

Minutes of the Public Safety Oversight Committee Meeting (PSOC) April 12, 2018

Members in Attendance: Russell Carey, Mark Porter, Bruce Holt, Lt. Joseph Donnelly, Michelle Nuey, James Greene, Kirsten Wolfe, Joie Steele, Justin Pace, Alex Song, Benjamin Wilks and Chiaka Ibe

The minutes from the November 2, 2017 meeting were approved.

The meeting opened with Russell Carey facilitating introductions and offering an overview of the functionality of the committee for new members, emphasizing the committee's commitment to transparency and open comment.

Campus Crime Activity Update

Mark Porter, Chief of Police, reviewed the findings from the Campus Crime Activity Report and spoke about the department's monthly process of monitoring potential crime trends both on campus and the vicinity of campus that have potential to impact the University community. The analysis of crime reported to the Department of Public safety also informs the department's efforts to report all crime statistics to the Department of Education. Mark Porter reported a decrease in crimes in the area of College Hill, with the exception of burglaries. A rise in burglaries was noted, particularly in the Brown Athletic complex. The committee was provided an overview of the outreach and follow-up conducted with athletic complex staff to assist in theft deterrence for the impacted facilities, as well as an investigations status update.

Following an explanation of the definitions of a burglary and larceny, the group learned that most thefts that occur in residence halls and administrative buildings are classified as burglaries. Ongoing trends of larcenies continue to be seen on campus, particularly with regard to bicycles.

Mark Porter also addressed the thefts of motor vehicle parts on-campus (Facilities Management) and a rise in thefts from motor vehicles in the district. Lt. Donnelly confirmed thefts from autos remains an ongoing trend in the city.

Armed robberies are down significantly in the area of campus and could be attributed to the increased and enhanced visibility of patrol.

Students on the committee expressed concerns regarding thefts occurring in the residence halls and the OMAC. The group agreed that there needs to be a more consistent presence of staff at the front entrance of the OMAC monitoring community access. Mark Porter reported that the department is working with athletic personnel to better monitor the various entry points of the facility, and considering new access protocols.

Professional Standards Report – Complaint and Stop Data Update

There have not been any Citizen Complaints received in 2018 year-to-date. The department follows a thorough intake process and there are multiple methods to submit (online, in-person, and by mail). Field Inquiry, Complaint, and Commendation forms can be found on the Department's website.

Motor Vehicle Stops are conducted to support the department's pedestrian safety initiative and traffic calming strategies, particularly in the area of the Jewelry District (JD). The committee discussed pedestrian safety concerns for staff and students working in the JD area of the University, particularly the South Street Landing. The group learned that DPS and PPD were working collaboratively to address many traffic and pedestrian concerns, to include the establishment of morning and evening traffic detail in the area.

No disparities have been discovered in our review of stop data. Our current systems track the purpose of every field and traffic stop, the race of parties involved, time, location, etc.

Training Report

The department offers a robust in-service and specialized training program for patrol personnel. Bruce Holt and Mark Porter discussed the recent 3-day Officer Simulation Training at the University of Rhode Island (URI), guided by the Federal Law Enforcement Training Center. DPS Campus Police, Public Safety, and Communications personnel participated in a comprehensive, active-shooter simulation on the URI campus, navigating multiple training scenarios in the residence halls, etc. DPS officers are furnished with hostile intruder "Go-bags" in the cruisers, containing a variety of readiness shields and supplies for an active-shooter incident. The department has also been partnering with the Environmental Health & Safety to offer hostile intruder awareness workshops for staff.

Committee member, Joie Steele, inquired about the department's Use of Force and de-escalation training. Joie and several student committee members recommended a partnership with the students on campus to incorporate a student voice in the scenario-based component of training, particularly around conflict resolution and general use-of-force scenarios.

Community Relations and Outreach Report

Michelle Nuey provided an overview of the department's community relations and outreach initiatives, as well as the Safewalk report. Kirsten Wolfe of Campus Life discussed upcoming restorative justice training and a potential partnership opportunity with DPS. Students also expressed a concern about safety service availability during Reading Period and expressed interest in the offering, and possibly expansion, of the Safewalk Program. Following a discussion regarding police-community relations, student variability of receptiveness to engage with DPS officers, it was determined that Michelle Nuey will follow-up with the Student Activities Office and UCS to explore programming options further.

Mark Porter and Michelle Nuey provided the committee an overview of the department's Diversity and Inclusion Action Report and status update, to include the department's attention to recruiting, retention, and outreach efforts.

