Public Safety Advisory Committee (PSAC) – Meeting Minutes
November 18, 2022
12:30-1:30pm
Held in Day 305 Dean of Faculty Conference Room and via zoom

Members: Caplan (institutional), Davis-Frost (institutional), DeLorenzo (student), Juan (student), Ladley (institutional), Loebach (student), Ovadia (student), Pender (faculty)

Absent: Byrne (faculty), Radloff (staff)

Guests: Bellamy (staff), Stickel (staff)

Co-Chairs: DeStefano, Lombardi
Staff: Honan, Matta, Conrad, Hodges, Blackwell

START: 12:31pm

I. General Updates & Introductions

PSAC Co-Chairs, Joanne DeStefano and Ryan Lombardi, welcomed committee members and introduced guests Chief Anthony Bellamy, and Deputy Chief Eric Stickel. Each committee member then introduced themselves.

II. Update on CRT Search

Compliance Administrator, Peggy Matta, updated the committee on the search for a CRT Director and CRT Coordinators. The team is currently recruiting more candidates for the Director role. As the process has continued, Peggy has been in contact with applicants. Liz Davis-Frost mentioned onboarding can be overwhelming and DeStefano agreed that the Director should be afforded a mentor for the first year or so.

III. Branding; Police Car Update

PSAC Members were able to voice their thoughts regarding the new look of a police car on campus. Davis-Frost began the conversation by stating that we should think about the subtle and implicit branding that occurs with any design. The new style lacked decals and other well-known aspects from the old vehicle that represented Cornell. It is very different from the old one and seems less welcoming and more militarized.
Chief Anthony Bellamy appreciated the feedback and stated that they had heard many of those sentiments from the campus community. The new car was a pilot study. CUPD had purchased a new vehicle and the team designed the new look. Bellamy felt it was important that his team felt heard, and their input was included in the design.

It was suggested that 3 designs be created and approved by University Branding, CUPD, and PSAC, and then an event would be held on Hoy Plaza where the campus community could vote on their favorite design.

Jamol Pender asked if we should consider using the term Public Safety Officer instead of Police. Vice President of Public Safety, Dave Honan, responded that this term was used in the past, however, often the public felt the responders had less authority than police, and more time was wasted on proving credentials than addressing the emergency. DeStefano added that once we expand our alternative response services, using “Police” will provide clarity as we will have responders that better fit as “Public Safety”.

Pender asked if students could differentiate between police and public safety and suggested that we find a way to educate about public safety so that their authority will be respected when responding to crises.

Conor Hodges commented that sometimes logistical choices may be misconstrued. He gave the example of a police team that began wearing vests for their equipment, rather than around their waist. It was shown this was more comfortable and better long term for the officers’ body due to the better weigh distribution. Those outside of the organization felt it made the officer seem militarized and unwelcoming. With the diverse background of the committee, PSAC will be able to look at choices like these and potentially mitigate any fallout.

The committee is poised to offer feedback on any branding related to Public Safety so that they can be proactive on managing the perception. DeStefano asked what Ithaca City is doing and Pender said he would reach out.

IV. Draft Public Safety Mission Statement

Peggy Matta stated that there was a meeting between sub-committee members Honan, Matta, Byrnes, and Hodges to discuss the mission statement. Matta shared the new landing page for Public Safety. The website will become more complete as new roles are hired and linked webpages are updated. A “Contact Us” button is available on the website as well for the public to provide feedback for consideration.
V. Communication & Rebranding Public Safety

Honan remarked that CUPD had been doing a good job on promoting positivity. The committee discussed ways to show more positive police engagement. Davis-Frost suggested inviting others to volunteer alongside the police at events to build a sense of community, increase visibility, and encourage collaboration and cohesion, but cautioned that the engagement must be organic and real and not as if we are “selling” the police. Lauren Loebach stated that CUEMS has a training meeting coming up with CUPD which will be captured for social media.

VI. Closing Remarks

Jade Ovadia stated that the feedback from the committee was representative of the student experience and Sam Caplan noted that the committee has recognized there is room to grow, and that community input is important. Jon Ladley offered to help synthesize data as we collect, process, and act on community feedback.

Meeting adjourned at 1:35 PM
Notes by: Maggie M Blackwell