

New Chief at University of Wisconsin-Madison



Kristen Roman

Kristen Roman began her duties as chief of police at the University of Wisconsin (UW)-Madison on January 9. She previously served as a captain in the Madison Police Department, gaining extensive experience in community outreach, mental health issues, and services to vulnerable populations. Roman has a master's degree from Boston University and a bachelor's degree from UW-Madison.

She shared these thoughts with us:

Why did you choose law enforcement as a profession?

"This profession chose me first; then I chose to stay in it. And doing so has provided me with countless opportunities to make a positive difference. I was 23 when I started, and, at that time, I thought of it as a means to an end. My plan was to take advantage of what was a robust tuition reimbursement program and work for my department while attending law school, then move on. Instead,

I discovered the many facets of this challenging profession and the deep satisfaction that comes from service to others. So I quickly committed to this work for the long haul."

What is the best career advice you received?

"I've received a lot of great advice over the years, but the most beneficial advice was to cultivate and tend to relationships and activities that involve people who are not in this profession. Doing so, I think, has helped me maintain a balanced perspective and mitigate one of the more toxic potential downsides of this work—cynicism."

What is your guiding philosophy of leadership?

"Wow. How to answer this in a few sentences? Simply put: my leadership is guided by a philosophy rooted in authenticity, diplomacy, consideration, and dialogue. Each of these requires vulnerability to a degree, and vulnerability is typically something officers, and most of us in general, work to avoid or mask because we are taught to see it as a weakness. But over the years, I have come to understand that there is great strength to be found in and derived from the ability to take measured emotional risks in addition to the physical risks this profession requires. I think understanding this paradox has freed me to become a more effective leader in many ways."

What advice do you give to young public safety officers?

"Well, I share the advice that I was given about cultivating outside relationships and interests. I also tell them to write a list of reasons why they have chosen this work, what they hope to provide or accomplish through this work, and what core values are required to do what they are setting out to do. Then I tell them to keep this list in their squad box, pocket calendar, or locker and to pull it out when they've had a hard shift or a setback or just periodically. It is a reminder of that virtuous optimism we all start out with, but that takes continued attention and perseverance to maintain throughout our careers."

What new tactic or innovation do you hope to bring to your department?

"I think the greatest asset any department/organization has is its people. Tools and approaches are constantly changing, and for the most part these changes bring improved services. But my focus will be on fostering relationships internally and externally. In my opinion, the most useful tactics and innovations are those that facilitate greater communication."

Is there a professional article or book that you would recommend?

"*Daring Greatly* by Brené Brown."

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What trend in law enforcement are you most glad to see?

“I’m glad to see a return to more of an emphasis on true community policing. I think campus police departments have, on the whole, done a better job of walking this walk than many municipal departments have, but I think a shift in this profession occurred

after 9-11. This shift moved us more in the direction of that oft-cited warrior mentality. Following the erosion of trust in the aftermath of several high-profile use-of-force incidents across the country in recent years, I think that the pendulum in policing is beginning to swing back in the direction of more police-community engagement, and this

has in many ways prompted a renewed sense of accountability to the people we serve.”

What do you do on Big 10 game days?

“Every Bucky Badger cheer in the book!”

Nominate a Hero for the Congressional Badge of Bravery

There are heroes among us. Agency heads can recognize those in their department by nominating them for the State and Local Law Enforcement Congressional Badge of Bravery. The Office of Justice Programs, which administers the awards, provides instructions and forms on its Website: <https://badgeofbravery.ncjrs.gov>

Eligible officers have either sustained a physical injury while carrying out their duties or performed an act of bravery OR, although not injured, risked serious physical injury or death performing an act characterized as bravery by the agency head who makes the nomination.

The actions for which the individual is nominated should have occurred in calendar year 2016.

