Public Safety Advisory Committee (PSAC) – Meeting Minutes
February 19, 2021
12:30-1:45pm
Held via zoom

Attendees:

Members: Byrne (faculty), Chukwukere (student), Davis-Frost (institutional), Haenlin-Mott (institutional), Hodges (student), Lewis (faculty), Mackowski, (faculty), Margulies (faculty), Ononye (institutional), Rogers (student)

Guest: Ivanchikova, Quellett, Vanderlan

Chair: DeStefano
Staff: Burgess Honan, Matta, Radloff

START: 12:30pm

I. Introductions:

Chair DeStefano provided an update of the survey stating that so far, the survey had a 22% response rate. Jason Hecht will be joining us at the March 5th meeting to provide a preliminary report of the survey. Chair DeStefano briefly discussed the membership of the committee.

Melina Ivanchikova, Rob Vanderlan, and Mathew Quellet were introduced to the group as today’s meeting guests to discuss the grant received for Belonging at Cornell – Telling Our Stories project.

II. Belonging at Cornell – Telling Our Stories Initiative

The three key players of the grant received for the “Telling Our Stories” initiative gave a quick overview of the project with the hope of gathering the group’s thoughts for ideas moving forward while still at the planning stage. The project itself was driven by the anti-racist movement and Black Lives Matter protests with its framework based on DoBetterCornell. Their goal is to involve the university and do research on Cornell’s fabric to tell stories in a public facing format. It is thought of as a way for students to find themselves and their stories. The idea is 2-fold: 1) the production of the site will come out of class experiences and investigate the past and 2) the actual experience/interacting with site. It was reiterated that the project is at the beginning phase and currently being well thought out.
The committee thanked our guests for today and expressed excitement for the project. Questions were raised about the process that will be taken to gain these stories and acknowledging that the hardest stories to tell are about injustice and frustration with their lived experiences. The committee also commented that there should be concerns about controlling the narrative and ultimately white-washing these stories. Dr. Ivanchikova reiterated that they have the same concerns, but they are not worried about having to tell the hard stories and that the point of the project is to make sure these stories are told. The committee also suggested developing a clear policy of what is approved beyond the project by anyone else. This project would need a set of guidelines that everyone can point to. Dr. Vanderlan stated that so much of how we make sense of this moment will define the next few decades. The questions and stories that make up the framework of this initiative are driven by contemporary concerns which will enable the group to create a thread between the past and current events.

While this project is currently ongoing, their goals is to continue pushing forward in seeking difficult stories to tell and hopefully use this tool for training, student orientation, and as a public tool for anyone.

III. Initial Recommendations Discussion

The chair provided a brief presentation of the process of capturing the recommendations sent to her by members of the committee. The chair also distributed these recommendations to the group so each member can have time to review them and digest. Members were given an assignment to submit to the chair in advance of the next meeting the recommendations that need further discussion/clarification and to provide input on the process going forward.

IV. Subcommittee on Training Update

Chief Honan provided a brief update on the progress of the work done by the subcommittee. The subcommittee has divided into groups to look at different scenarios that can help with police training initiatives. One effort being made is to reach out to Human Ecology for advice on having faculties on campus helping with discussions. Efforts have also been made at looking at creating new non-traditional ways of training, classes for students to take that highlight initiatives, etc. The chair reiterated that the subcommittee’s report is due on May 1st while the entire committee’s report is due to the President by May 25th.

V. Conclusion/Next steps

The chair set an assignment for the group to review the set of initial recommendations and select numbers to discuss at the next meeting and to provide input into the process going forward.
Meeting adjourned at 1:33 PM
Notes by: Samantha Radloff