Crime Alert - Theft of Electronic Devices & A Personal Safety Reminder

To follow up on the UCPD personal safety update sent to the community on the trends involving the theft of electronic devices, between 5/17/2012 and 5/22/2012 several thefts of laptops, phones and tablets were reported to UCPD. All of the stolen items were left unattended in unsecured labs, offices and classrooms during regular business hours. One of the laptops stolen was programmed with a file hosting service with cloud storage and file synchronization software. As a result, UCPD was able to track the stolen computer to a residence when the suspect logged onto the internet from his house. Our investigation led officers to the suspect where we recovered five stolen laptops and one stolen cell phone; a success we wanted to share with the community. The DA’s office is reviewing numerous charges against the suspect. It was later determined that some of the recovered items had not been reported stolen by the victims. We want to urge the community to be diligent about securing valuables and reporting all thefts to the police department, to aid all police agencies in the recovery of stolen items such as these. UCPD also recommends installing cloud software or another tracking device on personal electronic devices. In addition to the recovery of those items, officers assigned to the University Neighborhood Enhancement Team where able to serve a search warrant last week and arrest a suspect who stole a laptop from a student at the Starbucks on Blaine St.

Please remain vigilant, as another similar theft occurred last night near campus. At about 6:45 pm on Rustin Ave. north of Blaine St. a female UCR student had her iPod taken from her hands as she scrolled through her music by a suspect who ran by and grabbed it. Fortunately, she was not injured. The City of Riverside Police Department is investigating that crime. Please continue to be aware of your surroundings about be cautious about displaying items of high value as you walk in public.

**Original Message - Personal Safety Update**

Personal Safety Update Regarding Electronic Devices

UCPD has seen an increase in thefts of cell phones and laptops/tablet computers in recent months, as have police departments across the state. Many of these crimes have the same basic circumstances: The victim is walking on a public street and, in some manner, is publicly displaying their property (Either by talking on the phone or carrying their property outside of a bag or case). The suspect(s) approach the victim and either assault or intimidate the victim, forcing them to give up their property. The suspect then flees, normally in a waiting car. This same type of crime has been documented from Los Angeles to San Diego to San Francisco; in fact, these exact circumstances occurred near the intersection of Rustin Avenue and Linden Street this morning.

We urge all students, staff and faculty to be aware of how they display their phone or other electronics while they are in public. Thieves have targeted smartphones, tablets/iPads and laptop computers; in every case to which UCPD has responded, the thieves have targeted a victim that was using or openly carrying their property. While UCPD is stepping up efforts to combat this type of crime, the ease of recycling or reselling these stolen items indicates to us that the trend will continue, especially so long as the would-be thieves know who is carrying expensive or desirable items and who is not.