

Interview with UCI Police Dept. Acting Captain Anthony Frisbee



Anthony Frisbee
Captain, UC Irvine Police

What was your job history before UCI?

Right out of high school I went to work for the Department of Forestry and Fire, through the California Conservation Corps— as a helitack firefighter for about three years. We would be transported by helicopter to areas other vehicles could not reach. If the helicopter couldn't get low enough to land, it would hover low off the ground and we would jump down. This was here in California. I also graduated from the Fire Academy, but when the state budget crisis hit I was laid off. I then went to work for the Metropolitan Water District (MWD) for the next ten years as a construction project field coordinator. In that role I took part in supporting the construction of a new

lake/reservoir with two large dams, a smaller saddle dam in Hemet, and a 43-mile pipeline and tunnel system from/through San Bernardino to the new lake. I worked with paleontologists, archeologists, biologists, engineers, construction crews, and we all worked together to make sure environmental concerns, archeological sites, and Native American burial grounds were respected in the process.

When did you decide a career change was necessary?

My heart was always with law enforcement. My dad and uncle were both in law enforcement and I grew up with them as role models, hearing the stories of the people they were helping.

Any funny "tales from the force" from your Dad or your Uncle that stand out from when you were a kid?

None that I can share (laughs). I do remember hearing about the good stuff growing up in Salem, Oregon from my friends and family in law enforcement.

What made you choose law enforcement as a career?

Hearing these stories as a little kid really influenced me. As a child, I would play pretend cop and arrest my younger brother. As I approached 30, I realized I needed to follow my heart and focus on law enforcement. I've been on the job for the last 15 years: first as an Orange County probation officer, then as an officer for the city of Torrance, and now 11 years here at UCI.

What's your current role with UCIPD?

I am now the acting Captain of Operations. This means I'm responsible for our amazing patrol officers, community outreach programs, zone policing program, the field training program, and our extremely talented dispatchers (911 communications). I also serve as the department's core member on UCI and UC Irvine Health Medical Center's Consultation Teams.

When was that one moment where you knew you made the right career choice?

It was here at UCI, when I was working with a student who was very close to suicide. The student has now graduated, is successful, and has a family. I'm still in touch more than ten years later. I was able to make a connection with that student. That was early on in my career when I was a patrol officer. I'm very passionate about suicide prevention and want students to seek help, use the superb resources at UCI, and realize they have their whole life ahead of them. I lost my little brother to suicide and wish he had the opportunity to experience such an amazing community of students, staff, and faculty that we have here at UCI.

What do you like best about being a police officer at UCI?

The community, I never experienced a feeling of community until I came here. Society today is generally not built on community, everyone goes about their lives separately, but here at UCI we are a community, from the students, to faculty, to staff. We are here to support learning and research. There are different areas of expertise, and I get to connect with people in all these separate areas. I have an amazing job, getting to work with my professional colleagues at the police department and throughout UCI, while getting to serve people in all areas of campus—I love that!



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What do you want the UCI community to know about UCIPD?

Your department of Officers, Detectives, Dispatchers, Professional staff, and Community Service Officers (CSOs) are committed to serving our community with excellence. While our Officers complete the same police academy as our city partners, in many aspects, we actually have a higher level of training requirements to comply with state and federal regulations, such as the Clery Act. I am honored and proud to work with such a highly talented diverse group of professionals at UCIPD.

Many say they believe in community oriented policing, but we live by that. We don't just throw it out there, we strive to exemplify it every day. We're here to serve our community and our department's entire staff take great pride in helping to provide a safe environment for our community to thrive and succeed. I like it when we get to meet people or they come up and say "hi" and we get to know one another. One of the best times of the year is when our students graduate. We serve to help keep them safe, so they can focus on academics and become our future leaders. Commencements for us represent a joyful success for all our community members.

Our 911 dispatchers are the best. They are the first contact with the community when 911 is called during a critical incident and gather vital information to help those in need and support our responding officers. We also have our own emergency management team to work on crime prevention and Clery reporting—there is a team of Professional staff you may not see like our visible officers in uniform and the entire department is just an amazing group of dedicated people.

Why do you come to work every day?

The community, I take pride in the job I have and the ability to help people. From training to presentations, to meeting with people in crisis, to just walking around campus.

What about when you're not at work—what hobbies do you enjoy?

Besides being a workaholic, my wife and I enjoy hiking, bicycling, camping, and fishing. She has the patience of a saint. She is busy with CPA classes. We really enjoy our family time together. Right now, our family includes two puppies—both toy Yorkshire Terriers. They're adorable!

Acting Captain Anthony Frisbee

Most memorable moment as an officer on campus?

The dunk tank was a highlight (Capt. Frisbee sat in the dunk tank at Middle Earth's Spring Fling this year, as did Chief Cisneros)! I look forward to seeing other officers in future dunk tanks at housing events. Can't wait!

We've learned about your professional experience, would you share your educational background?

I went to work after I graduated high school. Later, I realized how important education is, so I went back to school to earn my Bachelor's at Chapman in Organizational leadership. I received my Master's in Criminology, Law and Society from UCI (zot...zot...zot).

What's your favorite food?

Any kind of Mexican food and spaghetti, but not together. However, I would starve if it wasn't for fast food and my wife's cooking. I tend to set off the smoke alarms when I cook.

How did you and your wife meet?

My wife and I met at UCI. We are true anteaters, alumni to the core. I am very blessed she chose to be my partner. What was she thinking?

Favorite Sports Team?

I wasn't really a sports enthusiast, until I started working at UCI. I really enjoy going to UCI events to support the teams. My wife is more of a sports enthusiast than I am and she teases me for it.

What's your best advice for students at UCI?

Never give up on your dream, and don't worry if you don't know what you want to be in life yet. It will all come to fruition in time. Have fun and focus on the life ahead of you... it will all work out. You are not alone.