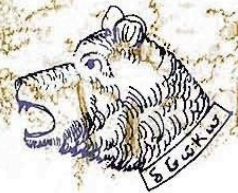# Order of the Golden Bear

The Usual Place, September 29th, 2015

The topic of tonight's discussion was "Campus Safety".

This topic was selected after Fellows noticed an increase in crime reporting in online student forums. This discussion also came shortly after UCPDs semiannual crime report.

Many Fellows expressed concern over the online crime reports posted by students on the Facebook commerce group 'Free and For Sale', a group only accessible to persons with "@berkeley.edu" email addresses. Within the last few months, students have posted an increasing amount of crime related public service announcements on the page, alerting students of muggings and potential muggings near campus. A few Fellows noted how inflammatory some of the posts were; many of the posts contained vague descriptions of 'black male' perpetrators. This prompted a few Fellows to express concern over the 'hypervisibility' these posts create for underrepresented African American students on campus. Another concerned Fellow noted that victims of crime usually have a hard time giving full descriptions of their attackers. Acknowledging this concern, another Fellow still claimed that the descriptions encouraged racial profiling and asked whether profiling had any utility at all. As a result, many Fellows asked for clarifying information in regards to whether crime is actually on the rise or if students have just become more comfortable reporting crime publicly.

In response, one Fellow stated that according to UCPD's most recent crime report, crime (within a mile radius of campus) is actually down 11%. This Fellow also noted that the campus has experienced a 10% decrease in robberies, while the City of Berkeley has experienced a 53% hike. A Fellow also noted that racial profiling doesn't help UCPD to track crime; the department requires more details specifically about the geography of where crime is happening and around when it is taking place. This Fellow claimed that racial profiling has no place in the policing methods employed by UCPD. Fellows were also generally interested how UCPD has worked to prevent crime on campus. One Fellow noted that UCPD enacted a bike theft prevention program that resulted in a 70% decrease in theft and 46 bike theft arrests. When a Fellow asked why there has been an overall decrease in the campus crime rate, another Fellow attributed the decrease to new technologies UCPD has employed to strategically disperse personnel where needed.

Overall, many Fellows commended UCPD for the work it has done to reduce crime on and around campus. According to some Fellows, the UCPD has done a great job of working to understand the needs of community members and responding appropriately. Equally gratified, one Fellow asked about the struggles that remain in regards to campus safety.

Fellows expressed a number of concerns regarding infrastructure and services. A few Fellows expressed concern over the lighting on campus and noted that more strategic lighting could reduce crime and improve the safety of the disabled community on campus. Some Fellows were concerned about the understaffed Bear Walk night safety program. One Fellow attributed this to cyclical staffing issues. Another Fellow was concerned about the increase in cost for security at student events. One Fellow attributed the price hike to the new campus-wide "composite benefit rate". Another Fellow stated that there should be an easier way to report crimes on campus than is already available which increased the cost for officers per hour. One Fellow claimed that there should be more comprehensive Night Shuttle services to the north side of campus.

A few Fellows brought awareness to safety services and initiatives that are either new or underutilized. One Fellow stated that students could use the Cal Tip Line to report crimes anonymously. While a few Fellows worried about the level of awareness new students have of safety programs on campus, another fellow noted that the university has implemented a new "Get your Bearings" orientation program that might alleviate these concerns; however, it will likely take at least another year to evaluate its effectiveness.

Several Fellows proposed actions that student leaders and faculty members can take to improve campus safety. One Fellow suggested that student leaders should encourage students to utilize Bear Walk, Night Shuttles, and the "buddy system" when leaving events late at night. Another Fellow discouraged students from walking alone late at night between October and November, as these are the months that the campus traditionally experiences the most robberies. Other Fellows encouraged the Fellowship to bring safety to the forefront of student consciousness at the beginning of the semester, while other Fellows encouraged the Fellowship to find more strategic ways to disseminate safety information.