I. Introductions:
Chair DeStefano welcomed new faculty member, Mark Lewis, to the committee and introduced Vanderbilt University’s Senior Associate Vice Chancellor and Chief of Police, August Washington, as the guest speaker.

II. Approval of Minutes
Members of the committee unanimously voted to approve minutes from the January 8, 2021 meeting.

III. Community Policing Discussion
Chief Washington introduced himself and his position at Vanderbilt and provided an overview of their university’s public safety programs centered around community-based services. A few examples of these services include comfort dogs, the Vandyride program and virtual escorts. Chief Washington described in detail work done by community service officers (CSOs) through the Public Health “Ambassadore Program. This program was born as a result of the pandemic to encourage communication with the student body. These out-of-uniform officers are patrolled around campus with the intention to encourage compliance with new school policies rather than identify violations and enforce punishments. The officers in this program are also designed to have a softer appearance and be “less military.” These programs were created to value the culture of service and focus on “listening with intent to understand and not with the intent to respond.” Simply put, the department does what the campus and their community needs and will do whatever it takes to help the
community. Questions were asked about the authority these officers have. Chief Washington clarified that these are primarily service oriented officers and not sworn officers of the university. They are trained up until they receive their security certification and have no citation and arrest powers and do not carry firearms.

Chief Washington also touched on the department’s training, specifically training to face challenges around today’s policing. Training encourages mobility of security and safety. For example, training encourages standing up to other officers who overstep their boundaries and community outreach. Chief Washington also provided a summary of their hiring program. Vanderbilt encourages upward mobility and promotes internal hiring and hires very few from outside. Internal hires are selected because of their understanding of the community and creates a diverse pool of officers.

The student members raised many questions regarding Vanderbilt’s programs, more specially, Vandyrides and the Vandyapp. Similar to Cornell, the app is designed to be opt-out to keep its students, faculty, and staff aware of what is happening terms of public safety and emergency preparedness. Student members also raised questions on the history of policing and how Vanderbilt approaches difficult conversations with its officers and the student body as it related to today’s policing issues. Vanderbilt also has a program called "CORE" which is similar to a community oversight board to have ongoing conversations with students to hear their concerns. Their objective is to continue to engage and have these difficult conversations even if there are no significant incidents to warrant these conversations. Questions on disability training were also addressed as well as student-based programs designed to integrate them on the CSO foundation.

IV. Focus Group Update

Peggy Matta provided a summary of the efforts made to secure external groups to facilitate focus groups. Companies who have shown interest have recommended focus groups and online forums ran by a mediator to encourage conversation and feedback. These have proven to be very successful in higher ed institutions. The group questioned flexibility around students’ schedules and the limited dedication it would attract due to time constraints.

The chair will meet with these groups again to clarify all questions raised and will get committee approval before moving forward.

V. Subcommittee on Training Update

Updates have been tabled for this meeting and will begin at the next meeting date.
VI. Conclusion/Next steps

The chair thanked Mr. Washington for participation at the meeting and hopes to have him present again in the future. The next meeting will be dedicated to digesting and dissecting the presentations up to date.

Meeting adjourned at 1:52 PM
Notes by: Samantha Radloff