

Bard Safety and Security Podcast

0:00 Josh: And welcome everyone, to the latest edition of our podcast series. As always, I'm Josh Tyler, here with the Director of Admission, Mackie Siebens.

0:10 Mackie: Hi everyone! As Josh said, I'm Mackie Siebens, alumna of the college, and we're joined today by members of the Bard community who help keep us safe. If you guys want to introduce yourselves, we'll start with you, John?

0:24 John: Good afternoon, my name is John Gomez, and I'm the Security Director.

0:28 Adam: Hey, I'm Adam, I'm a senior here at Bard, and I'm part of Bard EMS.

0:33 Mackie: Fabulous! So, thanks for joining us you guys, we're just going to sort of get some information out there to folks who are interested in this campus and how we think about safety and security. First off, John, can you tell us a little bit about the kinds of services that the security office provides to students, and indeed the community members here, on campus?

00:54 John: Sure! So, I think the most important thing that we do, is we try to be a friendly approachable face for the community. I think it's really important that the staff interact with students and that students feel comfortable approaching (us). I think that we've found that students feel much safer when they have some sort of connection with the security force and I think that's really important. I encourage my people to interact with the students, so that they always feel comfortable, should there ever be a problem or an issue, it's always somebody that they can approach. I guess our real sort of meat and potatoes is access control, getting into buildings, locking buildings, opening buildings, doing emergency escorts. We provide a 24-hour patrol of the campus, which you know, helps deter any sort of crime, any sort of thefts, but I think the most important is that one to one interaction with the Bard community.

1:58 Mackie: So, John, can you also just tell us a little bit about your professional history, before coming to Bard?

2:03 John: Sure! Well, prior to coming to Bard, I spent thirty years with the New York State police, in a number of different roles and responsibilities and ranks, I actually finished up my career up in this area, I live in the community, I've lived in the Red Hook community for 15 years, but I finished as a supervisor of the detective unit, in this local area, and I was actually the Bard liaison for about ten years, so I was very familiar with the campus. I spent a lot of time with the State Police, and I spent 17 years in the tactical unit. So, I have a tremendous amount of experience with investigations, and tactical work.

2:49 Mackie: And John, can you talk to us a little bit about safety and security initiatives that are going on campus currently?

2:58 John: Sure! So, we're continuing with an initiative that we started last fall, with looking at some additional technology, some cameras. We are looking at additionally a safety app, that might be part of a larger change within the Bard College app that might also have a, you know, we're looking for a safety feature to augment the 80 emergency blue phones that we already have on campus. And we're also looking at our lighting on the main campus path. We're looking to, by the end of February, double the amount of lights that we have on the main campus path.

3:39 Josh: Great, and John as Director of Security, what do you really see as your primary role?

3:45 John: So, I mean obviously I oversee my staff, I have a staff of twenty-five, but the real important part of my position is sort of a liaison with everything else that's working on this campus. I attend a number of meetings where I might just sit there quietly, and kind of overhear what might be going on, might be how security works with the rest of the college and I'm sort of the face of that. And then I certainly do a tremendous amount of work off campus, with obviously fire, EMS, law enforcement to coordinate anything, any sort of emergencies that might occur, anybody that needs to get on to campus, and how security can work better with those outside entities. I think primarily it's, you know, maybe go to a meeting at the library, security issues that may be at the library. I meet regularly, weekly with Residence Life and the Dean of Students office just to talk about any issues that might come up, and I found that to be very helpful to the security operation.

4:49 Josh: You mentioned the approachability of yourself and the staff, and in what ways do the students really interact with the security office? You mentioned accessing buildings, but are there other ways or other instances, that students would interact with security?

5:05 John: We try to be as proactive as we can. For example, I'll encourage my staff to go shoot pool with students in the campus center, just so students might feel more comfortable. I attend student government meetings. We try to be available, but not constantly, for instance, we'll walk through a residence hall, and if students approach us and want to talk, we always make ourselves available. 24/7 a student can get in touch with security, and primarily we are the contact after business hours for anything that might be going on the campus, goes through the security department. So, we have to be familiar with all the operations on campus, and be able to direct people.

5:52 Mackie: In talking about, sort of your approachability and how you work with other offices to make sure you're getting full picture, in terms of specific roles that students might play in actually being a sort of person who can also help with issues of security, Adam, you're in EMS specifically, and there's obviously a link between security and EMS. Do you guys want to tell us a little bit about how students are involved in keeping the community safe, particularly in the EMS role and how you communicate with security?

6:27 Adam: Yeah! So, just going off of that, it's a very close relationship I would say. We communicate very often, if there's ever a problem on our side that security sees, whether it's communication or something that happened on an actual emergency call, we're right in John's office, and we talk it out very thoroughly, about what can we do for the next time. But in terms of security and EMS, we're very interlinked. With EMS, you have a walkie that you do for a twelve-hour shift. So, security will get a call from a student on campus, saying that they need emergency help, and we get dispatched. Our walkies go off, like a really loud FaceTime jingle, it's really kind of scary, you know, FaceTime is scary now! And then we all sign on, we get the go-ahead, and we get a location, and they ask for transport if we need it, and security picks us up, talking about the emergency escorts, and we're in the back of the security cars, driving to the location. From there, the security cars, if they're already on scene, will give us a what's going on, on scene, an information that they've gathered, and then we work and they're there for our safety as well, just in case, you never know what scene you're walking in to. So, they're there for our safety, and for communication, whether to call an ambulance, or E-driver (Emergency Driver), so forth, so forth.

7:50 Mackie: And can you talk a little bit about the training, specifically for EMS students?

7:55 Adam: Yeah, so, we don't require any background training. You can come into this totally new, just not knowing anything about it, that's how I did it. So first there's two courses, you take one each semester. The first one is certified first responder, that's a full semester, you'll probably start it at the end of September if you're accepted into the squad and everything. It'll go into the end of December, you'll take a practical exam which is a bunch of skills and stuff, as well as a written exam. It's kind of like the preliminary before your actual EMT course which is the spring semester. That class is a little more rigorous. There are tests, quizzes, skills-based labs as well as written exams throughout. At the end, again, a written exam, and skill based, along with a twelve-hour ride-along with the NDP which is the paramedics around here, local. You have to complete a twelve-hour ride-along. It seems kind of crazy, you know, coming in freshman year, you're kind of figuring everything out as well, like classes, but with the squad, we're all helping each other, we have mentors, to help and assist. The squad's really, really close with each other, to help along with that journey.

9:10 Mackie: Nice! Thank you.

9:13 Josh: And you've both mentioned, kind of local safety and security agencies, and just in terms of if there is an emergency on campus, how close is the nearest hospital to Bard?

9:23 Adam: So, Northern Dutchess Hospital is about ten, fifteen. If you need to go there, there's two options. Ambulance is if you're seriously injured, or just a variety of things could be going on, but if you probably sprained your ankle and you don't want an ambulance because you know that can be somewhat costly, we'll call an emergency E-Driver which is a student driver who picks up a car from the security base, they drive over, they pick up the patient, and they drive them to the hospital, and once the patient is done at the hospital, they can call security for the E-Driver to come back and pick them up. Totally free, 24/7 just like Bard EMS, so it's a really good service.

10:07 Josh: Adam I'm glad you mentioned the emergency driver system, because a little later in this episode, we'll be talking to one of our Bard emergency drivers, so definitely stay tuned for that conversation.

10:17 Mackie: And fun fact, Josh, I was an emergency driver when I was a student here.

10:19 Josh: Were you really?

10:20 Mackie: Yes, I was!

10:22 Josh: That's great, very cool.

10:23 Mackie: Yeah, it was great. I'm glad that Julia will be joining us later to talk about what she does as an emergency driver in the role that Adam just mentioned too. John, going back to services and security measures, can you tell us a little bit about the actual sort of patterns of patrol, and how many security officers are sort of around for students to contact?

10:49 John: Well it depends on the shift, but we are here 24 hours a day, 7 days a week, 365 days a year, and we tend to have more officers in the evening, and in the overnights, just because that's when students are up, and out and everyone's in class during the day, and we have foot patrol, we have vehicle patrols, we have bike patrols, we have an all-terrain vehicle patrol as well that we utilize. So, we do have the campus broken up into sections, including the Montgomery Place campus, but it's very rare that as you're going through campus that you're not seeing a security vehicle, a number of times during a tour. And I just want to go back to EMS, and I think one of the great things about having a student EMS here is usually there's a response time of less than 5 minutes, which is a really great thing to have on campus.

11:58 Mackie: For sure.

(continued)

11:59 Josh: Excellent. Well, thank you both, we really appreciate having you here today, and certainly stay tuned for our continued conversation with our Bard emergency driver, Julia, and thank you guys.

12:12 Josh: So welcome back everybody, as we continue our safety and security podcast. I'm here with Julia who is an emergency driver on campus, and Julia, if you wouldn't mind introducing yourself, and also telling us a bit about what it entails to be an emergency driver on campus and what types of things you do as an emergency driver.

12:33 Julia: Sure! So, hi, I'm Julia, I'm a junior, and I'm studying environmental and urban studies here at Bard. Being an E-Driver is very simple. I work alongside the students who are working for the EMS service. Essentially, in order to help the students receiving medical care get to the places that they need to go, if they need further care. So I drive students to the hospital, and to the urgent care and to any other places that they might need to go.

13:10 Josh: So essentially, in non-emergency situations, like non-urgent emergency situations where an ambulance would be needed, you could be a resource, if somebody sprains their ankle, or breaks an arm, you could be the person that brings them to where they need to go.

13:25 Julia: Exactly. So, there are situations where we are not allowed to transport students, but that is all evaluated by EMS before I get there.

13:34 Josh: Ok, great! So how did you go about becoming an emergency driver? How did you find out about the job and what was the process like in order to become one?

13:44 Julia: It's actually funny, my first weekend at Bard, during L&T, I actually needed an emergency driver. I was very sick and very scared, coming in as a freshman I had never been in a situation where I don't have a car, or my parents, someone to drive me. So, I called security, and I...I cried, and I asked them what do I do? How do I get to the place I need to go? And they sent me an E-Driver, the girl was so nice to me. It's a completely confidential service, so I would see her around campus after and just give her a little smile and wave, but she was so kind, and it seemed like such a simple, easy, job to work on campus. And I was looking for a job because I have work-study, and SRG, which is the Student Resource Group, was hiring for E-Driver. So I applied and got the job!

14:36 Josh: Great! Did you have to take any tests or anything? What was the process like?

14:41 Julia: Right, so, as an E-Driver, you have to be certified as a Bard Driver, which I actually received that certification already while I was working for another driving job on campus. But that looks a little bit like, you attend a training which I forget exactly who leads the training, but some group outside of Bard comes and shows you various videos, has you do some quizzes, you talk through some scenarios, and then you take a few driving lessons, to get used to the Bard vehicles because you do not drive your own car when working any of these services. You're driving a Bard vehicle and they want to train you how to treat those vehicles because they are not your own.

15:22 Josh: Sure, and how do students go about utilizing your services? Say there is a need for an emergency driver, how would they be in contact?

15:30 Julia: Sure, that is as simple as calling security, and explaining the situation to them. Usually. You'll have to be evaluated by a student in the EMS service first, in order to determine, maybe they can help you here on campus, you don't need to go somewhere, and then they can decide if you need an ambulance or you need a student driver.

15:54 Josh: Great. Well Julia, thank you so much, for talking about your experience as an emergency driver, we really appreciate it. And for everyone listening out there, if you have any questions, feel free to reach out to admission@bard.edu at any time, and we look forward to the upcoming podcast and talking with you next time. Thanks!