

REPORT OF THE INCLUSIVE PUBLIC SAFETY WORKING GROUP

**Report of the Training and Capacity Building
Subcommittee**

December 15, 2020

REPORT

Introduction

The Department of Public Safety has been committed to building a robust training program for its employees to ensure that all Public Safety officers receive standardized training and onboarding so that officers are prepared to serve effectively in their duties. Over the course of the past two and a half years, the Training and Development Team within Public Safety has built an extensive training program for new employees with the goal that all uniformed personnel receive comprehensive training.

At the outset of this report, the subcommittee would like to acknowledge the tremendous amount of training and support the Training and Development team offers to Public Safety members all with the intention of supporting the University community broadly in its safety and security needs. The recommendations included here recognize the existing efforts of this team and seek to build upon their work by recommending enhancements.

All new hires, both officers and supervisors, receive between 80-120 hours of classroom training on University policy and Public Safety procedures. This in-person training is followed by 240 hours of on-the-job training. These training offerings are in addition to the annual mandated 8-hour training that New York State requires. The full training program overview is attached to this report as Appendix A.

The University also contracts with a security firm to provide contract officers. These officers receive some training from the University in addition to training from the firm. Their role and training are described more specifically below.

The Public Safety Training and Development team consists of two full-time employees, under the direction of the Executive Director, Finance and Administration. They are charged with planning, developing, scheduling, instructing, and implementing the training cycles across all 286 Public Safety employees, as well as over 200 contract officers. The training and development team also assists with conducting assessments, remediation training and skill-building workshops. Finally, they provide additional services to new officers to support their growth and development. The Training and Development team has a significant charge and responsibility, and the subcommittee observed their evident investment and dedication to their work and desire to continually improve upon the trainings they provide.

Methodology

Over the course of Fall 2020, the Training and Capacity Building Subcommittee members reviewed the training offerings from Public Safety with the goal of understanding the full training curriculum offered to Public Safety employees and contract officers used by the University and assessing how the training provides foundational knowledge of diversity and inclusion. The subcommittee attended a wide cross-section of in-person training sessions required of new employees at the sergeant

level, and also completed online training modules offered to contract personnel. Using a Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities, and Threats (SWOT) rubric, which is a frequently used project-assessment tool, the subcommittee assessed each training. The recommendations that follow were developed from this review and in discussion with the staff responsible for the development of the training curriculum.

In November 2020, the Public Safety Department held multiple trainings for a new cohort of six sergeants at the University and invited the subcommittee members to join. The subcommittee focused on attending those trainings that were most relevant to the topic of inclusive public safety and that were focused on interactions with the community. These trainings were: Professionalism, Desk Office Training Communications, Arrest and Use of Force, Implicit Bias and Racial Profiling, Crisis Intervention and De-Escalation, Handcuffing, Ethics, Multicultural Affairs, Undergraduate and Residential Life, Campus Connect, Leadership, and Effective Service. The full list of training topics available to this cohort can be found in Appendix 1 to this report.

Overview of Public Safety Staffing and Training

Columbia University's Public Safety Department is responsible for providing security services for the University across the Morningside, Manhattanville and CUIMC campuses. This essential service requires around the clock, continuous staffing. The cost of this level of staffing is substantial, and the University meets this need with a combination of proprietary officers on staff and by contracting with Allied Universal Security Services, which helps to fulfill the broader security needs of the institution. Most contract officers staff fixed posts, which means that they are posted at the entrance to buildings to provide access control. Contract officers perform access control at off-campus residence halls, some academic buildings on the Morningside Campus, and in academic buildings at the Medical Center, in addition to guard booths along Morningside and Riverside parks. A small number of contract officers serve in patrol posts, working on foot and in vehicles across Columbia's campuses.

Contract officers who serve in guard booths, building-access control and on patrol have a high degree of interaction with Columbia affiliates and members of the broader community, as do proprietary officers who work in similar positions. Contract officers assigned to residence halls are required to notify Columbia Public Safety Officers and or Sergeants to resolve any issues members of the community may have.

Differentiated Training

The primary difference between contract officers and proprietary officers is the amount and type of training that they receive. While New York State has mandatory training requirements for security personnel that all Public Safety officers (contract and proprietary) must complete, proprietary officers receive substantially more training from Columbia when compared to the contract officers on topics related to diversity, inclusion and belonging and orientation to our University culture. Proprietary officers currently

receive 13 hours of Diversity and Inclusion training as compared to 2 hours for contract officers.

Proprietary officers receive 80-120 hours of training, depending on their roles, provided or arranged by the Public Safety Department. The training is in these areas: Ethics, Professionalism, Executive Team Introductions, Campus Safety Authority/Clery Act, Health Insurance Portability and Accountability Act (HIPAA), Family Educational Rights, Privacy Act (FERPA), Protection of Minors, Evaluating Subordinates, Kronos Time Management, as well as public safety procedures, policies and related skills training. Additionally, University partners also provide training on: Equal Opportunity and Affirmative Action, Title IX-Enough is Enough, Multicultural Affairs, Accountability, Undergraduate Student & Residential Life, Student Conduct & Community Standards, Sexual Violence Response, University & Departmental Policies and Procedures, among others.

Prior to their assignment to Columbia, Allied Universal Contract officers receive 24 hours of new-hire training mandated by New York State, in addition to 4 hours of pre-assignment training from Allied Universal and 4 hours of Columbia-specific training in these areas: Equal Opportunity and Affirmative Action, Implicit Bias and Racial Profiling, Use of Force Policy, and Crisis Intervention and De-escalation. Additionally, both contract and proprietary officers must receive 8 hours of New York State Department of Criminal Justice Services mandated training annually.

Current Allied Universal Security Services policy requires their officers to complete an additional training provided by the security firm within 6 months of their hire. A full list of the training provided to Contract Officers is available in Appendix 3 of this report.

In light of these differentiated training requirements, the subcommittee made recommendations for both categories of Public Safety security personnel.

Summary of Observations and Recommendations

As discussed above, Public Safety currently offers a substantial training program for proprietary officers. This subcommittee viewed in-person training for new sergeants (proprietary officers) and online training for contract officers. Public Safety provides extended training offerings that include technical skill-building and workshops on important job-related functions such as radio operation, report writing, and Computer Aided Dispatch (CAD). The Department also orients proprietary officers to University values through trainings that focus on customer service, implicit bias, racial profiling, interacting with people in crisis and many other training modules that are specific to interacting with the Columbia community.

- Through this training program, Public Safety has already begun the critical work of orienting new officers to the culture and core values of an inclusive community

that is built on respect. The subcommittee believes more should be done to share the extent of these training efforts with the broader Columbia community and hopes that this report will shine a light on the extensive work already underway. To further this effort, the subcommittee also proposes a more robust communications plan to the Columbia community about training provided to Public Safety officers, and that there be more opportunities for community input on the training offerings.

- Because proprietary officers receive substantially more training, both in terms of actual training hours and Columbia-specific content focused on the University community and its values, the Training and Capacity Building Subcommittee provides these observations and recommendations:
 - Columbia's training and acculturation of proprietary personnel aspires to produce increased benefits to the community so that these officers will have expansive knowledge about Columbia and familiarity and experience with University values and culture, including the elements of inclusive public safety.
 - Proprietary officers tend to remain with the University for longer periods of time than contract officers, who have frequent/high turnover. As a result of this high turnover rate, contract officers are typically less familiar with University values and culture than proprietary officers.
 - In light of the two observations above, the recommendations are that:
 - Public Safety identify high-traffic, high-sensitivity posts currently staffed by contract officers, such as residence halls and front-desk staff in academic buildings, and
 - a) seek to ensure that, whenever possible, these posts are staffed either by contract officers with the greatest Columbia-based experience and training or by proprietary officers, all of whom have had extensive Columbia-specific training as part of their onboarding;
 - b) take concrete steps to increase the acculturation of all contract officers in these roles by providing them with specific training focused on effective customer service at Columbia and elements of inclusive public safety, including specific training about effective customer service at Columbia.

The subcommittee also observes that it may be beneficial to increase the number of proprietary officers in these roles and recommends further exploration of this idea.

- Additionally, Public Safety currently partners with the Office of Multicultural Affairs to train officers on topics closely connected to inclusive public safety such as

implicit bias, microaggressions, and empathic listening. It is our recommendation that the Training and Development team expand partnerships with the network of diversity officers and students at the University to allow for a broader cross-section of perspectives to inform and enhance these trainings. We also recommend that the advisory board suggested within this larger report partner with Public Safety to periodically review the existing training and preview new training offerings to ensure that best practices in diversity and inclusion are incorporated into the curriculum.

- Finally, although Columbia University Public Safety operates independently from the Public Safety units of its affiliates, Barnard College, Teachers College, the Union Theological Seminary and the Jewish Theological Seminary, a common misunderstanding of students, faculty, staff and the public is that Columbia University Public Safety is a single entity responsible for oversight of all safety and security across these entities. In the spirit of collaboration, the Training and Development team extends invitations for training opportunities facilitated by outside vendors to some of these affiliated schools. Because of the general perception of a coordinated Public Safety, it may be useful to formalize this arrangement to have closer coordination and unified training among the separate entities that share a common community, particularly on topics of implicit bias and diversity and inclusion. The subcommittee recommends using existing coordination groups to share best diversity and inclusion practices and training opportunities between the Department of Public Safety and University affiliates.

Recommendations for Proprietary Staff Training

As discussed above, Public Safety offers significant in-person training opportunities to new employees, and annual refresher training opportunities for current employees. While the Training and Development unit covers a wide variety of topics to address critical core institutional values such as diversity and inclusion and sexual respect, more can be done to enhance the efficacy of these training opportunities. We recommend:

- Reviewing the training sequence to build upon core concepts from one session to the next. This recommendation responds to specific observations by the subcommittee based on training attendance: For example, Professionalism, Leadership and Ethics are interrelated and mutually reinforcing topics that could benefit from being combined into a single enhanced training. Similarly, mental health, crisis intervention and de-escalation could benefit from a scaffolded structure to reinforce related concepts. While some training modules were more interactive than others, many could focus more on capacity-building. In particular, the subcommittee recommends building more opportunities for scenarios and role play into the training offerings on these topics, particularly because the experience of a role play has been demonstrated to be more effective than listening to a trainer explain a concept.

- Reinforcing training by stating key learning objectives and outcomes at the outset of each session to ground the trainees in the content about to be covered. Draw on expertise from the University's Diversity Officers network to enhance the training on implicit bias and discrimination, and provide Public Safety with more resources, in terms of hiring additional training personnel within the Learning and Development unit or funding the additional hours of staff training needed to enhance capacity among Public Safety officers.
- Creating Columbia-specific in-house online training to build annual knowledge reinforcement on concepts and issues closely connected to inclusive public safety, including community values, inclusion and belonging, mental health and well-being, de-escalation and effective interactions with the community, all of which will build on the existing diversity and inclusion curriculum.

Recommendations for Training Contract Staff from Allied Universal Security Services

- Once a Columbia-specific critical skills and values training is developed for online implementation, ensure that contract officers new to the Columbia community are required to take the training prior to their assignment on Columbia's campuses.

Recommendations for Next Steps

1. Enhance the Public Safety officers' diversity and inclusion training opportunities in collaboration with the members of the University Diversity Officers network and other faculty and staff with area expertise, and students. This will help to ensure that the trainings reinforce core community concepts to the greatest extent possible.
2. Build on available online modules by creating an online training focused on key University values and core concepts. Deploy these modules periodically as 'refreshers' for existing employees and for use with new contract officers.
3. Conduct an assessment of high-touch, high-sensitivity posts and ensure that they are staffed either by the most seasoned contract officers or proprietary officers. If staffing gaps remain, provide promising contract officers with supportive additional training so they may be assigned to these posts.
4. Hire two new training personnel for the Training and Development team. At least one of the new members should bring deep experience in diversity and inclusion training. Determine next steps for securing additional funding resources to support training and capacity building within Public Safety, including increasing training for contract officers.

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