Debate at UNLV a Success

UNLV Police Services partnered with local and federal law enforcement as the university hosted its first-ever general election presidential debate on Wednesday, October 19, 2016

By Jamie Bichelman

As cheers of I believe that we will win opposed rhythmic chants of I believe that she will win, peaceful protesters and students alike stopped to take selfies with police officers. CNN broadcasted to an awestruck crowd live on one end of the campus while employees and students poured out of the Student Union to witness a live broadcast by MSNBC. It was a different environment, to say the least, but a safe one nonetheless.

Learn about the preparation that went into keeping UNLV safe — including more than 16,800 miles traveled between Police Chief José Elique and his command staff — as well as the tales from our staff working alongside Secret Service, in our first-ever Debate Edition of The Police Blotter.
Documenting Debate Week: Remembering A Historic Week At UNLV

Officer Courtland Smith & Detective Paul Velez just prior to reporting to their debate posts.

Chief Elique being interviewed by Telemundo 🎤
Acting Asst. Chief Jeff Green & Lt. Rich Dohme, two of the supervisors responsible for police patrol on Debate Day

IT Director Ryan Doyle in the Command Post on campus

Photos & Illustration by Jamie Bichelman
Tales From the Command Post: Who Called on Debate Night?

By Jamie Bichelman

With $80,000 worth of technical equipment manned by the FBI and Secret Service among 10 other agencies, and more than 125 cameras integrated into a single video management system, one might think the Command Post to be a solemn environment.

With Police Services’ dispatchers spanning multiple locations on Debate Night, and a dedicated security room for Secret Service personnel, surely there must have been urgent matters to address?

“The main issue when I first got there was for me to contact maintenance, because with their suits on, it was too hot in the room,” said Dispatch Manager Sandra Barfield, stationed in the security room with Secret Service.

While star-struck students and community members watched live broadcasts on campus from their favorite networks, it was actually the viewers at home who took umbrage with the noise level of the crowds behind the sets.

“Our dispatchers took calls from various states, such as California, Michigan, and New York,” said Deputy Dispatch Manager Gina Schneider. While supporters with opposing political views peaceably coexisted and protesters remained civil throughout the entirety of the day, the most noise was actually generated by the fans who couldn’t contain their excitement about seeing celebrities on campus. “Not all of the noise came from election protestors,” Schneider said.

“Some of it was the fans of Anderson Cooper.”

Both CNN and MSNBC broadcasts were attended by supporters of Democrat, Republican, and third party candidates. Brightly colored signs formed a political rainbow across the sky. While some fans brought a cut-out of First Lady Michelle Obama, others waved flags sporting Hillary Clinton’s campaign logo. Many fans held Make America Great Again signs, while one group of friends had a custom shirt made for their dog for the Independent party candidate of their choice.

While some families in attendance saw the abundance of flags and posters as a symbol of diversity, it was once again the callers who were unhappy with these displays. “Calls were received about inappropriate signs in the crowds behind CNN and MSNBC while they were broadcasting,” Barfield said. “One lady called several times wanting someone thrown in jail over it.”

In all, the night was a success—a testament to the hard work and cooperation of all involved.
Leading up to the week of the debate, Police Services’ officers and command staff participated in outreach events on and off campus, like Careers on Wheels at James H. Bilbray Elementary School, and in a press conference on the UNLV campus. Check out the photos of our staff below!

Chief José Elique
Addressing the Media

Patrol personnel inside the Thomas & Mack Center
How did UNLV Police Prepare For The Debate?

By Jamie Bichelman

The Right Attitude

Though it was the first time UNLV hosted a general election presidential debate, UNLV police officers are no strangers to important moments featuring high-profile guests. While they approached the week with requisite professionalism and fervor, it was still another example of an opportunity to keep the campus safe — a daily priority for the department.

“It was just another day in the Bureau,” said Detective Robert Ljungquist. “We’ve provided security detail for political candidates visiting the university in the past, as well as for concerts and events at the Thomas & Mack.”

While students were starstruck seeing personalities such as John Legend, Chrissy Teigen, and Anderson Cooper on campus all month, according to Detective Ljungquist, police officers can’t become overwhelmed by important moments. “Our job is to protect the campus.”

Flying Through the Debate

Acting Asst. Chief Jeff Green traveled alongside Lieutenant William Newman to Hofstra University in New York to meet with local police to discuss security measures in advance of the debate on Sept. 26. Green then traveled alongside Chief José Elique to Washington University in St. Louis to meet with local police before the debate on Oct. 9.

In all, the three traveled more than 16,800 miles across the country. Between red eye flights, nights forgoing sleep, and meetings with university debate committees, their motivation was clear: “This is where we elect the next leader of our free world,” said Green. “It helped me stay on task — a desire to keep our community safe.”

Training to be the Best

UNLV police officers’ annual training coincided this year with de-escalation technique training they received before the debate. “We prefer de-escalation before we do anything physical,” Green said. “We want to talk to them and relate to them on a human level.”

University police officers, while still holding the same authority as Las Vegas Metropolitan Police Department police officers, are also trained in community outreach methods and being approachable to students in need. “People will always remember how you treat them,” said UNLV police officer and Nevada P.O.S.T.-certified instructor Stephani Loffredo, reciting her favorite piece of advice given to her.

Las Vegas Convention and Visitors Authority Executive Director of Customer Safety Ray Suppe commended the cooperation of all agencies involved. “Law enforcement agencies are used to planning together. They’re used to working together, to traveling together. Sometimes, they even train together.”

Partners in Crime-Fighting

UNLV Police partnered with more than 1,000 LVMPD officers and 11 other agencies, including the FBI and Secret Service. Security checkpoints throughout the university ensured the campus was safe throughout Debate Week and beyond. “We’re confident that we’re going to maintain a safe environment,” Chief Elique said before the debate. Indeed, they did.
## Get to Know Us: Debate + Thanksgiving Edition

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name and Position</th>
<th>What current political issue is most important to you?</th>
<th>What is your least favorite part of Election Season?</th>
<th>What is your favorite Thanksgiving Food?</th>
<th>Who cooks for Thanksgiving?</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Darrell Johnson, K-9 Officer</td>
<td>The length of terms for elected members of the United States Congress</td>
<td>The mud-slinging and when candidates avoid discussing issues</td>
<td>Turkey and ham</td>
<td>My mother-in-law</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mark Sakurada, Interim Technology Specialist</td>
<td>Immigration policy</td>
<td>The commercials, phone calls, and constant marketing of candidates</td>
<td>Prime rib</td>
<td>My mother</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Judith Paulson, Personnel Technician II</td>
<td>Abortion rights</td>
<td>The constant commercials</td>
<td>Mashed potatoes</td>
<td>My mom</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gloria Gonzalez, Student Worker</td>
<td>Immigration policy</td>
<td>The eligible candidates to pick from this year</td>
<td>Ham with pineapple on top, and sweet potato puree</td>
<td>My dad and I</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Debate Week: By The Numbers

There is a comforting sameness when it comes to the day-to-day operations of law enforcement — daily briefings, routine patrol routes to name a few. On Debate Week, however, police patrol and technical support evolved in response to the precautionary safety measures necessary to ensure a safe and secure event. From cups of coffee (too many to count) to the distance of network cables for video cameras (20,000 feet) and other interesting tidbits, here are the highlights from Debate Week.

23,682

Police Services officers did a lot of walking during Debate Week! In fact, one officer on patrol registered 23,682 steps on their fitness tracker!

80,000

Police Services partnered with 11 law enforcement agencies in a command post on campus. $80,000 was spent on cameras, licensing, and servers, with 125 cameras integrated into a single video management system!

683

Throughout the 24-hour period on Oct. 19, every one of Police Services’ full-time police officers and dispatchers worked extended shifts. In all, that’s 683 hours, not including civilian staff working inside PHQ! How’d they manage? “A lot of coffee.”
When it Comes to Debating, Practice Makes Perfect

By Hobreigh Fischer

It’s often not our favorite thing to do, and it can be repetitive, but practice is part of what brings out the best in all of us as professionals. It’s why presidential candidates spend a week or more leading up to a debate on learning the issues and preparing. However, it might surprise you to know that they weren’t alone in needing to practice for the debate. In the lead-up to the debate, UNLV’s staff invested 1,120 hours of practice and training to make the debate among the safest events ever staged at UNLV.

Whether it was rehearsing how to respond to a crowd that becomes panicked, lowering tense situations through words rather than actions, or maintaining police communications in an emergency, police staff did it all.

University police officers trained in a variety of areas including mobile field force, radio communication, and verbal de-escalation. The department’s dispatchers joined them for National Crime Information Center (N.C.I.C.) officer training and for virtual command center training.

Of course, any successful presidential debater and their support staff will tell you that learning the issues in preparation for a debate isn’t helpful if it isn’t rehearsed. Just as the candidates participated in mock debates, the department participated in several tabletop exercises to see how things would go on debate day. On Sept. 22, the department staged a tabletop exercise in cooperation with the Thomas & Mack Center staff in which they simulated an evacuation of the building.

What many people don’t know is that the successful tabletop exercise that day was the culmination of many years of hard work on the part of police and facilities staff to make the building one of the most prepared event facilities in Southern Nevada. UNLV Police Services actually has a supervisor, Lieutenant William Newman, specifically devoted to the emergency preparedness of the facility, and the building itself has been subjected to Site Assisted Visits (S.A.V.’s) from the Department of Homeland Security. UNLV Police Services has also worked closely with the Las Vegas Metropolitan Police Department to have the Thomas & Mack Center participate in the Nevada Silver Shield program, which lists the building as a key infrastructure asset for the state and assesses it strengths and vulnerabilities in an emergency.

While it was essential for UNLV to prepare the Thomas & Mack Center for the debate, there was far more to consider outside of the building. It was for that reason that UNLV Police participated in an additional debate tabletop exercise with LVMPD on Oct. 5. Their tabletop addressed all of the concerns regarding how the event would impact the areas of Southern Nevada surrounding the Thomas & Mack Center. Topics of consideration during the tabletop included lessons learned from the previous debates of 2016, officer deployments, communications, motorcades, first response, and media response.

The hours of practice and rehearsal that went into securing this event were longer and more painstaking for UNLV Police than any past efforts. It took everything the department had and the critical support and assistance of many others from UNLV, local law enforcement, and the convention authority to turn practice into success. What a success it was!
**SPOTTED: BUSTER & SIMBA ON CAMPUS**

Our two Springer Spaniels, Buster and Simba, had very busy schedules throughout October! In addition to their daily patrol duties, which includes explosives detection for special events, Buster and Simba made their rounds throughout Debate Week and beyond. Check out some of our favorites below!

- **High-five for the #UNLVPresDebate!**
  - UNLV Research and Economic Development Facebook page, Oct. 19

- **Happy Halloween from UNLV Police Services and Simba!**
  - Celebrate safely!
  - UNLV Police Facebook page, Oct. 27

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**UNLV POLICE UPCOMING EVENTS**

- **Rebel Roundtable**
  - **Nov. 30** – Student Union
    - 12:00 p.m. – 2:00 p.m.
  - **Girls on Guard**
    - **Dec. 9** – PHQ
      - 1:30 p.m. – 6:30 p.m.

- **Property Registration**
  - **Dec. 5** – Lied Library Lobby
    - 11:00 a.m. – 12:00 p.m.
  - **Dec. 6** – Lied Library Lobby
    - 8:00 p.m. – 9:00 p.m.
  - **Dec. 7** – Lied Library Lobby
    - 11:00 a.m. – 12:00 p.m.
  - **Dec. 8** – Lied Library Lobby
    - 8:00 p.m. – 9:00 p.m.

- **Campus Presentations**
  - Interested in scheduling a crime prevention and safety presentation for your campus group, class, or office? Police Services offers free presentations on topics such as nighttime safety, emergency preparedness, sexual assault awareness, and more! We can customize any presentation to suit your group’s needs.

  **To view Police Services’ calendar of events, visit:**
  - [www.unlv.edu/police/events](http://www.unlv.edu/police/events)

  **To learn more, visit:**
  - [www.unlv.edu/police/units/community-outreach](http://www.unlv.edu/police/units/community-outreach)
Hiring of Accounting Personnel Tech II Judith Paulson

The UNLV Department of Police Services is pleased to announce the hiring of Accounting Personnel Tech II Judith Paulson.

Prior to her appointment with Police Services, Judith served as an Administrative Assistant II for over two years with the Nevada Equal Rights Commission. She is a familiar face to the campus community, as she earned her Bachelor’s Degree in Hospitality Management from UNLV in 2010.

A lover of sushi and Korean cuisine, Judith enjoys hiking and interior design. She resides in Henderson with her husband and their 6-month-old boy and 4-year-old girl.

Her appointment became effective on September 12th.

Hiring of Dispatcher Diane Cowgill

The UNLV Department of Police Services is pleased to announce the hiring of university police dispatcher Diane Cowgill.

Diane boasts 20 years of experience at Alarmco, where she served as a service dispatcher, alarm dispatcher supervisor, data entry supervisor, and fire tech coordinator. She is a level 1 and advanced level-certified alarm dispatcher through the Central Station Alarm Association and the Security Industry Association.

An avid lover of Mexican cuisine, Diane loves to shop at antique stores and would like to take specialized classes in fire safety and fire prevention. She resides in Las Vegas with her husband, daughter, future son-in-law, and their two dogs.

Her appointment became effective on August 1st.

Retirement of Police Officer James Rudnik

The UNLV Department of Police Services bid farewell to Police Officer James Rudnik, who is retiring from UNLV.

Before his appointment to UNLV, Officer Rudnik was a retired wartime military veteran from the first Gulf War. During his military career, he served 20 years with the United States Marine Corps, ending his service with the military as a marine reservist.

Officer Rudnik received his law enforcement training from the Law Enforcement Training Academy of the Community College of Southern Nevada, and he has earned an Associates Degree in Electronics Technology from the Technical Career Institutes of New York. He also spent time attending Hunter College in New York City, where he pursued a degree in cartography.

Officer Rudnik will be missed, and we wish him happiness in retirement!
UNLV ramps up campus security ahead of final presidential debate
by Nathan O’Neal, News 3 Las Vegas

Police forces, Secret Service ready for debate
by Wesley Juhl, Las Vegas Review-Journal

The University of Nevada Las Vegas Department of Police Services is dedicated to providing excellence in protection and service to the university community. As law enforcement officers, we shall continuously endeavor to ensure a safe and secure environment conducive to a positive social and educational process.

The Police Blotter is a biannual newsletter published by the UNLV Department of Police Services’ Office of the Chief in order to assist the department in achieving this mission.

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