

PSAC Community Roundtable Report 2023

On February 21, 2023, the UCI Public Safety Advisory Committee (PSAC) hosted a Community Safety Roundtable, a community event on campus public safety and the future of policing on campus. The event took place in-person and on Zoom and was attended by approximately 80 people. The audience included students, staff, faculty, and community members.

PSAC Member and Associated Students President Sarah Semaan hosted the event. After hearing from Jody Stiger, Director of UC's Office of Systemwide Community Safety, on the implementation of the UC Community Safety Plan, PSAC asked participants to break into small groups. Event facilitators asked each group to focus on one of the following topics: *a vision of public safety for our UCI community and the future of policing at UCI*. A third option was available to students only: a small group where the Chief of Police (in-person) or the Assistant Chief of Police (online) would listen to the students' discussion of their concerns and vision for the future of public safety on the UCI campus.

Each group reported back to the entire room key points from their discussions. A summary of the main themes and ideas that emerged from these conversations follow.

Theme 1: Campus policing should prioritize student safety and student well-being.

Campus policing is a specialized form of policing—one that is specific to being a police department located in a student-focused community. Campus policing should prioritize interactions with students and community members that are not during investigatory stops or crime investigations in order to develop community relations and trust.

- Police should engage students through a non-combative and non-suspicious lens.
- Police should engage with students outside of investigatory stops, and increase informal contacts and interaction with the community. There should be an increased opportunity for connections outside of police stops/investigations.
- Police participation in community events should not be in full uniform.
- Additional training is needed for police-student interaction for non-emergency calls.

Theme 2: Broadening who responds to various calls for assistance in the community.

In the past, campus police responded to many types of calls for assistance. Today, we recognize that the police do not need to be, and should not be, the entity that responds to all calls. There needs to be a tiered response to calls with sworn police officers only responding to specific calls for service. The idea is to shrink the footprint of the calls the police respond to.

- Calls to the police involving mental health crises or concerns should first be addressed by a mental health professional.
- Student workers, student leaders, and community members need additional training to aid community members if appropriate and who to call for support.
- Public Safety Responders should respond to housing related issues if the calls are considered non-emergency-based calls.

- University and police response to protests needs to be done in a non-combative manner to aid in peaceful protests.
- Police dispatch should route calls to non-police responders if appropriate.
- There needs to be clear messaging on the tiered response system and its specific goals.

Theme 3: Communication between the police department and the community needs to be inclusive, unbiased, and thoughtful of follow-up.

The campus police need to have more outreach events to aid the community in feeling comfortable with their presence. In addition, police officers need to be trained to communicate with those stopped—either for investigatory purposes or by consent—in a transparent and unbiased manner.

- Clear and concise communication from police officers is needed to those individuals contacted by police officers.
- Police officers need to be mindful of the student, faculty, staff, and University Hills residents' perspective of traffic and consensual stops.
- The police need increased training to address biased and non-inclusive behaviors.
- The police need increased training in how to handle various populations of students including the neurodivergent population.

Theme 4: Police values should reflect community values.

The organizational values of the campus police should be based in respect, integrity, empathy, inclusive communication, and must incorporate the UCI community values.

- The core values should include honesty, transparency, empathy, integrity, patience, respect, curiosity to understand, knowledge of the history of systemic racism in policing, and how police roles are currently viewed in society.
- Police officers should be assessed, evaluated, and rewarded for performance of these community values, and internal promotions should prioritize these community values.
- The police should incentivize positive police interactions with members of the community. One goal of this incentivization is to maintain police morale to align with community values.

Relevant Developments

In light of the issues raised at the Community Roundtable, PSAC concluded it was important to share with the community some developments relevant to public safety in our community that have been implemented and will continue to be developed going forward. PSAC supports the reduction of the police footprint in the UCI community, the broadening of non-police responders for calls for service, and efforts to ensure policing occurs in a non-racist, unbiased manner. The developments are as follows:

- UCI now has a tiered approach for the responsible individuals who assist community members in their public safety needs. The **campus** tiered response includes Community Safety Ambassadors, Public Safety Responders, and UCIPD police

officers. The **medical center** tiered response includes Public Safety Ambassadors, Public Safety Responders, and UCIPD police officers.

1. [Community Safety Ambassadors \(CSAs\)](#) are part-time student employees who are stationed in specific areas for public safety and provide escorts to community members.
 2. [Public Safety Ambassadors \(PSAs\)](#) are full-time, non-sworn, unarmed employees at the UCI Health Medical Center who provide a highly visible security presence in designated public entrances to support community safety, monitor and control entry to restricted areas, and inspect areas to help prevent accidents and other hazards.
 3. [Public Safety Responders](#) are full-time, non-sworn, unarmed employees who respond to calls for service and safety concerns not related to reported criminal activity. The use of PSRs is currently a pilot program.
 4. Police Officers are full-time, sworn, armed employees who respond to and investigate suspected criminal activity.
- When answering an emergency call, UCIPD Dispatchers will ask a caller who is reporting an incident if they would like a follow-up contact by the Department after the police have finished addressing the call for service. Additionally, the Dispatch team now triages calls and refers incidents to the most appropriate campus stakeholders for a response, thus removing the police from addressing every call that comes through UCIPD Dispatch.
 - UCIPD began a pilot program in 2020 in which a mental health professional from the Orange County Health Care Agency Psychiatric Emergency Response Team (PERT) is available on campus one day a week to respond to calls to the police department involving mental health emergencies and to provide follow-up care.
 - UCIPD is partnering with “Be Well OC” for wellness checks in the campus community from 10 a.m. to 10 p.m. seven days a week. This program hopes to begin by July 2023. Learn more about this team on the [Be Well OC Mobile Crisis Response Team website](#).
 - UCIPD has provided all sworn personnel with new “community engagement uniforms” that consist of polo shirts and utility pants to be worn at community and training events.
 - UCIPD launched a K-9 Program in 2021. Cliff and Max are the canine members of the program. The goal of the program is in part to develop community rapport. The canines are also trained to detect firearms and explosive-related materials, and to help out with missing and lost person calls if needed. More information is available on the [K-9 program website](#).

PSAC will continue to work with all constituents of the UCI community to enhance the overall safety and wellbeing of the campus and medical center. PSAC is committed to working to transform policing at UCI and will continue to work towards this community-founded and

community-driven goal. Please continue to provide feedback, questions, and suggestions to psac@uci.edu or through the [feedback form](#) on the [PSAC website](#).

Date: April 19, 2023

PSAC Members:

- Katie Tinto, Chair – Clinical Professor, School of Law
- Kelli Sharp, Vice Chair – Associate Professor, Claire Trevor School of the Arts, Dept. of Dance
- Adisa Ajamu – Director, Center for Black Cultures, Resources, and Research
- Kabria Allen-Ziaee – Residence Life Coordinator, Student Housing
- Davidian Bishop – Director, LGBT Resource Center
- Gwen Black – Director of Equal Opp./Affirmative Action, Office of Equal Opp. & Diversity
- John Bodenschatz – Dir. of Finance, School of Humanities & Vice Chair, UCI Staff Assembly
- Joe Brothman – Director, EH&S, UCI Medical Center
- Angela Chen – Director, DREAM Center
- Paul Cooper – Assistant Chief of Police, UCI Police Department (ex officio member)
- Reginald Gardner – President, Associated Graduate Students
- Adam Kasarda – Director, Disability Services Center
- Sarah Semaan – President, Associated Students
- Hobart Taylor – Chairman, Homeowner Representative Board (HRB), University Hills