by campus police have to be transported to Detroit police facilities because the Wayne State lockup doesn’t meet state standards for housing prisoners.

The new station will include an electronics repair shop and secured covered parking. It also will contain additional holding cells, a training facility and gymnasium. Currently, suspects arrested by campus police have to be transported to Detroit police facilities because the Wayne State lockup doesn’t meet state standards for housing prisoners.

The new station will include an electronics repair shop and secured covered parking. It also will contain additional holding cells, a training facility and gymnasium. Currently, suspects arrested by campus police have to be transported to Detroit police facilities because the Wayne State lockup doesn’t meet state standards for housing prisoners.

The new station will include an electronics repair shop and secured covered parking. It also will contain additional holding cells, a training facility and gymnasium. Currently, suspects arrested by campus police have to be transported to Detroit police facilities because the Wayne State lockup doesn’t meet state standards for housing prisoners.

The new station will include an electronics repair shop and secured covered parking. It also will contain additional holding cells, a training facility and gymnasium. Currently, suspects arrested by campus police have to be transported to Detroit police facilities because the Wayne State lockup doesn’t meet state standards for housing prisoners.

The new station will include an electronics repair shop and secured covered parking. It also will contain additional holding cells, a training facility and gymnasium. Currently, suspects arrested by campus police have to be transported to Detroit police facilities because the Wayne State lockup doesn’t meet state standards for housing prisoners.

The new station will include an electronics repair shop and secured covered parking. It also will contain additional holding cells, a training facility and gymnasium. Currently, suspects arrested by campus police have to be transported to Detroit police facilities because the Wayne State lockup doesn’t meet state standards for housing prisoners.

The new station will include an electronics repair shop and secured covered parking. It also will contain additional holding cells, a training facility and gymnasium. Currently, suspects arrested by campus police have to be transported to Detroit police facilities because the Wayne State lockup doesn’t meet state standards for housing prisoners.

The new station will include an electronics repair shop and secured covered parking. It also will contain additional holding cells, a training facility and gymnasium. Currently, suspects arrested by campus police have to be transported to Detroit police facilities because the Wayne State lockup doesn’t meet state standards for housing prisoners.