PSRB Meeting  
June 29, 2020

Present: Burns, Matthew  
Bones, Robert  
Crawford, Holly  
Crummins, Richard  
Kodzas, Ela  
Fragassi, Christopher  
Gibson, Thomas  
Gorka, Justyna  
Kinslow, Tony  
Palermo, Elizabeth  
Parrinello, Kathy  
Price, Francis  
Ramirez-Fernandez, Mercedes  

Guest: Mark Fischer

1. Administrative Matters

After an introduction of new members, the group approved the January meeting minutes.

2. Updates from DPS

Bias related Incident

Chief Fischer described a bias related incident with an officer two days after the news of the George Floyd incident in Minneapolis. An officer commented on a Facebook post describing George Floyd’s words by saying “I say this exact thing most days at the gym.” The officer was immediately suspended without pay. After investigation, which included consideration of the officer’s explanation for his actions, he was terminated.

Notwithstanding the officer’s good employment record over many years, the members agreed that termination was appropriate given the officer’s role to protect safety on campus and the importance of maintaining trust and confidence among all members of the University community served by DPS. The statements went against the University’s Meliora and iCare values as well as and DPS’s policies and standards.
The Public Safety Officer’s union has grieved the termination on the ground that progressive discipline or training would have been a more appropriate response. As of the meeting the grievance has not been decided.

**Crime Mapping**

Chief Fischer presented a map for the period from 6/1/19 to 6/1/20 showing the types and incidence of crimes at locations on and near the River Campus and Eastman campus. Although the River Campus and adjacent streets are relatively safe, violent crime is more prevalent in the 19th Ward and heading North into the Genesee Section (patrolled by RPD).

The RPD Downtown Section near Eastman is also comparatively safe; most crimes in the area are larcenies, and very few felony crimes occur near ESM.

The maps are public and can be accessed through RPD or the Monroe County Crimes Analysis site. The ones presented by Chief Fischer are attached to these minutes.

**Pepper Gel**

In response to previous requests that he report uses of pepper gel, Chief Fischer described an incident on May 8th involving a patient in the Emergency Department. The patient was combative and threatened to light oxygen tanks on fire in a vulnerable area. The officers decided to use pepper gel due to the volatile equipment, close quarters, and because they were in an area in which it would have been difficult to manage a restraint of the patient. There were no injuries.

Chief Fischer presented statistics of pepper gel use in past years:

- 2016: 2
- 2017: 6
- 2018: 0
- 2019: 3

All incidents were at the medical center. Gel is used instead of a spray because in crowded areas it is more targeted and affects only the individual whom it contacts.

**Armed Response**

One armed response occurred on May 28 in an inpatient unit in Psychiatry. The patient was barricaded and in possession of a homemade shank, with a previous history of fighting staff officers. As soon as the officers were in the hallway the patient threw the shank and was restrained. The armed officer left the unit immediately.
Due to COVID, training has been limited lately and has occurred online, such as refreshers on social media policies and bystander intervention. In-person armed officer training is required by law and will have to be done. Two trainers have been on furlough.

**Executive Order for Law Enforcement Reform**

A recent NY Governor Executive Order covering police agencies and requiring plans for police reform was discussed. It does not technically apply to DPS, but Senior Vice President Holly Crawford has nonetheless directed that DPS draft a white paper addressing how all issues covered by the Executive Order are addressed by DPS.

**Furloughs**

DPS furloughed 13 staff members, and no officers. Current officer staff levels had to be maintained to cover post and patrol obligations. Chief Fischer expressed hope that the furloughed staff would return, but recognized that they have marketable skills.

**RPD**

Chief Fischer addressed a recent call to sever the University’s relationship with RPD. There are no contracted patrols or contractual relationship with RPD except for a Memorandum of Understanding that is required by law in order to delineate the relative responsibilities between DPS and RPD for crime response and investigation. DPS is almost always the first responder to calls on University property and does not rely heavily on RPD as a matter of routine.

**Other Achievements**

The DPS has achieved IACLEA accreditation, making it one of 61 agencies in the world to earn that designation. This represents professional validation of DPS’s policies and systems.

As recommended by the Ad Hoc committee, most DPS policies are now available on its website. Certain policies deemed particularly sensitive are not included.

A student advisory board has also been established, although it has been somewhat difficult to recruit members.

DPS has revamped the recruitment process and classes are more diversified. Sixty percent of the last class are from underrepresented groups.

3. **Membership**
Elizabeth Palermo and Christopher Fragassi, who are URMC faculty and resident/fellow representatives on the PSRB, will continue in their roles for an additional year. The Institute for Innovative Education at the Medical Center, which was charged to appoint the URMC faculty member, no longer exists. Mr. Fragassi, a Psychiatry resident, generally has a more flexible schedule allowing his attendance than residents in other disciplines like surgery, and many URMC issues with DPS concern psychiatric patients, which makes him a good fit for the role.

There was discussion of whether to expand the membership to include more student and faculty representation, including students of color. There was further discussion of whether PSRB should be reviewing policies in development rather than after they have been adopted or published. Some members pointed out that the original charge to the PSRB was more limited, i.e., to act as a review board and not a policy-making body. It is advisory to the President and does not decide on policy matters but makes recommendations. The Faculty Senate is in the process of preparing recommendations to President Mangelsdorf regarding changes to the PSRB’s function and membership.

4. **Social Distancing**

A member asked what DPS’s role is in enforcing social distancing. It is not likely to serve as the first level of enforcement; rather, student health ambassadors are expected to do that.

5. **Future Meetings**

The group agreed to try to meet again in early or mid September.