

Recommendations for the Transformation of Public Safety in the UCI Community

Public Safety Advisory Committee
February 23, 2021

In the wake of the national protests calling for racial justice and an end to police violence in May 2020, on June 9, 2020, Vice Chancellors Douglas Haynes and Ronald Cortez and Chief Griffin asked the Public Safety Advisory Committee (PSAC) to conduct an evaluation of the UCI Police Department. As a result, PSAC has led an honest, in-depth assessment of the UCI Police Department and its role and effectiveness in serving all segments of the university community. We are at a point in our history of policing on the UCI campus and nationwide where small tweaks are insufficient. PSAC is committed to structural, cultural, and systemic change. Such change requires broader, longer, and more difficult, introspective work. That said, PSAC also recognizes that the scope of the recommendations requires that we move forward in steps in order to accomplish this broader change.

Recommendation #1: Develop and adopt a mission and set of cores values underlying public safety as desired and envisioned by the UCI community.

PSAC recommends undergoing a strategic planning process to establish a mission and core values of public safety on campus—which may, or may not, include the police department as currently constituted. The determination of the mission statement and core values guiding public safety in our community will require participation from all stakeholders on campus.

SHORT TERM ACTION ITEM #1: The establishment of a strategic planning process to determine the mission and guiding core values of public safety in our community.

LONG TERM GOAL: The creation of a public safety vision that serves, builds trust, and protects every member of our UCI community.

Recommendation #2: Improve Data Collection and Management to Enhance the Assessment and Evaluation of the Efficacy and Practices of the Department, and to Determine What Type of Public Safety Services Are Needed

PSAC underscores the importance of reporting data in a way that is meaningful to the UCI community and permits evaluation of the policing function in ways in which the community cares about. Without meaningful data collection, we will not be able to make effective decisions about what type of public safety we want on campus, which public safety functions should remain in the hands of a police department and which ones should not, nor assess whether the department meets community performance standards.

SHORT TERM ACTION ITEM #2: Immediately begin a process to change data management practices at UCIPD, including identifying data elements to collect that align with community performance standards and storing data in a format that can easily be collated and analyzed.

SHORT TERM ACTION ITEM #3: Stop police practices that are not aligned with community values until they are supported, or are being evaluated by, proper data. This includes the undercover policing tactic of a “bait bike” and the use of OC Sheriff’s Department facilities for the booking of arrestees.

SHORT TERM ACTION ITEM #4: Reformulate how data, policies, and procedures are presented on the UCIPD website to the UCI community.

LONG TERM GOAL: A complete reconstruction of the public safety data management system to support the goal of a different vision of public safety.

Recommendation #3: Construct a more responsive complaint investigative process and feedback mechanism that promotes campus safety expectations and community standards.

As a long overdue step, PSAC recommends a simplified complaint resolution process and one that focuses on additional aspects of the complaint review other than simply determining whether there was a police policy violation. PSAC believes the focus of complaint investigation and resolution should focus on: a comprehensive review of all the actions that led to the event and opportunities to enhance the performance of the involved officers and reassess departmental policies and procedures going forward.

SHORT TERM ACTION ITEM #5: UCI Administration and UCIPD create a working group to revamp the complaint process, both in process and substance, and to add a community feedback component to all policing contacts.

LONG TERM GOAL: A revised and re-focused complaint process along with an active and effective system for consistently collecting and analyzing community members’ feedback on interactions with the police or other public safety entities.

Recommendation #4: Align performance standards with campus safety standards and values as determined by the UCI community.

Changing the culture of UCIPD entails changing the culture of public safety in our community. Thus, resetting UCIPD performance standards builds from what we, as a community, expect of our officers. Once the core values and mission of the UCIPD are determined by the community, this in turn will effect leadership development and promotion within UCIPD, the officers that are hired to become part of UCIPD, and the type of policing that is celebrated and valued within UCIPD and the broader university community.

SHORT TERM ACTION ITEM #6: Participate in the collective bargaining agreement process to include incentives for UCIPD and other police departments to participate in, and demonstrate results in, these recommendations and the strategic planning process.

LONG TERM GOAL: Re-envision hiring, promotion, and leadership development within the UCIPD in accord with developed mission statement and core values of public safety construct.

ADDITIONAL RECOMMENDATIONS:

In addition to the work described above, PSAC supports these additional steps that are either underway, or should begin in the short term:

- **Mental Health Evaluation Team and Expanding the Roles of Public Safety on Campus.** PSAC supports steps to incorporate other entities assisting or taking over certain aspects of calls related to issues regarding a person's mental health. PSAC also supports steps to expand the role of community service officers and other non-police entities to assist in our community and on particular issues, for instance, noise ordinance calls from the campus housing areas.
- **A Critical Evaluation of Campus Preparation for Campus Protests:** PSAC supports a critical evaluation of current policies and practices of the University when there is a demonstration or protest on campus. This includes the development of a policy on the decision-making process on when and how to close Aldrich Hall.
- **Body-Worn Camera Footage:** PSAC supports the development, in consultation with community stakeholders, of a policy governing the release of body-worn camera footage.
- **Civilian Oversight and Police Accountability:** UCI Administration must undertake a study of various police accountability mechanisms that may be implemented in order to increase community oversight of whatever form UCIPD ultimately takes. This must be done as a component to the previous recommendation to overhaul the current citizen complaint process.

For a more detailed explanation of PSAC's review process and these recommendations, please see the full PSAC Report, available at <https://psac.uci.edu/>.