The PSU community has discussed the safety of our campus for several years. The continuous and ongoing review has informed and expanded our community’s understanding of campus public safety. As a campus, we have worked very hard on this issue, and many concerned members of our community have offered their valuable and thoughtful insight and ideas.

Oversight of our public safety function is the job of the university president. Keeping our campus safe is one of the biggest responsibilities I have as PSU president. Today I am providing the board an update about our plans for implementing a new, balanced and holistic 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.

(PAUSE)
During the preparation of this plan, I spoke with stakeholders on campus and off campus. I met with committees and their individual members. And I reviewed the full range of reports crafted over the past 18 months and those from earlier conversations about public safety at PSU.

This review was very instructive and is fully integrated in the holistic plan I am about to describe. We learned many things from this review. Let me talk about that.

- We learned from a recent student engagement survey that many students have broad concerns about being safe on campus.

- We learned that among all of us at PSU—faculty, staff, students, and administrators—there are varied understandings of and expectations for campus safety.

- We learned that people who experience homelessness and visit our campus may be better served by health and support services rather than by campus public safety.

- We learned that students are interested in having a role in our overall campus public safety system.
Above all, we learned that we need to:

- Elevate campus public safety to an ongoing, high level of attention and

- That to provide comprehensive safety we need to think beyond a binary question and develop an integrated approach with many different elements - that approach must include a role for everyone in our community.

PSU is an environment with complex safety needs:

- Protecting and caring for the individuals on our urban campus goes well beyond the abatement of crime.

- It encompasses emergency preparedness, risk management, traffic control, and much more.

We want everyone to feel welcome and safe at PSU;

- Yet we have learned that safety means different things to different members of our diverse community, and creating a plan that responds to these differences is a challenge.
The fundamental guiding principle of this plan is that public safety must be a shared responsibility. We all have a role, which could include:

- Reporting a suspicious circumstance
- Ensuring your valuables are kept in a safe place
- Walking someone with safety concerns to their car
- Or, enrolling in bystander training courses that will be offered by the university.

It is this collective participation that creates the energy, assets, and behavior needed to ensure our campus is a safe and welcoming environment for teaching and learning.

The foundations of a safe community are equity, transparency and human dignity. Truly safeguarding our campus requires that we fully realize PSU’s commitment to equity. Goal 4 of our Strategic Plan reminds us to “ensure a campus climate that welcomes all students, employees, and community partners.” Racial and social
inequities must be identified and, through collaboration, resolved.

Our holistic plan has several elements. They include:

- **One**, enhanced and strengthened oversight of public safety by a campus committee of diverse members.

- **Second**, enhanced and comprehensive training of all public safety staff in topics related to community policing and our urban environment, including de-escalation and building effective relationships with diverse groups within our community, and understanding the needs of people experiencing homelessness.

- **Three**, paying close attention to how campus infrastructure and building access affect safety, while at the same time recognizing our commitment to community engagement; and,

- **Four**, commitment to ongoing review, learning and improvement, including a thorough review of campus public safety every three years.

Our urban location necessitates that PSU begin, with the help of this plan, to confront the enormous social
challenges of homelessness and addiction. In recent years, 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 campus 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 need 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.

Staffing is another critical component of our campus public safety plan. Our plan balances the responsibility for safety among multiple types of staff.

- **PSU will hire 10 new Student Safety Ambassadors** who will be a visible presence on campus. This strategy was recommended by the earlier Implementation Advisory Committee and, more recently, by the Review and Response Team.
Student Safety Ambassadors will welcome visitors, offer directions, walk folks between buildings when needed, and alert the Campus Public Safety Office to safety concerns. These will be paid positions. We want students to have a part in our campus safety plan because they are at the heart of everything we do.

- **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. Safety Officers will respond to most calls for service on campus and will serve as a deterrent to crime, provide safety escorts 24 hours a day, and offer first aid and CPR in emergencies.

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

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 and to tell you that 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.

My executive staff and I are committed to implementing this plan as laid out — fulfilling all of its elements. We will report to you regularly about our progress and learning that may inspire further innovation. Maintaining safety requires constant reflection and innovation. In addition to our commitment to ongoing review, we will formally review this plan every three years, learning from our experiences to advance overall public safety and security.

Campus Safety is everyone’s responsibility. I appreciate everyone’s engagement and participation. Students, faculty and staff can offer comments here or through the President’s Page on pdx.edu. I will read your comments and forward them to UPSOC, the oversight committee.
Trustees: I appreciate your trust in appointing me interim President in the midst of this difficult conversation at PSU, and I fully expect to be held accountable as we move forward.