

Inclusive Public Safety Advisory Committee

December 8, 2023

11:00am-12:00pm

Agenda:

- Welcome and aims for our time
- Vice President's Report
- Discussion: Civil Discourse and Current Campus Climate
- Next steps and close

Themes from last discussion on trust building:

- Pay attention to language used in communication
- Promote inclusion and belonging
- Shift the narrative around Public Safety
- Increase awareness of student perspectives
- Clarify and address the confusion between NYPD and Public Safety
- Acknowledge that hierarchies are a challenge, especially for students

Vice President's Report:

Recent events on campus

- Reminder: Public Safety is not a sworn police department (no weapons, cannot exact punishment, etc.)
- NYPD on campus - not just regular officers. They are trained to deal with civil discourse
- Building trust is important. Recommendation: leadership of NYPD speak to Columbia community
- Avoid preconceptions and judgements. Happens often to NYPD and Public Safety based on things that happened in the past.
- Public Safety does not have the ability to take sides and must keep everyone safe.
- No serious injuries or property damage in recent events have made them successful in that sense
- CUID process/limited access to campus; people from the outside create concern based on information that we receive about events
- VP Lewis offered to meet with students concerned about NYPD presence on campus.
- NYPD is working in collaboration with Public Safety and we will not allow certain behaviors by officers on campus
- Public Safety is aiming to improve communications such as alerting the broader community to changes/restrictions on campus
- Important to recognize good intentions from the leaders of Public Safety and NYPD

Tammie Steward report on bias and racial profiling trainings -

- All training modules are reviewed by a working group
- Trainings include review of diversity, inclusion and equity frameworks
- In September 2023, the training team attended a hate crime “train the trainer” training.
 - This training has recently been opened to non-sworn Public Safety entities in addition to sworn police departments
- Additional trainings:
 - IACALEA DEI Training (November 2023)
 - Crisis Intervention training for Barnard and TC
 - January 2024 Behavioral Intervention and best practices course
 - Quarterly meeting with CPS (How to handle persons in crisis)
 - Situational trainings are held twice monthly for the Columbia community and offered to specific departments

Question about the reason for the recent suspension of two student groups –

- VP Lewis shared that Public Safety was not involved in that decision
- A student shared that outrage was because student governing boards typically handle suspensions, but current policy allowed that system to be bypassed
- Dean Begg confirmed that a public statement was released and the issue was discussed during a recent University Senate Plenary meeting by Gerry Rosberg

Small group discussion on Civil Discourse:

What does civil discourse look like in the context of this University? Can you have civil discourse when people disagree? How can dialogue be set up to best foster civil discourse? Impressions of current climate on campus, what needs to happen, what needs to change? Is there a role for this Committee in addressing the current campus climate?

- Expression of ideas without interruption/interference, even if you disagree
- Tolerance
- Respect
- Everyone has the option to not attend a discussion that they disagree with
- Discussions with opposing views should be possible (i.e., in a town hall setting with outside facilitators)
- Division among students in the current climate is very noticeable and surprising
- Helpful to use facilitators and important to establish ground rules around respect
- Walking into conversations without assumptions
- Listening, being open to what others are saying, and giving opportunities for others to be heard
- Educating the community on what civil discourse is
- Understanding of how to have civil conversations (helpful for faculty, staff and students)
- Being respectful of all feelings
- Current climate is taking a toll on everyone in various ways
- Campus feels different
- How is this impacting the general student experience?
- Not trying to change the other person’s mind in a conversation

- Hearing the other side
- Recognizing each other's humanity and experiences
- Disagreeing doesn't make the other person wrong
- Different experiences shape how people see things
- Frustrations among student leaders and student groups in current climate
- Very heavy topic, overwhelming to see and hear it everywhere
- Communications have gotten worse and students feel they are not getting enough response from the administration
- Emails are often the only direct form of communication with students and can contribute to frustrations and growing tensions (students don't feel heard, respected or seen)
- Healthy dialogue at the University is critical
- Disagreeing but finding ways to meet in the middle and finding points of alignment
- Society has a hard time moving past differences and is very polarized
- Not all views of police are antiquated – important not to invalidate some of those views
- We should continue to have higher expectations of police and of our engagement with police on campus
- Police are an important part of the ecosystem of Public Safety
- Modeling a collaborative and partnering presence
- Disagree with positions and not people
- The community is feeling sad, tired, overwhelmed and heavy
- Authenticity, depth and transparency are needed in town hall/panel conversations

Next steps:

Final meeting of the semester and final meeting for student member Arden Lee

Spring meeting dates: February 23, March 22, April 26