

Columbia University Inclusive Public Safety Working Group
Meeting Notes for
October 9, 2020 -- 9:30-10:30 AM

Agenda

1. Welcome
2. Public Safety's training program: A presentation and Q&A with Al Becker, Public Safety's Executive Director for Finance and Administration, Matthew Childress, Assistant Director for Training and Development, and Tamesha Steward, Manager of Training
3. Introduction of the working draft on defining Inclusive Public Safety
4. Subcommittees discussions (data-gathering, comparative research, training and capacity building)*

1. Welcome

The Working Group co-chairs, Suzanne Goldberg and Flores Forbes, welcomed the working group back to its third meeting. Jim McShane introduced Albert Becker, Executive Director for Finance and Administration, Matthew Childress, Assistant Director for Training and Development, and Tamesha Steward, Manager of Training.

2. Presentation on Public Safety's Training Program

Al [Becker introduced the training presentation](#) and his training colleagues. He also noted the in-depth training program document shared via email, which contains detailed information on Public Safety's training practices.

Matt Childress shared his own background, including his time as a Columbia General Studies student and his work addressing harassment and discrimination in the ballet world. He reviewed his role: oversee the training program, evaluate trainings, and collaborate with campus stakeholders for curriculum development.

Tamesha Steward shared her own background, including as a Public Safety Sergeant and Senior Sergeant with Public Safety prior to her current role as Manager of Training. Her role includes: conducting in-person classes, facilitating training sessions, and handling administrative matters such as ensuring all guards have gone through the training required to maintain their guard licenses.

Presenters shared Public Safety's diversity mission statement: Department of Public Safety is committed to maintaining a safe, open, and diverse campus where the safety of all is paramount while the rights of all are respected.

Public Safety works collaboratively with University stakeholders in developing the diversity and inclusion training curriculum. It has significant training expertise, and is one of only two institutions of higher education in the State of New York accredited to teach the NYS DCJS Instructor Development Course. The New York State Department of Criminal Justice Services is the organization that oversees mandated training of security officers in New York state.

Public Safety has three core areas of focused training: new hire training, New York State Annual Training, and ongoing staff training. In creating in-house trainings, the training development team follows the *capacity development model*, which has six distinct stages: 1. Collaboration with campus stakeholders to develop training; 2. Integrating training into the curriculum; 3.

Setting performance goals and monitoring performance for trainees; 4. Evaluating member performance and offering remedial training for deficiencies; 5. Reassessing training curriculum and collaborating with campus partners; 6. Analyzing member performance against the training curriculum. The training and development team develops the curriculum with an eye to Public Safety best practices and Columbia University standards; it is also focused on the adult learner and the content is presented in multiple successive training modules to enhance retention and promote understanding. Each module is reviewed by campus partners and updated based on input.

Using this model, the training development team created an Implicit Bias and Racial Profiling Module. The training is split into two sessions and trainees receive instruction about implicit bias, attitudes and stereotypes that affect actions and decisions. This training is scenario-based and focuses on affinity bias, confirmation bias, and microaggressions (microassault, microinsult and microinvalidation). Participants are taught techniques to fight and counter bias. The second part of the training focuses on enhancing understanding of racial profiling and understanding that both University and Public Safety policy prohibit this. It also highlights the differences between criminal profiling, which focuses on investigative detail and explainable facts, and racial profiling.

New Hire Training

New hire training focuses on: duties and responsibilities, accountability, skills development and First Responder training. Every new officer and supervisor receive 80-120 hours of classroom training and an additional 240 hours of on the job training across the University's three main campuses. Every new hire is given in-depth training on University policies and procedures, including anti-discrimination and harassment training through the Office of Equal Opportunity and Affirmative Action. New hires also receive training on ethics and the moral and professional responsibilities of being a public safety officer, addressing community members with mental health needs or who are in distress, and non-violent crisis intervention and de-escalation skills. Last year the training department began offering an empathic listening and effective communication training for responding to incidents involving undergraduate students. New hires also receive first responder training in CPR and Naloxone administration.

New York State Department of Criminal Justice Mandated Training

New York State also mandates 8 hours annually of training. Six hours are programmed by the state: the role of the security guard; legal powers and limitations; emergency situations; communication and public relations, access control, report writing and ethics and conduct. Columbia Public Safety is allowed to select two hours of training and has chosen additional training in implicit bias and crisis intervention and de-escalation.

Ongoing Staff Training

Public Safety emphasizes ongoing staff development and all public safety staff receive ongoing training, including required workshops and seminars. The department also schedules training from campus partners. For example this past summer the Office of Multicultural Affairs within Undergraduate Student Life offered training selected from their Diversity and Inclusion series which covered these topics: intro to the LGBTQ+ community at Columbia University, Unconscious Bias, Anti-Racism and CU Safe Zone.

Contract Guard Training

Columbia University contracts with guard companies for additional personnel to staff off-campus housing, patrol booths and stations. These guards are required to meet the annual NYS training

and they also attend a four hour training by Columbia Public Safety that also includes training on implicit bias and racial profiling, in addition to 20 hours of online training through their firms.

The Q and A that followed addressed these questions:

- How many contract guards are on campus vs. University employees? The University arranges for approximately 200 contract guards across all three campuses through security firms. They staff off-campus residence halls, conduct access control at CUIMC buildings, and conduct perimeter patrols on foot and in vehicles.
- How many complaints do we receive for contract guards vs. employees? The University receives very few complaints about guards, and most complaints that come in are about language and courtesy. It's not clear what the breakdown of complaints are between contract guards and University personnel.
- Will there be an opportunity to review the experiences of public safety staff in doing the trainings? The data-gathering group will offer opportunities for the community, including public safety staff to share their experiences.
- Can we know what the hours of training are based on the content type? How many hours are devoted to specific topics? The training summary sent to the working group provides this detailed information. Public Safety does a lot to reinforce and repeat trainings so people are able to absorb and retain the information.
- How do we deal with the limits of the training? What type of integration is there between training and practice? What types of challenges happen with the training - what are the biggest issues you have confronted and how can the group help? Integration is important. Public Safety follows up with the training. Officers and sergeants go through monthly evaluations after they are hired, and they paired with experienced personnel during their on the job training. Some have difficulty picking up skills therefore we work on developing a remediation plan for new hires who are missing key skills. We offer homework and review and track progress. These efforts are important because they increase learning and we have a higher retention rate of our staff because of this step in the process.
- How frequently does training happen for officers? When did the University start engaging in this level of training for its public safety staff? Training happens annually and throughout the year for the staff. The Department of Public Safety enhanced its training schedule approximately 3 years ago and began by adding more days of training for its officers and supervisors.

Working Draft: Inclusive Public Safety definition

Suzanne Goldberg briefly discussed the draft definition of inclusive public safety that was circulated to the group, and reiterated the request for comments and suggestions. The draft is a work in progress, reflecting working group members' comments from previous meeting.

Subcommittees:

The remainder of the meeting was spent in breakout groups for the three subcommittees: Data-gathering, comparative research, and training. The charge to each subcommittee was included with meeting materials, and the subcommittee members will begin their work immediately.