

POINT PARK UNIVERSITY

For Immediate Release

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Point Park University officers now equipped with body cameras

-- Use of technology part of longstanding commitment to safety --

PITTSBURGH, PA – As part of a longstanding commitment to maintain a safe campus, Point Park University police officers are now equipped with body cameras.

Training for Point Park's 13 sworn police officers was conducted this summer, and officers began wearing the devices on Aug. 1.

"Our officers go out of their way to become familiar and comforting faces to those on our campus, but we recognize there is a need to be prepared for any type of situation," said Jeffrey Besong, chief of police and vice president of Public Safety. "The use of body cameras acts as an additional safety precaution for both officers and citizens."

Research has shown that people tend to be far less aggressive and adhere to social norms when they are aware a camera is in use. In addition, the body cameras offer the ability to:

- More accurately document events, actions, conditions and statements made during incidents;
- Enhance the ability to prepare reports and present court testimony;
- Improve the training capabilities of our department;
- Assist with investigations of alleged police misconduct;
- Protect department members from civil liability resulting from wrongful accusations of misconduct.

"Point Park has always been diligent about creating a safe environment in which to live, learn and work," said Paul Hennigan, president of the University. "The use of body cameras is just the latest example of our University's proactive approach to that commitment."

In fact, Safe Campus, the National Campus Safety Summit, placed Point Park's police department on its Safe Campus 2016 Top 25 list. Point Park was selected from more than 4,700 eligible college or university administration departments based on efforts and improvements in campus safety.

In the past five years, Point Park's police department – one of just seven accredited university departments in the entire state -- has:

- Developed a video to assist in the training of students, staff and faculty on how to handle the threat of an active shooter;
- Increased the number of officers on staff;
- Enhanced technology, including a new ID card system and installed Metis two-way emergency devices that interface with the school's emergency notification system;
- Updated communications and 911 equipment;
- Started the Sexual Harassment and Rape Program (SHARP) and Refuse to Be a Victim program.

Point Park has established extensive policies and procedures pertaining to the use of body cameras by the University police force that protect the privacy and rights of students while also providing clear direction to police on usage of the technology during and after an incident.

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Founded in 1960, Point Park University is a dynamic, urban university with a strong liberal arts tradition. Located in Downtown Pittsburgh, Point Park enrolls nearly 4,000 full- and part-time students in more than 100 undergraduate and graduate programs offered through the School of Arts and Sciences, School of Business, School of Communication and Conservatory of Performing Arts. Visit PointPark.edu to learn more.