

IPSAC Meeting Notes

2/16/24

Agenda

- Welcome and aims for our time
- Discussion: Inclusive Public Safety: A Working Definition - What does Inclusive Public Safety mean to you?
- Next steps and close

Melissa reflections

- 35 years at Columbia – this is the toughest time experienced on campus
- Tensions are high, pain is deep, frustrations are real
- Bringing people together has been harder than ever
- Vision for this group is to create a space where we can speak frankly and share thoughts and experiences, even when we disagree
- Commitment, as chair, to make space for all of this and respect this vision
- Remarkable time – student against student, faculty against faculty, staff against staff – new experience for higher ed
- How do we move forward effectively?
- How do we make sure that everyone in our community feels like they belong here?
- Listening to understand, not listening to respond – will use this approach in this meeting – honor experiences of the committee
- Moments of discomfort, committing to sit with that discomfort

Gerald reflections

- Want to hear perspectives, will not take it personally
- Encourage committee not to hold back
- Disheartening to see student on student/faculty on faculty conflict
- Challenging times are affecting everyone greatly

Introduction of new student members

- Jalaj Mehta
- Aandishah Samara

Themes from small group discussions

- Educating community on what civil discourse is
- Using facilitators and establishing ground rules
- Option to not attend discussions
- Disagreeing does not make anyone wrong
- Division among students is noticeable in the current climate
- Current climate is taking a toll on everyone
- Feelings of sadness, heaviness, being overwhelmed and tired
- Healthy dialogue at the University is critical
- Student-facing communications need improvement
- Authenticity, depth and transparency are needed in these conversations
- Meeting in the middle and finding points of alignment
- Society is polarized and moving past those differences is a challenge

Dialogue Across Difference Initiative

- Part of larger Values and Action effort led by President Shafik
- Campus Conversations – Dialogue-based workshops where students can learn critical listening skills, manage hard conversations, talk about how identity impacts conversations

Review of the working definition of Inclusive Public Safety

- The working definition for Inclusive Public Safety: Inclusive Public Safety at Columbia University is an ongoing commitment to ensure that the work done to protect the safety of all on our campuses is carried out in a way that treats every person with dignity and respect, takes a proactive approach to addressing racism, including specialized efforts to counter racial profiling, disparities in treatment, and all forms of bias, recognizes that some members of Columbia's diverse community, including those who are African American, Afro Latinx, or from other Black communities, along with Indigenous people and other people of color, may have heightened concerns about Public Safety operations, based on past experiences with and concerns about race-related profiling, abuses of power and violence by law enforcement; acknowledges that different communities have varying needs in relationship to safety and feeling safe on campus; responds thoughtfully and effectively to these concerns; supports regular evaluation of this work, with both internal and community-based opportunities to participate; adheres to its (the Department of Public Safety) values of Pride, Professionalism and Service by providing a diverse and well-trained public safety team that can be responsive and sensitive to the wide variety of community members that it serves

Feedback on the working definition of Inclusive Public Safety from small group discussions

- Definition still generally works - adding diverse voices at the table is important during decision making processes

- Definition should discuss transparency around communications between Public Safety and NYPD
- Acknowledge different communities and their relationship to safety
- Actions and measures for the committee – not just discussions – more tangible items
- In smaller groups, students want the opportunity to interact/share more with the other members of the committee, not just students
- Better communication is needed across campus – student and faculty voices are not always the same
- We need more dialogue
- Increased Public Safety presence is noticeable on campus – How is this perceived by students and the community? How do we communicate about increased Public Safety presence?
- Uniforms are often associated directly with police
- Committee was formed out of antiracism/George Floyd initiatives
- Changing times affect the committee's focus so we need dynamic language that includes all populations and supports all populations in need
- Definition needs more actionable targets
- Creating dynamic, safe spaces for shifting needs
- Equity but also being sensitive to specific groups' needs at specific moments
- Gender identity/religion/faith/culture should all be included in the definition
- Fluidity is needed in the language

Next meetings

- March 22
- April 26