Public Safety Advisory Committee (PSAC) – Meeting Minutes
October 23, 2020
2:00-3:00pm
Held via zoom

Attendees:

Members: Byrne (faculty), Chukuwukere (student), Haenlin-Mott (institutional), Hodges (student), Mackowski, (faculty), Margulies (faculty), Rogers (student)

Chair: DeStefano
Staff: Burgess, Honan, Matta, Radloff

START: 2:02pm

I. Introductions:

PSAC Chair, Joanne DeStefano, welcomed the committee members to the first PSAC meeting of the school year. Each committee member introduced him/herself.

II. Role of PSAC

Chair DeStefano provided a brief overview of the committee by stating its requirements as outlined in the State Education Law Sections 6430-6436. The committee is required to review campus security policies and procedures and make recommendations for their improvement. Chair DeStefano explained the composition of the committee as prescribed by the state. Two additional institutional members are needed. The committee is looking for recommendations with an eye towards creating a diverse committee in order to capture as many opinions, experiences, and thoughts. It is important to keep the committee as transparent as possible with the community. Meeting agendas and minutes will be on the CUPD website under the public safety tab. In addition, University Communications will create a Chronicle article.

III. Plans for the Academic Year

Chair DeStefano stated that the goal of the committee is to go through a very methodical, open, and inclusive process to evaluate and reimagine our safety and security protocols at Cornell. In order to accomplish this goal, the committee will need to understand the current baseline data. Chair DeStefano has asked Chief Honan to provide an in-depth background on the police force and its presence on campus by including CUPD’s legal authority, organizational structure, budget, training requirements, hiring process and how we recruit for diverse candidates, community
engagement activities, policies, service calls, 911 data on numbers, reasons for calls, who responds to complaints, use of force policy and activity, protective equipment used by CUPD and what’s not used, number of arrests, reasons for arrests, and the CUPD internal review process. The committee recommended additional topics be included in the baseline data; title IX activity involving CUPD, and student/faculty/staff experiences with law enforcement off campus. After understanding the baseline data, the committee will focus on areas and issues that need improvement. A survey will be given to all faculty, staff, and students to seek feedback regarding public safety on campus.

There were concerns that a survey would not provide enough input so the committee requested to also conduct focus groups. The committee also expressed concern that the process is longer than developing a set of recommendations. A two year project timeline will be developed to ensure the committee works through the implementation phase. A committee member suggested calling the set of recommendations a strategic plan, since it provides a more positive tone and room for additional recommendations.

There was discussion on how best to proceed with the focus groups. The committee believes that the PSAC should lead the focus sessions and should think carefully about the composition of the different focus groups to obtain a good cross section of ideas. The committee discussed possibilities of hiring an outside firm to package the content derived from the focus groups and will continue looking into that idea.

The committee believes this is an excellent time to become a leader in safety and security practices and was encouraged to think BIG ideas. It was suggested that Cornell could play a national leadership role and use its talents as a living learning laboratory.

The committee decided that additional meetings are necessary. The group agrees to meet every other week and identify a collaboration tool where materials between meetings could be shared. Sam Radloff will evaluate the collaboration tools and implement one as soon as possible.

IV. Background on CUPD

This agenda topic was tabled until the next PSAC meeting on November 6, 2020.

Meeting adjourned at 2:58 PM
Notes by: Samantha Radloff