Purpose of Submittal:
Below is the annual update of the Department of Public Safety.

Supporting Information:
The Department of Public Safety is under the direction of Darin Rasmussen, Director of Public Safety/Chief of Police, supported by Keith Williams, Assistant Director of Public Safety/Assistant Chief of Police.

The Department’s Strategic Plan pursues these primary goals:
1) To further the University’s academic mission and its strategic objectives.
2) To serve the University community with impartiality, fairness, and with respect for everyone’s rights.
3) Embrace a community-oriented strategy that focuses on reducing crime and security problems through utilizing innovative, non-traditional methods as well as industry standards, and established best practices to address root causes and whenever possible eliminate their reoccurrence.
4) To promote community confidence through providing accountability and transparency through the use of the Campus Community Public Safety Advisory Council, a broad-based advisory group that includes students, faculty, staff and members of the community.
5) To be good stewards of the resources entrusted to us.

Transparency, Professionalization and Accountability
In 2020 the Department made a strong effort to increase transparency, professionalization, and accountability. Among others, major accomplishments include:

- Publicly expressing the Department’s full support for Campaign Zero’s “Eight Can’t Wait” reforms.
- Implementing a comprehensive policies and procedures manual which is based on current law, industry standards and universal best practices.
- Conducting a five-year review of department activity including calls for service, citations, and arrests to identify trends and training needs.
The Department, in consultation with the Campus Community Public Safety Advisory Council (CCPSAC), initiated a pilot program to assess the viability of body worn cameras. This pilot will be conducted in 2021 and brought back to the CCPSAC for a recommendation for making the program permanent.

National, State, and Local Participation

Chief Rasmussen participates on the University Policing Committee of the Washington Association of Sheriffs and Police Chiefs (WASPC). WASPC is the state’s recognized professional organization for law enforcement related issues and has significant influence in Olympia. The University Policing Committee meets several times a year. This committee has a mutual aid agreement among the six university police agencies for responding to major disasters or events, and a “best practice” policy for dealing with threats of violence and response to violent situations on campus.

On the national level, Chief Rasmussen and Assistant Chief Williams participate in the International Association of Campus Law Enforcement Administrators (IACLEA) as well as the International Association of Chiefs of Police (IACP). Both associations enable the department to stay informed and consistent with national law enforcement trends, especially campus law enforcement, and utilize best practices.

The University Police Department continues its strong working relationship with the Bellingham Police Department and Chief of Police Florence Simon, and the Whatcom County Sheriff’s Office and Sheriff Bill Elfo.

Community Engagement

The Campus Community Public Safety Advisory Council (CCPSAC) is co-chaired by the Director of Public Safety and the Director of University Residences. The Council is advisory and consultative, focused on programs, policies and procedures, and is comprised of a cross section of the University community including students, faculty and staff, as well as identified members of the external community. It assists the Director of Public Safety and the Department in remaining responsive to the needs of the University community and by providing input on issues surrounding public safety, crime abatement, and campus security. The Council meets several times a year, or as needed.

The Department, in partnership with University Communications and Marketing, and with support from the CCPSAC, have initiated a one-year pilot program to test the viability of a cellular phone based safety app to improve safety of students, faculty, and staff. The program will allow for safe travel across campus as well as the anonymous reporting of suspicious activity and crime.

In partnership with University Communications and Marketing, and with support from the Psychology Department, the Public Safety website is being redeveloped to be more student centered based on input received from a student focus group conducted by one of Western’s Psychology professors.

The Department, in partnership with University Residences, has initiated a Residence Life Resource Officer pilot program in which identified University police officers work together with Residence Life staff to address communication and safety issues within the residence halls.

In partnership with Western’s Office of Off-campus Living and the Bellingham Police Department, the Department actively participates to address neighborhood issues that draw
citizen complaints over noise, traffic, littering, and other behavioral issues. It is part of Western’s commitment to keep our students safe and be a “good neighbor” to the communities around Western’s campus.

The Department utilizes uniformed police officers who present programs to the community dealing with Crime Prevention, Personal Safety, Property Protection, Substance Abuse, and other topics.

The Bicycle and Skateboard Patrol Program coordinates bicycle and skateboard safety efforts to heighten awareness of University regulations, and to allow more personalized contact with students, faculty, and staff. Officers engage in educational awareness efforts to make bicyclists and skateboarders aware of the rules affecting them, and a strong enforcement effort to hold violators who continue to ignore the rules in place for the “walk zones” accountable.

The Department works with University partners to improve safety practices for programs involving children at Western, and completes hundreds of criminal history checks for Compass 2 Campus program student volunteers annually.

The Department provides “Behaviors of Concern - Violence Prevention” training sessions for students, faculty and staff upon request. These sessions include two video presentations, “Options for Consideration” and “Flashpoint”. For easy access, the videos link from the Department's homepage, as does Western’s “Emergency Preparedness” video.

*Emergency Management*

In 2020 the primary focus of the Emergency Management function was to help meet the needs of the University’s response to the COVID-19 global pandemic. The Department was responsible for assisting in the implementation of the Comprehensive Emergency Management Plan (CEMP) in the early days of the pandemic and serving in a consulting role to the emergency management team.

In addition, University Police and Dispatch helped protect the University’s infrastructure through serving as a gatekeeper for on-campus critical staff and conducted over 4,000 area checks throughout campus.

Assistant Chief Williams and Holly Woll-Salkeld facilitated a virtual tabletop exercise focused on an earthquake in October. A principal outcome was to discuss a campus wide evacuation. An exercise/drill of this nature is required for universities by the Jeanne Clery Student Right-to-Know and Campus Security Act.

*Emergency Response and Notifications*

Through close working relationships with the Office of Communications and Marketing, the Dean of Students Office and the Environmental Health and Safety Office, a multi-faceted alert system makes it possible to notify students, faculty, and staff via text messaging and email within minutes of an event that may pose an immediate threat to the University. This system also uses the current fire alarm system to facilitate voice messages to be transmitted throughout University buildings and incorporates Desktop Notification, which sends a similar notification through all networked University computers.

The Department is in full compliance with FBI and Washington State Patrol requirements for security standards for all Western staff who may meet or work in those areas that contain confidential criminal justice information.
The Department leads a Safety Assessment Team (Threat Assessment) of representatives from Enrollment and Student Services, Judicial Affairs, University Police Department, Counseling Services, Residential Life, Student Health Center, and University Communications and Marketing. The team is in full compliance with the guidelines recommended by the National Behavioral Intervention Team Association (NaBITA) for its approach to potential issues of concern at the University. The team meets on a routine basis, as well as when necessary to deal with potentially threatening situations, and to strengthen the collective ability to resolve or mitigate issues of concern. This collaborative team of professionals has functioned well to respond to several serious incidents affecting the University.

The Department of Public Safety and the Office of Communications and Marketing annually conduct alert system tests in fall, winter and spring quarters.

**Professional Standards and Training**

Professional standards and training form a cornerstone in the development of competent police officers and civilian personnel, and are a requirement of the accreditation standards. Officers are expected to demonstrate mental and physical skills that include strong written and verbal communication abilities, knowledge of relevant laws, officer safety techniques, and proficiency at skills that support proper patrol procedures.

In 2020 all University Police Officers met or exceeded the state required hours of training in areas specifically related to their jobs. These included training in crisis intervention, defensive tactics, legal updates and current law, active shooter training, and RAVE emergency messaging training.

**State and Federal Reporting**

The Jeanne Clery Student Right-to-Know and Campus Security Act, passed by Congress in 1990, and continually modified, is in response to concerns about crime and security at post-secondary education institutions. This Act requires institutions to disclose information about university safety policies and procedures, and to provide statistics concerning whether certain crimes took place at the university. The program is a mandatory nationwide reporting effort that tracks statistical information of the seven most serious criminal offenses within geographical areas and reporting districts.

The Department of Public Safety and Enrollment and Student Services compile the on-going annual crime statistics for publication and ensure compliance with Federal Register guidelines. Updated information is provided annually for new and returning students, staff, and faculty. Police agencies also report monthly activity through the National Incident Based Reporting (NIBRS) segment of the Uniform Crime Reporting (UCR) program administered by the FBI. Specific required crime and fire information is included in Clery Act (Student Right-to-Know) reporting, along with information about alcohol and drug law violations, weapons possession, and incidents of student misconduct.

The 2019 Annual Security and Fire Safety Report (ASFSR), published in December 2020, is the most comprehensive and compliant document to date, and is available at:  
https://vpess.wwu.edu/files/docs/ASRCleryreport.pdf