Dear Campus Community,

Today, I presented to the Board of Trustees a holistic plan to keep our campus as safe as possible while creating and maintaining a climate of equity, transparency and human dignity.

The plan demonstrates a new, balanced, community-based approach to campus public safety. The approach is the culmination of review and deep reflection in the aftermath of the tragic death of Mr. Jason Washington. I want to extend my deepest condolences to Mr. Washington’s family, and to tell you that we continue to grieve his death as a community.

Public Safety Must be a Shared Responsibility

PSU is an urban environment with complex safety needs. Protecting and caring for the individuals on our campus goes well beyond the abatement of crime. We want everyone to feel welcome and safe at PSU.

Our approach is guided by one prominent finding from our reflection. In our learning community, public safety must be a shared responsibility. Community safety is a human endeavor. We all have a role to play, and it is this collective participation that creates the energy, assets, and behavior needed to produce safety and advance security.

Our holistic, balanced plan has eight elements. They include:

- **First**, strengthened oversight of public safety by a diverse campus committee.
- **Second**, enhanced, comprehensive training for public safety staff in topics such as de-escalation, building effective relationships with diverse groups and understanding the needs of persons who are homeless.
- **Third**, paying close attention to how campus infrastructure and building access affect safety, while also balancing our commitment to community engagement.
- **Fourth**, commitment to ongoing review, learning and improvement, with a thorough review of campus public safety every three years.

Responding to complex physical, social and emotional needs

We have learned that many disruptions on our campus come from people who are experiencing dire physical, social, and emotional conditions or who lack basic shelter and food. Their needs are acute and our path forward must reflect our commitment to human dignity for everyone.

For our students facing crises, we will continue to offer a range of mental health and support services, as we have for over a decade. For visitors on our campus who are in need of support,
we are dedicated to working with community partners to find new ways to minimize the need for campus public safety response and maximize a health care-informed response.

Our plan balances the responsibility for campus public safety among three types of staff.

- **PSU will hire 10 new Student Safety Ambassadors** who will be a visible presence on campus.

- **Our safety staff will include 10, unarmed Campus Public Safety Officers.** This increases their presence on campus by 150%, funded with money set aside in the last budget process.

- **There is no change in the number of authorized, sworn officers.** Ten Campus Police Officers will be responsible for enforcement, investigation, and intervention activities.

**Security and Respect for All**

Concerns about public safety run deep on our campus. Some members of the campus community feel unsafe with the presence of armed officers, while others believe that an armed presence is needed to provide a safe and secure environment.

I want to acknowledge these strongly held feelings. I respect them, and I respect all of you who have shared them with us. Fundamentally, the benefits of safety and security must be made available to all members of the campus community, consistent with PSU’s Strategic Plan.

Building mutual trust and respect requires us to create a climate of inclusion and equity that permeates the campus every day. I believe that the comprehensive nature of this plan allows us to take an important step in that absolutely necessary direction.

I invite you to comment on this plan by visiting [pdx.edu/president/](http://pdx.edu/president/). Your comments will be shared with me and with the University Public Safety Oversight Committee.

Sincerely,

Stephen Percy
Interim President