



University of Washington Police Department

Corona Virus Update May 22, 2020

UWPD detectives last week arrested an individual described as a prolific burglar. While detectives are continuing their investigation, this person may be linked to seven burglaries and four trespasses on campus over a three-month period, while many buildings have been closed due to the COVID-19 outbreak.

Individuals who commit crimes such as trespassing or have warrants for their arrest must be released due to current restrictions on booking suspects into the King County Correction's Center related to COVID-19. This is important to help curb the spread of COVID-19, however the inability to arrest and book suspects into a King County Correction's Center has led to individuals committing multiple crimes at a greater rate. The UW is not immune to this problem as evidenced in this recent arrest. This particular suspect is believed to be responsible for over \$13,000 in damage to university property and has been arrested multiple times before his arrest earlier this week.

Since the in-person instruction ended in early March, UW police have seen a rise in property crimes occurring in campus buildings. The rate of trespass, vandalism and burglary combined is up 101% compared to this same 4-month period (Jan-April) in 2019. Unauthorized persons gaining access to campus buildings and committing theft or vandalism is a growing problem and the primary reason for the uptick in property crime. Conversely, crimes such as bicycle theft, vehicle prowling and crimes against individuals remain extremely low. Crimes occurring inside buildings at a higher rate is directly related to less "natural surveillance." With fewer eyes and ears on campus, persons intent on committing crimes are less likely to be detected, but UW police has added more security resources and now have more security guards walking through buildings.

The additional security personnel has increased the reporting of open doors, windows and suspicious circumstances so police officers can investigate these concerns. Last month the increased security patrols found individuals trespassing as well as assisted our campus community by thwarting a potential burglary. We are pleased with the work security guards are doing and it is offering an opportunity to both detect and prevent crime.

UW police officers are deeply committed to keeping the campus safe and are doubling their efforts to find unique ways to stay in close contact with the UW community. Now more than ever the words "To Protect and To Serve" have taken our innovation and creativity to new heights. Officers disinfect their cars, equipment, even their keys on each shift, and don personal protective equipment when necessary to meet community expectations for campus safety.

This week, officers are working on unique ways to stay connected to the UW community. Besides our increased social media posts, one officer has taken on the challenge of creating signs in our storefront windows off of 15th Avenue NE to offer messages of inspiration and reminding people that we are here for you. Officers in our Community Engagement section are working with animation software to take our upcoming campus presentations to a bold and exciting level for online student and parent visitations. Like our UW students, we never stop learning and are committed to meeting the unique challenges presented each day.