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Georgia Southern University officers are now equipped with body cameras

SEPTEMBER 9, 2015



Georgia Southern's Office of Public Safety is the first public safety force in Bulloch County to incorporate body cameras and in-car recording systems into the daily work of its officers. The University has equipped each of the Police Department's 34 patrol officers with body cameras and four marked patrol cars with video equipment.

The University administration recognized the need for the cameras and video recording system as part of the Office of Public Safety's commitment to transparency about the conduct of the officers with the community. Georgia Southern's Police Department is among a growing number of police departments on college and university campuses that are using video technology during routine and critical calls for service. The equipment helps to ensure accuracy and accountability, expedite resolution of complaints and provide opportunities for officer training. In addition, the availability of visual evidence through the use of the technology will provide additional protection for both the community and officers. The cameras and recording system are tamper-proof and video cannot be altered or deleted.

"The addition of in-car and body camera equipment is something our department has been working toward for some time, said Laura McCullough, interim chief of police of the Georgia Southern Office

of Public Safety. "We recognized a couple of years ago the advantages of having video cameras for both the benefit of community and law enforcement officers. With current events and the social climate as it is today, it is even more important that we do all we can to continue to be as open and transparent as possible."

After researching several systems, the Office of Public Safety used end-of-year funds to purchase equipment manufactured by Watchguard Video to cover the needs of all patrol officers and cars and to purchase the video storage system. The department also has applied for grant funding from the Georgia Governor's Office of Highway Safety to purchase additional equipment.

Video evidence of incidents captured by the body cameras will be downloaded at the end of each shift and stored on a secure storage system. Videos are saved for 90 days and then deleted unless they are needed for a case, at which time a copy will be made and submitted for evidence. Under Georgia law, video recorded by law enforcement is not considered public record.

Installation and system training was completed in late August. Following a couple of weeks of field training, the cameras are now in full-time use.

Georgia Southern University, a public Carnegie Doctoral/Research University founded in 1906, offers more than 125 degree programs serving more than 20,500 students. Through eight colleges, the University offers bachelor's, master's and doctoral degree programs built on more than a century of academic achievement. Georgia Southern is recognized for its student-centered and hands-on approach to education. Visit GeorgiaSouthern.edu.