

Harry Downes Jr. named Police Chief, Director of Public Safety

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Delaware State University has named Harry W. Downes Jr., a retired Delaware State Police major, as its new director of the Department of Public Safety and chief of University Police.

Chief Downes brings over 25 years of law enforcement and senior-level executive management experience to his new leadership post at DSU. He served from 1983 to his retirement in 2009 with the Delaware State Police, beginning as a trooper and moving up to a progressive number of posts that culminated in his promotion to the rank of major and his assignment as an administrative office on the executive staff in 2005.

During his State Police career, he served as a special investigations detective, a corporal in the Community Service Unit, a sergeant in the Rural Community Policing Unit, a lieutenant for the Traffic Patrol, as well as a training coordinator. As a captain, he developed domestic violence policies and served as an investigator in that area throughout Delaware, as well as served as the director of the Training Academy.

Prior to his state police tenure, Chief Downes served as a cadet and an officer in the Camden-Wyoming Police Department from 1980-1983.

“His extensive law enforcement background from his many years with the Delaware State Police includes areas such as human resources, training, executive leadership and many others responsibilities and are the types of experiences that are important for a university to have in its chief of police and director of Public Safety,” said Kemal Atkins, DSU vice president of Student Affairs. “In addition, Chief Downes has strong ties in the surrounding Dover community and throughout the state that will help the University strengthen its connections and partnerships beyond its campus.”

In addition to his law enforcement background, Chief Downs also served as the director of DSU’s Sussex County satellite site in Georgetown from 2010 to the summer of 2011.

Chief Downes has associate degrees in criminal justice and computer science from Delaware Technical and Community College, a bachelor’s degree in general studies and a master’s degree in public administration both from Wilmington University. He has also completed the Northwestern School of Police Staff and Command at Northwestern University, Police Supervisor’s School at Penn State University and National Incident Management System from the Department of Homeland Security in Washington, D.C.

A Delaware native, Chief Downes is a 1979 product of Caesar Rodney High School.

“I am very pleased to be the next chief of the DSU Police Department,” Chief Downes said. “However, this post is not about me, but it is about leading an outstanding team of officers to provide the safest environment possible at DSU.”

Chief Downes officially began his new public safety post with DSU on July 18. He succeeds former Chief James Overton, who left the DSU earlier this year after six years in that post to become the director of the Department of Public Safety at the University of Massachusetts.

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