

Partners in Security

Mark Goodwin

Community Engagement Center

2012 Fall

EDGE PROJECT

Project Summary

After taking a course in Criminal Law, I came to realize there was a problem with the legal system. Many people do not know what many of the laws are, even the ones that govern some of the most important aspects of their everyday lives. It isn't hard to understand why, after all, legal texts are well known for confusing language and extreme specificity. This ignorance leads to all sorts of problems in the ways people interact with Law Enforcement and the legal system in general. My goal was to find a way to help overcome this gap between them and the legal system.

For my project, I wanted to focus my efforts on law enforcement and safety information to help the students at SUU. The overall goal being that others would continue the project on after me, and that students would have a better idea of where they could find legal information they needed. To accomplish this, I went to the police, students, and faculty in order to find the information that they believed would be most beneficial. After I collected all the various questions, I compiled them into a set of two pamphlets which would be available to anyone who wanted them.

Project Highlights

The project turned out to be a wonderful lesson in adaptability, an attribute that I believed I understood before this. As it turned out, not as much as I thought! Granted, when most of your project involves dealing with other people and their schedules or ideas, things can rapidly spiral into chaos. In spite of the challenges, it was a great opportunity to learn what things people find important in the legal system. Granted, this did come after spending a great deal of time figuring out whether I could answer questions like, "why do the police pull me over when I'm going fast?" or "what's their problem with me drinking if I'm 18?" without coming across as too sarcastic (I opted to ignore these two). Comedy aside,

there was a lot of depth to many of the questions asked, I deeply enjoyed being able to see what people find important in the law.

Overall, this project has been an exercise in patience, management and in communicating with others.

Almost exactly the traits and skills that are required for people who want to hold a job in the field of Law Enforcement.



One of the posters I set up to advertise my "get out the questions" effort. This one in particular was placed near the cross walk at University Blvd. I considered this one the "problem child" as I had to replace it a number of times due to damage.

From My Journal

July 18, 2012: I was able to secure a ride along with the South Jordan Police tonight. It never ceases to amaze me just how rude a lot of people can be to police officers. One has to wonder if they really think that yelling at the guy giving you a ticket is going to get you off the hook. Still, it was fun to talk with a veteran cop who's worked in a number of different positions within the agency. We talked for a while about the one thing he wished people would know, and he told me it was turning the interiors lights on in the car. I didn't believe him at first, but after seeing just how hard it is to look inside of a car and see

what the people are doing, I can understand why officers would get uneasy when they have to approach a vehicle and they can't see inside.

September 8, 2012: I almost regret my promise to make the questions that students asked completely anonymous. I really do hope that some of these questions were just sent in as jokes, because asking about “why cops arrest you for underage drinking,” is almost sad. I suppose I could go into a lengthy description of where to find punishments that are attached to laws, but I will have confidence in the students to find the answers to those kinds of questions on their own.

Though I have to say, the fact that so many people are asking about the proper procedure to report police misconduct did warm my heart. Police corruption is a subject close to my heart, and helping people know the proper procedure to help crush that problem gives me great hope that people won't allow themselves to be taken advantage of legally. Conversely, I really hope they don't swamp the internal affairs department with a bunch of false claims.



The finished product of this project, the General Safety and Police Pamphlet, and the Student Legal Information Pamphlet, doesn't look like much, but looks don't count for much.