I spent the first three years focused internally at the LASD. What I envision is a large number of groups with leadership credentials that help bridge our department to the communities we serve. We want to bring information “to” you but also listen and benefit from your knowledge and expertise. I want your input and suggestions. I would like to hear your concerns, and yes, your criticism but also your commendations for our personnel. In turn, we would like to educate you on emerging public safety trends, opportunities…and threats. In some communities, that might be “knock-knock” burglaries, or fraud or elder abuse.

The Los Angeles County Sheriff’s Department is like no other in our diversity of responsibilities. In addition to patrolling the vastness of more than 4200 square miles, we have security responsibility for the county courts, parks, hospitals, 9 community colleges and one-third of the transit authority. We run the largest jail system in the nation where more than 30 percent of our inmates are suffering from mental illness. One in four inmates are self-reporting as homeless.

The nature of crime used to be local. Today, it is transnational in nature. The LASD must take the long view on serious issues such a counter-terrorism, the opioid epidemic which includes lethal synthetic drugs such as Fentanyl, human trafficking and more.

The public’s expectations of a deputy sheriff have never been greater. Imagine, a 21-year old deputy sheriff who is now expected to deal with society ills of drug addiction and mental illness. Is this fair or reasonable?

Policing needs you. Police only make up one-third of one percent of the population. There are too few of us to accomplish the mission of public safety. We would like your role to be, among many things, the eyes and ears of the community, our advisors, critics and supporters.