Former lieutenant, graduate of Rider, appointed as new assistant director of Safety and Security

By Cara Latham

A Rider alumnus has recently taken over responsibilities as the new Assistant Director of Campus Security. Captain Thomas A. Tucker, class of 1974, took over position after the retirement of former Assistant Director, Capt. John Hanusi.

Tucker, originally from Dover, N.J., is a former lieutenant with the Trenton Police Department (TPD), where he worked for about 28 years. Upon becoming eligible for retirement from the police department, he saw the opening for the position and applied to come back to work for Rider, he said.

“I’m happy,” Tucker said. “I think it’s neat to come back and finish your career work where everything started. Not many people have a chance to complete that circle and go back to where it all began.”

Tucker said he enjoys the job so far, but wishes he had more time to intermingle with the students and Security staff.

He said he would have a little bit more free time to interact with the students, he said. “But between administrative work and operational work and meetings, my down time hasn’t been as much as I would like it to be. I’m trying to work on that.”

However, he is determined to implement some positive characteristics to Rider’s Safety and Security procedures, he said.

“If at all possible, I’d like to see the manpower increase for our security force,” Tucker said, “although I understand that the budget is a little tight.”

Tucker also said he is content with current efforts at Security and plans to continue with the practices that are already in place, especially the program that was developed last year with the Lawrence Police Department (LPD).

“We developed a program last year where the LPD comes on the Lawrenceville campus every Thursday, Friday and Saturday night to supplement our officers,” he said.

“Traditionally, they’re the busier nights for social activities and I’d like to see that program continue because it’s definitely helpful.”

He is also busy with other aspects of Security as part of his duties, which he draws from his experience with the TPD.

“A lot of the administrative duties that I have to do here are similar to a couple of assignments I had when I was with the TPD,” he said. “Toward the end, I had some big administrative duties. Of course the big difference here is that [officers] are not armed.”

Overall, Rider has a good student body and most of the students seem very cooperative since he’s been here, he said. He also said that one of the differences between his time at Rider and the present Rider is that the drinking age is no longer 18.

“I was legal [for students] to drink anytime they wanted to, whereas now it’s more of a challenge to them and hopefully they won’t take that challenge,” he said.

When he first started work at Rider, Tucker said it was a little complicated because the position was vacant for several months before he began, but added that things are going well.

“Tucker said, “It was kind of a challenge in the beginning” to cover all of the necessary work that had been left for him since Hanusi’s retirement.

Fortuantly, that was in the summer when there weren’t many students here, so that allowed me the time to catch up on things.”

He said that he is a quick worker, despite the amount of work he has to complete.

“Between the daily statistics and reports, there’s quite a bit to do,” he said.

Tucker attributed his success to Rider and is looking forward to becoming more involved with the campus.

“Rider initially gave me the foundation to start a professional career with the police department,” Tucker said. “I’m looking forward to walking around campus and striking up conversations [with students] and seeing if they have any concerns.”

During Tucker’s years at Rider, he was a member of the Phi Kappa Psi, which no longer has a chapter at Rider. He also served as Vice President of the Inter-Fraternity Council, Chair Justice of the Inter-Fraternity Council Judicial Court and a Senator for the Student Government Association. He received a Bachelor of Arts degree in Public Administration and Sociology at Rider. During his tenure as a student, he also attended the police academy full-time. He later pursued a graduate degree at the City University of New York (CUNY) and a Master of Arts degree in Criminal Justice at the John Jay College of Criminal Justice in Manhattan.

“Before becoming the Assistant Head of Security, he received five commendations during his service in the TPD, including the Trenton Police Citation for Meritorious Service for pursuing and capturing an armed robbery suspect who pointed a gun at him and attempted unsuccessfully to fire several times while Tucker had him pinned. He also received the Trenton Police Valor Award, the Department’s highest award, for responding to a fire and successfully aiding in the evacuation of numerous occupants from a quick moving fire that eventually destroyed 13 homes. Because of these actions, there were no casualties or serious injury.

The "Lunch Box" is a series of lectures by Rider and Westminster professors scheduled throughout the year, to address timely and key issues in society. The series is open to the community and free of charge. The first lecture was given on Wednesday by Dr. Myra Gutin of the Communications department.