Refining the charge of the Review and Response Committee

How do we develop a response that:

In responding to this charge we wanted to develop a response that

1. Delivers on Urgency for “right” action
2. Builds on rather than replicate previous work or (non-response)
3. We heard from previous reports and the communities are sharing that there is a need for action and that in-action is a danger
4. A response that also reflects perspectives from communities or constituencies that have not had an opportunity to share with us yet

We read through all the documents that have been created by other committees. This included the Margolis Healy Report, ICE Report. The committee also heard the PSU Disarm testimony. ASPSU Safety Survey, HB3338 Testimony. We also reached out to Kris Henning, previous ICE committee member, for all the data that he gathered for the 2015 ICE report. He shared data that showed patterns and trends with safety.

Having read through all the documents we identified four groups that we needed to speak with. We scheduled the Resident Advisors, Black Student Union Members, Un-Sworn Safety Officers, PSUSU members, and Houseless Community Members come and speak as focus groups to the committee meetings. One of our concerns was to understand the safety concerns of those various communities on campus. The following questions guided our conversations:

1. What does safety on campus mean to you
2. What are the factors that contribute to a lack of safety on campus
3. What two things can we do on campus that would have the biggest impact for safety on campus now and for the future?
4. And one thing you would want the committee to know, what would that be?

Foundational Principles

What do we mean by foundational principles?

- This is what is guiding the work.
- This is how the work needs to be framed for it to be successful

Whatever we do, we must deliver on these principles. Framing the floor for this to happen, without this floor other good work could not be sustained.

- We quickly learned definitions and experiences of safety were very different from one group to the next. What makes one person safe may make another feel unsafe and because of this we wanted our foundational principle to be informed by the safety definitions and concerns of all of our stakeholders.

- A campus where people feel safe and are safe
• Not only do we want people to feel safe but we also want them to be safe
• One is subjective and one is objective
• There is a need to respond to both

• Elevate Safety and Public Safety to the level of strategic importance (core to our academic mission)
  • One of the significant things we learned is that the public safety vulnerability are multi faceted and complex and they should be elevated to a level of strategic importance
    ▪ These issues are connected to a National Conversation taking place around these issues and we want to connect with that. It allows PSU to lead in a National importance
    ▪ One thing we learned is while this issue is framed as black and white, arm/disarm. What the conversations showed is that the answers are multifaceted
  • Expanding the understanding of safety to risk and vulnerability. It forces us to look at these issues along the stream and the idea if we move upstream we can make visible the precursors of public safety. Like risk and vulnerability. Those are the things that we found out when speaking with RAs and Houseless community. Both these conversations were much more upstream focused. If we can address safety concerns way before they become an issue. If we can address people feeling safe in their homes, buildings, lighting conditions, having a place to rest. PSU has a role to play in the houseless conversation in Portland and that role is very important to our conversation here on campus. As PSU, given being in the hub, we have a role to play around solutions to houselessness in Portland and that role connects to providing resources but also will help with campus safety.

• We need to rebuild trust and promote healing.
  • While it may be expeditely desired to have an arm/disarmed decision, it will not promote healing.
  • We learned that disarming is not a black and white issue.
    ▪ There are several ways the campus can disarm. You can adopt the hybrid approach advocated by both the students and Margolis Healy report. Where public safety is addressed by a range of resources which include a mix of students serving as Cadets, interns from SSW partnering with non-sworn officers to address challenges that have a mental health component,
      • We can make the safety needs with an array of staffing.

• Reflects the best thinking (data/evidence) of (PSU community--students, staff, faculty--experts, previous committees)
• Making the work (processes, products, outcomes) transparent
Quality of the work

- Community input—ongoing mechanism
  - Establish an ongoing mechanism that solicit community input.
    - That the work is not ad hoc, episodic, but rather it is deliberate and ongoing. How do people know there are structures in place, accountability and that they are distributed across campus?

- Community collaboration—need do bring community together
- Makes visible short-midrange-long term goals
  - Website would be useful just to counter the narrative of the lack of transparency
  - Supports transparency
- Avoids dichotomous in solutions and groups (us/them)
  - Framing solutions in a multifaceted/multi dimensional matter
  - Avoid dichotomous representations of ideas, solutions or strategies that create antagonist us/them
- Future orientation
  - A safety infrastructure that meets the current and future needs of the campus
  - The system that we create needs to have a futures orientation, meaning it is adaptable, it is able to listen for new changes new challenges. Creating an ear that is always listening
    - How do we become aware of the emerging safety needs, concerns and definitions of a growing and diverse campus community in a timely matter
- The work needs to have measurable outcome, ongoing assessment

Dangers

Understand the traps and factors that if unattended can pose as a threat to the work we do moving forward.

- Not challenging or replicating dichotomies us/them
  - This conversation as represented in the media creates antagonism.
  - Not recognizing and replicating dichotomies is a really large risk factor.
- We are not a committee of public safety experts
  - Authority creates a relationship. Trusting the authority that they have your best interest in mind. There is a fiduciary obligation.
  - It's about acknowledging the importance of authority and expertise. We need to trust who we authorize to be our caretakers. Trusting those we have given the authority to but this is predicated on authority and its relationship.
    - Do no harm principle
  - As the committee to provide input
- Short term solutions or approaches
- Uni-faceted solutions
• Spinning--Non-response as a risk factor
  o It erodes trust. People are looking for movement.
• Not being fully informed
• Not looking beyond PSU/Portland/Oregon
• Public cynicism

Who we spoke with and what we learned:

Faculty Senate (4/22/2019):
Tom did we get this right?

• The committee members also attended a Faculty Senate meeting that featured the conversation about the Margolis Healy recommendations.
• When framed as a decision to arm and disarm the vote was this much for ___ and this against ______. However, when provided with a hybrid model that used a combination of sworn and non-sworn officers the vote was not as divided. There was more openness as having sworn officers in the hybrid model versus the non-hybrid model to just disarm.

RAs (5/9/2019):
• Safety concerns are not just due to dangerous persons/situation but safety concerns begin with job security, food security, access to spaces both physically and emotionally. The safety concern of the most vulnerable students on campus. Those who are marginalized due to gender identity, race, housing status, immigration status.
  o Students don’t feel safe on campus due to these concerns. For example queer and trans students do not feel safe accessing our public restrooms. They also do not feel safe reaching out for help if they are targeted. Students do not feel safe reaching out to CPSO in the event that they become a victim of sexual violence.
  o A lot of the safety concerns are happening in the dorms, ex. Sexual assault, domestic violence, mental distress, non-PSU dangerous people entering buildings.
  o Structural features
• Mental Health was a major challenge the RAs spoke to. Much more can be done to support students in mental health
• We need to understand the safety concerns of all the demographics that make up PSU campus
  o We need to know more about the safety concerns from the students who attend PSU.
• Identify and bridge the gaps of student support. It is not enough to just have support when things go bad (mental, financial)
• Consider identities and policies that students are experiencing safety in identities that they possess ex. Gender, race, sexual orientation
• The lack of transparency in terms of our processes, resources is making it so that students cannot trust the support and the institution itself.
  o Institution betrayal came from not having all the knowledge and information to know where to go to address what kind of safety needs
• Some students expressed more fear and resistance when CPSO is called

PSUSU (5/23/2019):
• Strong lack of student representation in these conversations
• Concern with the ball continuously being passed down
  o A decision needs to be made now whether to arm/disarm
• This committee was created because a man died

Black Student Union Members (6/6/2019)
• Strongly expressed that this committee was formed because a black man, Jason Washington, died
• Black Students will not feel safe on campus if the officers are carrying guns
  o We say we are a diverse campus and yet keeping CPSO armed is putting those diverse students in danger
    ▪ Police in general do not make us feel safe
    ▪ We would not call the police for sexual assault or domestic violence because we do not trust them
    ▪ Policing is very reactionary, how does this help the victim?
• By not listening to the students, staff and faculty who assert that we need to disarm, PSU is sending a message they do not care
• There are community based alternatives that do not involve arming CPSO
• The decision to arm/disarm should come from the community and not the Board
• We think training regarding oppression is important for everyone to understand the reality that we live in

Non-Sworn Safety Officers (6/6/2019):
• They would like a higher medical role
• There is a strong need for mental health experts or larger training for us to be able to assist in responding to calls
  o Unsworn officers could take over about half of the calls the armed police are taking if they had more medical and mental health training
    ▪ More resources, ex. Special teams

Houseless Community Members (6/13/2019):
• There are several non-lethal alternatives than using guns
• Safety/liability should also meet the needs of the houseless not just staff/students/faculty
• Homeless feel oppressed
• Media/society are portraying homeless people as dangerous
We need to change the culture/perception
  - We can do this by including their voices in the discussion

- Crimes are typically done because of desperation – PSU Food Pantry is a big help but it does not serve non-students
- Homeless advocacy program
- Making PSU less accessible is a disservice to PSU and its community
  - Doing something for homeless at night would be a huge help as night is the most dangerous time

PSU Faculty Senate

On 22 April, 2019, the Portland State Faculty Senate met in special session to discuss the Margolis Healy Report.

A number of important themes emerged from this discussion:

- Senators expressed general frustration that we as a campus have been discussing this topic all year long, and yet seem to be unable to make any substantive progress.
- Senators expressed a strong preference for moving toward a model of community policing, though there was considerable uncertainty over how to do so, or what community policing would ultimately look like. It was pointed out that community policing would involve not merely greater authority for the University Public Safety Oversight Committee (UPSOC), but also the more active participation of all members of our community. To this end there was a desire for improved and more widespread de-escalation training, and bystander intervention training.
- It was pointed out that, since the PSU campus is very open to the surrounding communities, any solution to safety on campus will require a larger collaboration with the local region. Considerable frustration was expressed that state and local authorities seem to be uninterested in helping us or partnering with us to solve these problems.
- A great deal of ambivalence was expressed over the question of disarming the Campus Public Safety Office (CPSO), but some of those present argued strongly that it should be disarmed.
- Senators expressed considerable agreement that we need much more information on the topic of campus safety, beyond the information provided by Margolis Healy. It would be very valuable to conduct a statistical study comparing crime rates and use-of-force incidents on the PSU campus with local, state, and national statistics, and with comparator educational institutions. Senators would like to know more about models of campus policing adopted by other urban campuses, and learn which models have proven to work best. Senators were disappointed that the Margolis Healy Report did not provide this sort of comparative information. It was also suggested that one might conduct a longitudinal study of crime on the PSU campus, to determine whether the introduction of the armed police force in 2015 had the effect of reducing the incidence of crime.
- It was pointed out that, apart from such difficult questions as the disarmament of CPSO, the Margolis Healy Report makes many other less controversial recommendations that
could be implemented relatively cheaply, such as providing locks on doors of office suites that would be more effective in an active shooter incident. Frustration was expressed that many of the same recommendations were made already in the May 2015 report of the Implementation Advisory Committee (IAC), and have still not been implemented.

After the first hour of the special session on 22 April, three straw polls were conducted of the senators present to get a better sense of where they stand on the larger conclusions of the Margolis Healy Report, and on the question of the disarmament of the CPSO. The number of senators voting was roughly thirty-two, and voting was done anonymously by clicker. The results are especially revealing:

- Asked whether they favor a hybrid model of campus policing—retaining some armed officers with a greater reliance on unarmed security officers—57 percent of the senators answered either “agree” or “strongly agree.” Arguably this means that more than half of the senators favor retaining armed police officers in some capacity, but the results may also reflect the ambiguity of the term “hybrid,” which to some extent one may interpret as one wishes. (Figure 1)
- Asked whether they favor the model of policing that we currently have at PSU (that is, the CPSO as it actually exists, not necessarily as it was intended in 2014), 61 percent responded “strongly disagree.” There is thus a widespread sense that our structure of public safety is inadequate and needs to change. (Figure 2)
- Asked whether they favor moving to an entirely disarmed public safety force on the PSU campus, the senators responded in a remarkably symmetric by-modal distribution. That is, 29 percent responded that they strongly agree, and another 29 percent that they strongly disagree, with much lower numbers in between these two extremes. These results indicate that our campus remains very deeply divided by this question, and show how difficult it will be for the campus community to unite around a shared solution. (Figure 3)

Wrap-up conversation with committee:

- Practices that can start to change the conversation are crucial (campus safety cadets, CAHOOTS, etc.)
- Make progress in things we can be doing to prevent situations where force is needed
  - Methods other than force can make campus feel more safe
- We cannot hide the police – that won’t help build the bridges
- Physical Security Workgroup (suggest in the Margolis report)
- Resources, framing conversation, accountability
- Public safety needs to be a part of the strategic plan
Promising practices discussed:

**Cadets**--Engaging in safety practices that involve more members of the community providing for each others safety. How do we take care of one another and engaging the entire community in that conversation and practices.

Cadets is a well known practice where students are employed to support campus security. What does this look like? Students work in pairs to patrol a specific geographic area. They respond to calls such as escort, situations where one might feel unsafe, lock outs. This is a high impact practice because it engages students and community in meeting the safety needs of the campus. It is recognized as a best practice on other campuses so we can be engaged in conversation with them on what is working and what is not. It gives the community members efficacy that we can do this. It expands our understanding the range safety concerns on a campus. It begins to change the conversation of campus safety on campus. This helps build transparency, trust and the understanding and experiences of safety.

**Transparency**-- Challenges occur when people don’t have a sense of authority infrastructure and who has what responsibility to take action, when people are having their actions decided for them without their input. The lack of transparency has really contributed to the challenges with this with mistrust. A social media strategy for sharing information may be helpful. Useful too is a place for making available the timelines, authority, ownership that explains why things are being done. A place people can go to ask questions why things are being done. A place where people can report what is not working and what is. A place where we can report our own assessments of what is working and what is not. A place where we can communicate and share out best practices nationally and internationally that helps elevate this conversation to the national level. We learned explicitly from the students why that is so important. Without transparency the students experienced institutional betrayal leaving them feeling unheard, not addressing their concerns and needs and this all stems from the lack of transparency when the campus is not be clear enough about these concerns. This promote healing and trust.

**Funding**-- In both the reports and the focus group we spoke with the committee realizes significant investment in campus safety is needed. Recognizing that PSU is connected to Portland’s other needs, houselessness, policing, public trust. The committee recognizes a significant request for investment is needed. PSU’s safety issues are tied to Portland’s housing crisis, homelessness, larger issues around mental health, financial insecurity and vulnerability, vulnerabilities that people from the LGBTQ committees, those underrepresented voices. In short this is an issue that has relevance well beyond the boundaries of the campus. PSU is in the eye of a public safety storm. This puts us in a strategic position to rally resources (financial and intellectual capital) to spur innovations and chart paths to move forward. Recognizing the campus’s strategic position/location may serve as the basis for special request to legislators for dedicated funds for public and campus safety.