



**Undergraduate
Student Government**
University of Southern California



**GRADUATE
STUDENT
GOVERNMENT**
University of Southern California



USC STUDENT GOVERNMENT 2020-21

Proposal: Building an Equitable Department of Public Safety for the Wellbeing of the University Community

June 11, 2020

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INTRODUCTION

As the Undergraduate (USG) and Graduate Student Government (GSG), we propose the following plan to recommence the Department of Public Safety Community Advisory Board (CAB). This plan calls on the University to recommit to the Provost mandate to convene the CAB quarterly; create permanent at-large positions on the CAB for students and community members; investigate and publicly report on racial bias and racial profiling in all DPS cases; create an Education Review Committee to oversee and review all DPS training and education protocol; involve the CAB in all DPS hiring procedures; involve the CAB in all disciplinary procedures; determine all DPS policy based on CAB leadership and community input; immediate demilitarization and disarmament of all DPS officers; publicly share all DPS policy and policy changes under CAB oversight; and, create an external Campus Complaints Office that receives, investigates, and resolves all complaints against DPS officers.

BACKGROUND

When the CAB was initially created in 2016, it was made with the intention to “advise and assist DPS in addressing issues such as community quality of life, university community involvement, and culturally competent officer training.”¹ While the CAB held some promise for addressing community concerns about policing on campus, the University has failed to uphold its promise to transparency and community oversight. USC never convened the CAB after its creation in 2016. At this juncture, the University must restart, restructure, and reimagine the future for the CAB. The proposed new focus for the CAB, emphasizing community- and student-led oversight of all DPS procedures, is integral to the University’s responsibility to foster diversity and equity through the creation of a safe campus for all students, faculty, staff, and community members.

In the past several weeks, USC Administrators from across campus have spoken out to condemn the murders of George Floyd, Breonna Taylor, Ahmad Arbury, and the ongoing forms of violence facing the Black community in the US. We see these public statements as an important first step to begin conversations about the pervasiveness of anti-blackness at USC, but recognize that these sentiments will remain hollow promises if immediate actions are not taken to address long standing concerns about policing and racism on the USC campus. As President Carol Folt wrote in her all-campus letter to address recent uprisings against police violence, “We recognize the need for continued conversations around policing, and our chief of the USC Department of Public Safety will be partnering with our campus and broader community to find collective answers to persistent inequities.”² The DPS Chief, John Thomas, echoed these sentiments in his address to the USC community writing, “It is time for us in law enforcement to own up to this legacy [the history of relations between American law enforcement and the Black community], take a deep, hard look at how we engage with black communities, and collectively work to rebuild our institutions so that black communities are served as equitably as any other community

¹ [Update: Access and Opportunity, Diversity and Inclusion - USC Provost](#)

² “Note to Community from President Folt,” May 31, 2020.

in America.”³ We demand that our campus administrators commit to substantively addressing anti-blackness and police violence at USC by creating a Community Advisory Board with total oversight of all Department of Public Safety procedures. We call for these changes in solidarity with current efforts by the Black Lives Matter movement to defund the police across our nation.⁴

In light of nationwide protests in the name of reform, justice, and equality, the Black Student Assembly in partnership with DPS held a peaceful protest where USC students and the surrounding community rallied together to voice their grievances, mourn the losses of George Floyd, Ahmad Arbury, Breonna Taylor and the many victims of police brutality and demand action in re-establishing trust and mending the relationship between the black community and law enforcement.

Alongside student demands, our own faculty and many of our peer institutions have issued calls for campus police departments to cut ties with state and local police, to disarm and demilitarize campus police, and to create community oversight of campus police.⁵ These calls are part of long standing demands from BIPOC communities on campuses and in areas surrounding college campuses, who disproportionately face constant threats to their safety on and off campus as a result of racial profiling, harassment, and other forms of discrimination attributed to substantial and unnecessary police presence.⁶

³ Chief John Thomas letter to Trojan Community, June 3, 2020.

⁴ [SIGN THE PETITION: #DefundThePolice](#)

⁵ Faculty Letter to President Folt and Chief Thomas, June 8, 2020 . See also, [Our Demands](#) by the Black Liberation Collective; [End Ties with LAPD and Defund DPS](#) by the Student Coalition Against Labor Exploitation.

⁶ See, for instance, [POLICY PLATFORMS – M4BL](#); [Campaign Zero](#); [Race and Policing in Higher Education](#); [Black Students' Lived Experiences with and Perceptions of Law Enforcement](#); [Colleges and Universities Have a Racial Profiling Problem](#).

RECOMMENDATIONS

Thus, in order to address racial profiling, police violence, and the role of DPS, we propose the following renewed charter for the Community Advisory Board for the Department of Public Safety:

- I. The Community Advisory Board for the Department of Public Safety, hereinafter referred to as the “CAB,” shall be an official committee of the University of Southern California.
 - (a) The CAB shall be charged and sponsored by the Provost, who shall act as Chair of the CAB.
 - (b) The CAB shall have meaningful support from the Academic Senate, Staff Assembly, Undergraduate Student Government (“USG”), Graduate Student Government (“GSG”), the Department of Public Safety (“DPS”), and organizations from the University community.
 - (1) The University community shall be hereinafter defined as individuals who study, work, visit, and live at or by both the University Park Campus and the Health Sciences Campus.
 - II. The CAB shall be charged with the following mission and purpose:
 - (a) The DPS Community Advisory Board acts as an two-way advisory and governing body between the Department of Public Safety and the University community, including USC’s neighbors and local residents. The CAB is independent from DPS and strives to hold the Department accountable in ensuring community safety, equitable treatment, and quality of life for those on and off USC’s campuses.
 - III. The CAB shall have the following areas of responsibility:
 - (a) To investigate and publicly report on all incidents of discrimination and harassment based on protected characteristics by an officer of DPS, past and present;
 - (b) To make recommendations to the University regarding the creation, amendment, and repealment of any University policies relating to DPS’s mission;
 - (c) To advise on, participate in, and make changes to DPS operational procedures, including those relating to hiring, onboarding, educating, and discipling DPS officers;
 - (d) To exercise general supervision of the financial books and records of DPS and participation in DPS budgetary processes;
 - (e) To oversee and support the public relations and community outreach efforts of DPS;
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- (f) To build trust between DPS and members of the community with the goal that the entire community may experience safe and equitable treatment in any interactions with DPS employees;
 - (g) To create and prescribe the size, duties, and authority of subcommittees based around special projects or procedures as needed;
- IV. The CAB shall be composed of the following members:
- (a) Two (2) faculty representatives, appointed by the President of the Academic Senate;
 - (b) Two (2) staff representatives, appointed by the President of the Staff Assembly;
 - (c) Two (2) graduate student representatives, appointed by the President of the Graduate Student Government;
 - (d) Two (2) undergraduate student representatives, appointed by the President of the Undergraduate Student Government;
 - (e) Two (2) representatives from local community organizations, appointed by the Senior Vice President for University Relations with consultation from the CAB; and–
 - (f) The Executive Director and Chief and Assistant Chief(s) of the Department of Public Safety, as ex-officio non-voting members.
- V. The CAB shall convene at least once every three (3) months. Special meetings may be called at any time by the Chair or a simple majority of all voting members.
- (a) Notice of every regular and special meeting shall be made public within forty-eight (48) hours of the meeting being called to order. Notices shall specify the time, place, and purpose of the meeting.
 - (b) Meetings of the CAB shall be open by default unless closed by a majority of all voting members. Public meetings of the CAB shall make time for open forum on the agenda.
 - (c) A quorum is mandatory for the CAB to conduct any business at a meeting. Quorum shall be defined as half of all voting members plus one (1) being present. All voting members shall have one (1) full vote.
 - (d) Any action required or permitted to be taken by the CAB may be taken without a meeting if all members individually or collectively consent in writing to such action. Such action by written consent shall have the same force and effect as the unanimous vote of the CAB.
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- VI. The CAB shall, on request, have access to relevant information pertaining to DPS in order to ensure that the CAB is best informed to carry out its mandate. DPS and/or the University will provide the CAB with all materials, except those prohibited by federal and state law.
- (a) In carrying out its responsibilities, CAB members may have access to highly sensitive and confidential information. To ensure the protection of individual rights and the integrity of DPS's work, CAB members will be responsible for maintaining confidentiality of such material.
 - (b) Upon appointment, each CAB member must sign a statement pledging to protect confidential information received while fulfilling CAB duties, provided that doing so is in the University's best interest.

Beyond these proposed changes to the CAB Charter, we call for action to address long-standing concerns from the community regarding DPS's mission. We demand the following:

- **Immediate Review and Reporting of Existing Policies**
 - Conduct an immediate transparent and public report of all DPS use-of-force protocols under the oversight of the CAB
 - Conduct an immediate transparent and public report of DPS and USC's involvement in assisting LAPD, LASD, and state law enforcement in ongoing investigations (i.e. data sharing), under the oversight of the CAB
 - Conduct an immediate transparent and public report of DPS policy on the firing and suspension of officers
 - **Adoption of New Policies and Protocols**
 - Immediate creation of a clear and accessible system for all USC stakeholders to file formal complaints against an officer of DPS, followed by outreach to inform the greater USC community of the complaint process
 - Create an Education Review Subcommittee of the CAB to oversee and review all DPS training and education protocol
 - Create a division underneath the Office of Equity and Diversity that receives, investigates, and resolves all complaints against DPS officers
 - Immediate demilitarization and disarmament of all DPS officers
 - Require extensive background reviews of existing and incoming DPS officers - barring anyone with past charges of domestic violence, battery, sexual assault, and/or any history of aggressive or discriminatory behaviors from holding a DPS officer position.
 - Create policy to review existing and incoming DPS officers with a history of law enforcement, barring those with past complaints from being hired by DPS
 - Require all DPS officers to wear body cameras and create public policy for the transparent and full review of DPS officer body camera footage of all incidents involving use of force by the CAB
 - Immediately cease all DPS surveillance and policing of USC's surrounding communities
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- Create policy to separate campus police from wellness checks, mental health services, community events, and other such routine campus functions
 - Publicly guarantee that no current students or future applicants to USC will be penalized for encounters with the criminal justice system related to Black Lives Matter protests
 - Publicly commit to have no involvement in the violent policing of the protests and no use by LAPD of USC facilities in this process

USG and GSG respectfully ask that these recommendations be implemented, or that the University provides a meaningful response to these concerns, within two (2) weeks of this proposal's submission to the following individuals:

Dr. Carol L. Folt, President;

Dr. Charles F. Zukoski, Provost and Senior Vice President for Academic Affairs;

David Wright, Senior Vice President for Administration;

Felicia A. Washington, Senior Vice President, Human Resources;

Sam Garrison, Interim Senior Vice President, University Relations; and

Chief John Thomas, Executive Director, Department of Public Safety.
