Empowering Your Campus Security Team to Do More With Less

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Learn what new capabilities Campus Security teams are searching for as they strive to create strategic value and do more with less.

The Impacts of COVID-19 on Universities

When COVID-19 first hit in February 2020, no one knew what to expect. In just 9 months, we've seen universities close their campuses, then reopen and now, with the recent surges in COVID cases around the world, many are now reverting to fully virtual classes again. University executives understand the magnitude of the challenges caused by the pandemic, which include reductions in enrollment[1] and tuition, reduced supplementary revenue from sports and other events, and reduced or frozen operating budgets and an increased concern about protecting the safety of the university community.

Campus safety and security teams are accustomed to seeing their university announce a new campus or building without incremental funding to support the expanded responsibilities, but the effects of the pandemic are being felt especially hard as teams cope with frozen headcount, limited budgets, and resources. And now, campus security teams are being thrust into new roles to help protect students, faculty and staff as the university learns to cope with the added pressures of the pandemic. In fact, it's clear that campus security and safeguarding teams are playing a more critical role than ever before.

By reading this page, you'll understand

✓ How to change how other perceive your Campus Security or Campus Police department

✓ The new capabilities required to drive strategic value across your university

✓ A review of campus security systems & solutions and the opportunities for consolidation

✓ Best practices by leading undersides across the globe

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Key challenges

As your teams begin to feel the effects of these cuts, how can you maintain and if possible, enrich the services and value your team provides in these constrained environments? How can you counter the pandemic's impact on officer fatigue and morale? Campus safety and security leaders are beginning to explore how they can enhance the performance of their organization and boost the strategic value they provide to their university community.

New Capabilities Required

In light of restrained resources, security leaders are thinking beyond current capacities and challenging their teams to come up with a list of capabilities that will enable them to act as a force multiplier in order to take on the latest round of challenges and incremental responsibilities. Ideally, they're looking for the ability to:
- Visualize the exact location and availability all of their assets deployed across a large dispersed area in real-time
    - Differentiate between full-time vs. contract security resources
    - Distinguish between RAs, first aid, fire wardens, student volunteers, campus security, and others available in the field
- Coordinate all assets through a unified interface or 'single pane of glass' instead of doing so through a series of radio calls and acknowledgments
- Direct resources with command & control technology during emergency incidents and see staff respond in real-time to commands and adjust as circumstances change
- Cut their response time to incidents for better outcomes
- Send targeted communications to specific groups or to those in a particular geographic area, impacted by an incident
- Analyze and improve the deployment of their most precious and costly resources (their staff) to maximize their impact
- Create greater transparency to increase the level of accountability and value delivered to students and staff

Positioning Your Team to Provide Strategic and Tactical Value

Looking beyond their own department, security and safety teams are also looking to expand the value they can provide to their university or college. Especially when universities are facing constrained resources, by transitioning from strictly tactical security to contributing strategic value to multiple departments across the university, you're positioning yourself as an essential member of the executive leadership team who understands the big picture and delivers in pressure-packed situations with limited resources – a rare quality.

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Ways to Drive Strategic Value

Making the adjustment to provide strategic value sounds great – but what are the ways a campus security or campus police team can actually achieve this? We've met with some of the thought leaders in the US, UK and Australia for insights and here's a synopsis of how they're delivering on this front:

- Providing other first responders with real-time visibility of the location and availability of their resources. By giving other departments such as Emergency Management, First-Aid, Fire Safety, and Public Safety this capability, they're enhancing each department's ability to respond in a timely and efficient manner. This also builds rapport between first responder departments and enables them to collectively work more effectively as a team, particularly for widespread events such as a fire or natural disaster.

- Enhance other departments' capabilities to instantly understand who in the university community needs help, where they are, and what type of assistance they need. This functionality isn't just useful to first responders, it's especially helpful for Health & Safety, Student Wellbeing, Mental Health, Facilities, Lab Safety, Student Affairs, International Travel, and other departments. Instead of wasting time routing calls through a general dispatch number and deploying campus security to initially respond, universities can deploy the right resources at the right time, to the right place to expedite response and effectiveness.

- Providing additional capabilities and back-up systems to Business Continuity teams. For example, universities that have been subject to cyber-attacks need alternative tools they can rely upon when primary systems have been disabled due to these attacks. By providing Business Continuity teams with the ability to send targeted communications to the entire university or specific groups or departments impacted by an incident such as a natural disaster, they can quickly and efficiently distribute information to all those i.e., take shelter, use alternative route, log onto a different wireless network.

"SafeZone provided us with timely and actionable intelligence so we could eliminate our fixed point guarding resources in order to expand the size and caliber of our in-house team. With SafeZone, we know where all our first responders are, so we're more efficient and effective with our response and we've saved £390,000 YoY."

Russell Huxtable, Head of Business Continuity and Resilience

A great example comes from Russ Huxtable, Head of Resilience and Business Continuity, Swansea University. Russ was managing an in-house security team, as well as contracted security which was expensive and resulted in a lack of consistency. Russ initiated a strategic initiative to upgrade his team to "first responders" which involved enhanced training and certification on first aid, mental health and suicide prevention. He then used SafeZone's technology to provide his team with real-time situational awareness so they could more quickly understand who needed help and where.

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Changing How Others Perceive Your Department

By providing other departments with the capability to see and deploy their resources in response to a student or staff member who needs assistance, you'll position yourself as someone that deserves a seat at the center of the command and crisis management table with other strategic leaders mapping out next steps.

You'll now able to provide a valuable capability that didn't exist before – enhancing cross-organization coordination for better cooperation across the whole organization which will result in enhanced outcomes without significant investments.

A Review of Campus Security Systems & Solutions:

You may be wondering, "How can we do more when we actually have fewer resources?" As campus security teams are being asked to do more, it requires a thorough examination of each of the systems, equipment and technology being used. Ideally, the question is not, "Which of these can we do without?" Rather, "Do we need a separate solution to address each one of these capabilities?" There are varying levels of overlap between these categories so you should be able to identify one or more applications or tools that can be displaced with current or alternative solutions.

You should focus on retaining and investing in multi-functional solutions that can check several boxes vs. a standalone, single-purpose services. By displacing some of these standalone systems, you can realize savings in order to invest in solutions that deliver maximum value to your department as well as the broader organization.

Below are just some of the systems used by campus safety and campus security teams to help protect students, faculty, and staff. Take a close examination of these systems and look for opportunities to consolidate and save.

- Mass Communications
- Lone Worker devices and lone worker systems
- Staff Duress systems
- Public safety apps
- Emergency call stations or "blue light phones"
- Wired Panic alarms – costs for equipment + fixed infrastructure + maintenance
- Shuttle Trackers / vehicle trackers
- Tip reporting systems or apps
- Radio Systems –costs for handsets, monthly service, and licenses to achieve group coordination & collaboration between various first responders
- Incident Management and reporting systems – emergency management and coordination
- Team coordination systems i.e. lightweight CAD (Computer Aided Dispatch) systems
- Workforce Management solutions

Operating Expenses Tied to Campus Security Systems & Solutions:

As you complete this review of your security systems, equipment, and technology, consider the operational costs to purchase, train, maintain and support each one. Categories of savings that could be realized include:

- Savings on systems, licenses, upgrades etc.
- Cutting back on the amount of training for the team to support each system
- Vendor management expenses tied to managing each vendor i.e. negotiation, procurement, etc.
- Increased susceptibility to data leakage when sharing/sending/importing data to/from multiple systems
- Incremental IT costs to on-board, deploy, support, and troubleshoot multiple systems
- Costs and time required to manage SLA compliance for each vendor (including credits), and the challenges tied to managing a mission-critical safety system with multiple SLAs
- Costs tied to monitor each system, take the data/findings/alerts, and distribute the information to all necessary team members

Turning Lofty Goals into Reality

Even if university budget cuts have limited your ability to take on major enhancements and upgrades to your CCTV system, access control or Security Operations Center, there is an investment which costs an order of magnitude less to implement but gives you an equivalent or greater increase in your ability to coordinate your limited team resources and respond faster.

You can deliver on this with CriticalArc's SafeZone solution which is a unified system that provides command and control technology to enable visualization of the identity, location and availability of each first responder across campus.

As you're being asked to "do more with less" the selection and deployment of a unified campus security solution that can support multiple use cases for numerous departments across your institution, while also providing your campus safety and security teams with greater situational awareness is the type of force multiplier effect required to manage these challenging times.

Because your most valuable and expensive resource is your staff, you need tools that can help you protect them and optimize how they're deployed. SafeZone provides you with real-time location of all staff on patrol (even when outside their vehicle) so you can deploy additional resources if an officer encounters resistance and needs back-up or first aid.

In addition, you can more intelligently deploy your resources for maximum coverage. The University of Arkansas is just one example of a customer who uses the SafeZone patrol heat-maps to analyze and optimize their patrols to provide better coverage and protection of the university community (see image below). You'll find these improved capabilities, will also enable your team to shift from patrolling empty hallways or sitting behind a desk to engaging with and better supporting the local university community.

And when various student organizations are calling for campus police or security teams to be defunded, this increased engagement with students and staffs will provide greater organizational transparency as your team strives to earn the trust of the university community and help them recognize your organization's commitment to protect them through better visibility, faster response etc.

SafeZone also enables your campus community to raise alerts and request aid or emergency assistance and empowers the University to send targeted communications to select groups and/or individuals in a particular geographic area.
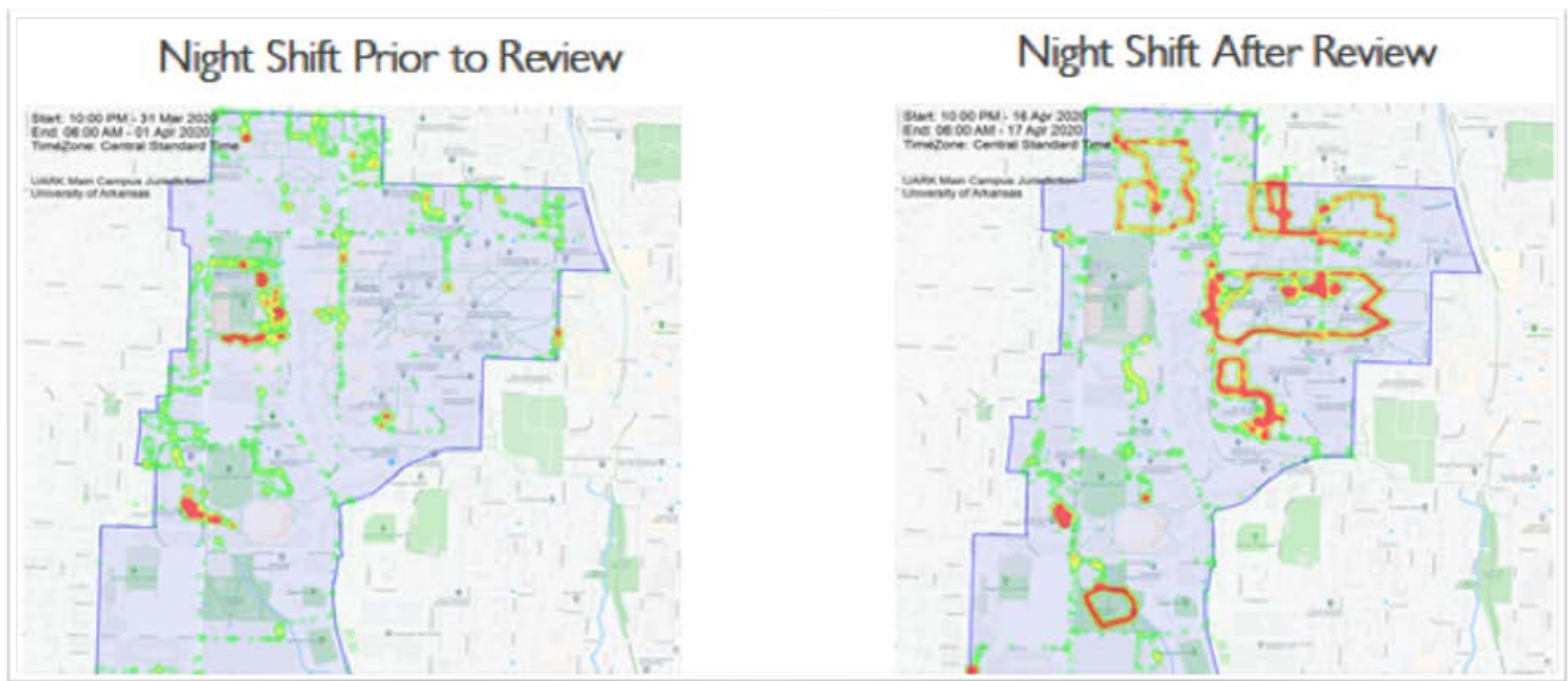
Learn more about SafeZone

Moving Forward

Prestigious universities across the world who have recognized the incremental functionality SafeZone provides to enhance how they protect their community and increase the operational excellence of their team. As your team begins to explore how they can add strategic value across the university, and resources are curtailed, take a moment to **request a demo of SafeZone** and learn how we can help empower your team to do more with less by maintaining current responsibilities and enhancing your ability to more effectively coordinate resources and respond to critical incidents.

Author: Glenn Farrant, CEO of CriticalArc

About CriticalArc

CriticalArc is a global technology innovator and the creator of the distributed command and control solution, SafeZone®, which has been adopted by dozens of universities and hospitals across the world. SafeZone fundamentally changes the way businesses manage safety and security operations across dispersed campuses and multi-site organizations, allowing proactive response that positively impacts the outcome of any incident.

Headquartered in Sydney, Australia, CriticalArc has offices and operations in the UK and North America providing an international delivery capability and reach. For more information on CriticalArc and SafeZone, please go to www.criticalarc.com, email contact@criticalarc.com or telephone **+44 (0) 800 368 9876**

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