Inclusive Public Safety Advisory Committee Meeting
April 8, 2022 - 9:00-10:15am - Satow Room, Lerner Hall

Dan Held, Noah Lichtman and Omairys Rodriguez from Columbia University Facilities and Operations communications joined this meeting

The meeting focused on Communications and Public Safety - a key issue that flows out of recommendations from the 2020 Inclusive Public Safety Recommendations.

Public Safety's stated goals are to build and strengthen its communications.

The meeting began with a discussion about the assigned pre-work and reminder to the group about the three questions they were to ask members of their communities:

1. **How aware are you of Public Safety's communications?**
2. **What channels/platforms do you use to receive these communications?**
3. **Any feedback or observations about Public Safety communication channels?**

Deidre Fuchs, Interim Vice President for Public Safety, shared how Public Safety communicates aside from Clery alerts:
- By sending messages to Deans
- Posting information on website
- By offering events and programming focused on crime prevention
- Having a presence in dorm lobbies, Low Plaza, etc.

The following is an aggregated list of points from the discussion:

Tendency for Public Safety Communications to be reactive:
- Committee members shared the impression that the communications from Public Safety are generally shared after an incident has happened. The impact on community members is that the communications feel more like a response to a crisis instead of a dialogue.

User Experience:
- Orientation is the only time that many students interface with Public Safety directly; there is a need for more in-person dialogue.
- Committee members discussed the sense that Public Safety's email messaging and text-based communications are more responsive to users' needs than its website, social media channels, particularly for undergraduates.
- Emergency texts should be opt-out rather than opt-in.
- Students are not aware of many services that Public Safety provides (i.e., the hotline, safety cabs, LionSafe app).
- Students are often not hearing about Public Safety's prevention programming far enough in advance.

- Real-time communication is a priority for parents/families about crimes and issues on campus/in the area
- Mixed Experience with the Federally Mandated **Clery crime alerts**
  - Committee members shared a sense that the alerts are not helpful; a desire for more transparency was shared.
  - A suggestion was shared to include the priority level in the subject line - as many students do not open them, and would prefer text alerts
  - The messages' origins (to focus on sexual assault prevention and response) feels far afield to their current use. The focus feels unclear, Committee members shared a desire to learn more about them, and to educate the broader community as well.

Communication Channels
- Students are hearing about public safety incidents in the community through other channels, not through Public Safety
- Graduate students may feel inundated with information
- Students want to be updated on physical safety threats more than other incidents (i.e., repeated thefts)
  - Last year's bomb threat was not effectively communicated; sudents received the information inconsistently.

Clarity about Public Safety Roles and Responsibilities (Columbia vs. Community)
- Porousness between Columbia and broader community
  - Morningside Park - who is responsible for public safety there?
- Overreporting crimes involving non-affiliates may paint a negative picture of the surrounding neighborhoods
- There can be misinformation or perceptions in the Columbia community about Public Safety's purview and role that are outside of their control; they sought guidance about how to better use communications to effectively share correct information.

Mental Health Incidents and Public Safety
- Due to privacy concerns with regard to Public Safety officers responding to students experiencing mental health crises there is no notification to the broader community, so others may be unaware of officers' presence or caught off guard.

Columbia University Facilities and Operations Communications ("CUFO") Team Presentation

CUFO Communications supports many aspects of Public Safety communications to the Columbia community
- CUFO Communications' mission is to support students by maintaining a safe, beautiful, functional campus and by providing services/spaces for campus life. They run a 24/7 operation

- As part of this work, they focus on strategic communications, primarily by ensuring the community knows about resources and critical aspects of Public Safety
- There is a gap between what people know about Public Safety's communications and the perception - their goal is to narrow the gap
- They are focused on two primary areas of communications in support of this goal:
  - Strengthening awareness about Public Safety's work
  - Sharing information about Public Safety's program offerings and events
- Their plan to address these goals:
  - Share broadly the roles and work throughout the University - foster inclusivity
  - Community events
  - Create content - website, social media - Who we are, What we do, How we help
- Channels used: Events calendar, newsletter, Instagram, Facebook, YouTube, LionSafe app, Digital campus screens
- How to extend the reach of non-emergency messages? What is the best way to get messages across to different constituencies?

Public Safety is currently trying to update the LionSafe app (i.e. make itmore student friendly, "fun and functional" and working to ensure all affiliates are "opted-in" to messaging

The CUFO team posed questions to the Committee for feedback:

- **How can Public Safety create greater inclusion at Columbia through their communications?**
- **What is working well?**
- **What are specific ways these strategies can be more inclusive?**
- **Where might there be missed opportunities?**

- **Committee members shared back a range of ideas and responses:**
  - Ideas for greater inclusion:
    - Engage student groups
    - Having a presence at community activities - creating a partnership - sharing more pictures of Public Safetybeing engaged on campus

  - Specific Strategies/Missed Opportunities:
    - Increase Instagram engagement by:
      - Linking to University Life/other websites?
      - Having a student help manage the account - incentivize this work
      - Using "Stories" feature - quick/fresh takes on messaging
    - Low tech strategies might be more effective - flyers, campus screens, etc.
    - QR codes to intrigue students on various channels
  - In order for social media to be effective there must be trust
  - Build community through in-person engagement - especially students who did not have in-person orientation
  - Focus on interpersonal opportunities for students who are less engaged

Next month's meeting will focus on uniforms in the residence halls and planning for the Fall 2022 agenda.