

DRAFT PROPOSAL FOR A REIMAGINED PUBLIC SAFETY REVIEW BOARD AT THE UNIVERSITY OF ROCHESTER

(29 September 2020)

We propose a reimagined Public Safety Review Board (PSRB) that is designed in response to the structural racism that is endemic to policing in American culture. It is part of the effort to build new institutions that reverse the trend toward ever greater surveillance, militarization and mass incarceration. The new PSRB needs to be part of a wider institutional effort that rejects this model of safety through policing in favor of one that embraces antiracism, community partnerships, restorative justice, conflict mediation, and non-extractive economic development in the City of Rochester.

PURPOSE OF THE PSRB

In articulating the purpose of the PSRB, we begin with a question posed by the 2019 Public Safety Proposal Advisory Committee: “what does safety, broadly construed, mean for all members of our community—including the university’s neighbors—and how can we meaningfully move toward it in a way that is consistent with our values: equity, leadership, integrity, openness, respect, and accountability?” ([2019 Report](#)).

In order to answer this question, we propose the following aims for the Public Safety Review Board:

- The PSRB should foster transparency about DPS. Specifically, the PSRB should disseminate information about Public Safety’s authority, composition, policies, and any other information that would be beneficial in helping our University and broader community understand the nature and power of Public Safety Officers
- The PSRB should provide a venue for independent submission and reviews of complaints and concerns about the actions of Department of Public Safety (DPS)
- The PSRB members should actively solicit feedback and suggestions from the university and neighboring communities. The focus should be to foster conversations and solicit policy proposals that aim at a broad conception of safety -- one that aims not just at preventing crime but also at rectifying inequities, providing needed supports, and helping to foster an environment where all may flourish

To achieve these aims, we additionally recommend that the PSRB have the following responsibilities:

- to review and make recommendations regarding policy proposals brought to them by community members
- to review the DPS budget and to propose changes in the allocation of resources among DPS and other University offices that provide support for public safety more broadly conceived, such as EAP, UCC, OMSA, and MERT.
- to produce an annual public report that assesses the data presented in the DPS Clery Act Report; that summarizes other sources of information about activities, complaints, and resolutions concerning the DPS; and that proposes policy recommendations, amendments to reporting structures, and initiatives to engage with the larger Rochester community.

PROPOSED SIZE AND COMPOSITION OF THE PSRB

Research universities are complex institutions composed of many different occupational groups, each with their own particular interests and concerns regarding public safety. In addition, historically marginalized groups such as people of color, members of the LGBTQ+ and Deaf communities, and people with disabilities have good reason to feel apprehensive about the way they might be perceived and treated by public safety officers and local police forces, and may hesitate to call on them in an emergency situation. This is true whatever other position they may hold in the university, so it is essential that their views be represented on the PSRB.

The need for many different perspectives to be represented on an enlarged Board charged with reviewing policies and practices must be weighed against the need for a smaller group to convene on a more regular basis to deal with issues that demand immediate attention as they arise. We propose to achieve this balance by following the model of the Board of Trustees and the Faculty Senate, both of which have about 45 voting members who meet on an infrequent basis to address major policy issues, and smaller executive committees who meet on a more frequent basis. The Senate Executive Committee currently has eight voting members and eight ex officio members representing all seven Schools and members of the Central Administration.

PSRB Executive Committee

On this model, the revised PSRB will be composed of four ex officio non-voting members and thirty-seven voting members who meet on an infrequent basis, and an Executive Committee of no more than twelve voting members, two of whom will be elected to serve as Co-Chairs, and of four ex officio members.

NON-VOTING EX OFFICIO MEMBERS (4 total)

A member of the Board of Trustees
 The Senior Vice President for Administration and Finance
 The Director of Public Safety
 A representative of the Public Safety Officers

VOTING MEMBERS (ABOUT 40 TOTAL)

Permanent Members from Central Administration (4 total)

Vice President for Equity and Inclusion
 Senior Associate Dean for Equity and Inclusion, SMD
 Associate Vice President for Human Resources
 Chief Operating Officer, Strong Memorial Hospital

Rotating Members serving overlapping 2-year terms

Faculty members (9 total)

1 member of the Faculty Senate Executive Committee, to serve as liaison
 3 faculty from SMD especially the fields of Emergency Medicine and Psychiatry
 1 faculty from SON representing Clinical Nursing

- 1 faculty from ESM representing the Main Street campus
- 2 faculty from AS&E, WSE, and SBS, representing the River Campus

Undergraduate Students (7 total)

- 2 Students representing the Student Association
- 2 Students representing the groups covered by the Minority Student Advisory Board
- 2 Students representing historically marginalized groups including:
 - the LGBTQ+ community
 - the Deaf community
 - students with disabilities
- 1 Student representing the Medical Emergency Response Team (MERT)

Graduate Students (5 total)

- 2 students representing the medical students, residents and fellows in SMD
- 1 student representing the River Campus graduate students
- 1 student representing URMC graduate campus students
- 1 student representing Main Street campus graduate students.

Staff members serving overlapping two-year terms (4 total)

- 1 member of the Bias-Related Incident Executive Team
- 2 staff members representing the Genesee Staff Council
- 1 staff member representing the Employee Assistance Program
- 1 registered nurse from URMC

Service workers serving two-year terms (4 total)

- 2 URMC service workers representing 1199SEIU
- 1 River Campus service worker representing Local 200
- 1 ESM service worker representing the Main Street Campus

Community members and alumni (4 total)

- 3 Community members representing the 19th Ward Community Association, the PLEX Neighborhood Association and other local community associations as occasion arises.
- 1 graduate from the university living in the local area

RATIONALE FOR THE COMPOSITION OF THE PSRB

Ex officio members. The knowledge and expertise of these members are necessary for Board deliberations, and so they need to be present for a part of most meetings. Their position in the chain of command over public safety officers means, however, that it is not appropriate for them to serve as voting members of a body that is designed to review the policies and practices they are responsible for implementing. Following the practice of the Faculty Senate, ex officio members will attend all meetings of the Board, but may be asked to leave the meeting when the voting members need to have an unrecorded discussion of an issue.

Undergraduate Students. Both undergraduate and graduate students have an interest in public safety because they live, work, and socialize in areas patrolled by public safety officers. As the

group whose members are most likely to come into contact with public safety officers, they need the largest and most diverse representation on the Board. The Student Association will be asked to nominate two members to represent the student body as a whole. It is particularly important that students representing historically marginalized groups be included on the Review Board because of the documented cases of explicit and implicit bias exhibited by public safety officers and local police forces during encounters with these groups. Historically marginalized groups that need to be represented include but are not limited to students of color, LGBTQ+ students, Deaf students, students with disabilities, and international students. In many cases, organizations already exist to represent the interests of these groups, and they should be asked to nominate representatives to the Board (e.g. MSAB, Pride Network, TINT, QSOC). Where such organizations do not exist or are inactive, student leaders in other groups will be asked to help identify representatives for the Board. Student volunteers working with the River Campus Medical Emergency Response Team (RC MERT) are often present when public safety is called and have unique insights to offer the Board.

Graduate Students. Medical trainees (medical students, residents, and fellows) have particularly frequent contact with Public Safety and need to be represented on the Board. Masters and Ph.D. students have a distinct set of interests in public safety. Organizations such as the Graduate Student Association of AS&E and the Graduate Student Society of SMD will be asked to nominate representatives.

Faculty. Faculty members have an interest in public safety because they work in the facilities patrolled by public safety officers; they have daily contact with students and staff and are aware of conditions on the ground. One member will be nominated by Faculty Senate Executive Committee to represent the interests of the faculty at large. Because these working conditions vary significantly among the three primary locations of University facilities, the Medical Center, the River Campus and the Eastman School Campus, it is important that each of these schools be represented on the Review Board. It is particularly important that faculty working in the Emergency and Psychiatry Departments at Strong Memorial Hospital and in Clinical Nursing at the School of Nursing be represented as they are the ones who have the most frequent contact with public safety officers. Where school-based faculty councils are active, they will be asked to nominate members to represent each of these campuses.

Staff. Staff members need to be present on the Board both because they work in the facilities patrolled by public safety officers. Board members representing the staff on this basis will be nominated by the Genesee Staff Council. Staff working as members of the Bias-Related Incident Executive Team and the Employee Assistance Program need to be represented because they are the first line of contact between students and employees who may wish to register a formal or informal complaint about the conduct of public safety officers. As front-line caregivers, staff nurses at SMH have frequent interactions with DPS, so their perspectives need to be included.

Service workers. Service workers are often present on campus when most faculty and staff are not. They are also more likely to live in neighboring communities and to have to negotiate the boundary maintained between the university campuses and the local communities on a daily basis. It is important that those working in the Medical Center, on River Campus and at the Eastman School have representatives on the Review Board.

Community members. Members of the general public who live in areas patrolled by public safety officers have an interest in the University's public safety policies and practices. Those living in neighborhoods adjacent to the three campuses have the greatest interest and need a voice on the Board. The elected officers of the 19th Ward Community Association, of the PLEX Neighborhood Association, and of other relevant communities will be asked to nominate members. As the university's Medical Center has expanded its footprint throughout Monroe County, the area patrolled by the DPS has also expanded and a separate set of issues may have arisen at these more distant sites.

Background to the Ad Hoc Committee to Reimagine the Public Safety Review Board (29 September 2020)

The current Public Safety Review Board was created by President Joel Seligman in October 2016 to review the selection and training of officers, to provide an independent review of any use of a weapon by an officer, and to review any complaint of racial bias in the Department of Public Safety. In the intervening years, the PSRB has also been asked to review new policies before they are implemented, such as the proposal to arm public safety units stationed on River Campus. The original Board included one University Trustee, three permanent members from the upper administration, two faculty members and two students.

On June 23, 2020, the Faculty Senate Executive Committee appointed an ad hoc committee to reimagine both the composition and the purpose of the PSRB to make it more responsive to a cross-section of the university community, and to formulate a set of proposals to discuss with the faculty senate, with the wider university community, and with President Mangelsdorf.

A member of the SEC, Thomas Gibson, agreed to chair this committee and began to assemble it during the last week of June. From the beginning, it was conceptualized as a committee that would necessarily include constituencies that went well beyond the faculty senate's electorate. Public safety is a matter of concern to everyone who lives and works on or near the University. As a highly complex institution, it is essential that all constituencies have a voice in how public safety is conceptualized and preserved.

The committee was formed by reaching out to representatives of constituencies who had knowledge of the issues and were willing to serve. They included administrators suggested by the Vice President for Equity and Inclusion; faculty members suggested by the SEC; students suggested by the SA president and MSAB; staff members suggested by the President of the Genesee Staff Council; service workers suggested by the Vice President of the SEIU; and community members suggested by the President of the 19th Ward Community Association. Additional members were recruited by the snowball method where existing members suggested others who represented key constituencies that were not yet represented. It currently consists of twenty-five members representing the administration, faculty, staff, students, service workers, and local community.

The committee met on July 20, August 3, August 20, September 18, and September 23. Despite its size and diversity, there has been a remarkable degree of agreement within the committee that a truly inclusive Board would have to be significantly larger than the existing one, and that the ad hoc committee was itself a model for what the revised Board should look like. None of the committee members supports every suggestion contained in this draft proposal, but all agree that it provides a useful basis for discussion by all the constituencies that have an interest in the operations of the Department of Public Safety at the University.

We are distributing the attached interim report for discussion by the Faculty Senate that commissioned it, as well as by all the other constituencies with representatives on the ad hoc committee, including the Student Assembly, the Graduate Student Association, the Genesee Staff

Council, and neighborhood associations. A web portal will be set up for members of these bodies to post their comments.

PARTICIPANTS IN THE AD HOC COMMITTEE TO REIMAGINE THE PUBLIC SAFETY REVIEW BOARD

2 Central Administration

Mercedes Ramirez Fernandez, Vice President for Equity and Inclusion
Adrienne Morgan, Senior Associate Dean for Equity and Inclusion, SMD, and Associate Vice President for Equity and Inclusion

6 Faculty members

John Deangelis, Assistant Professor of Emergency Medicine
Josh Dubler, Associate Professor of Religion; Director Rochester Education Justice Initiative
Thomas Gibson, Professor of Anthropology; Senate Executive Committee
Shaun Nelms, Associate Professor (Clinical), Superintendent East High EPO;
Beth Palermo, Assistant Professor of Clinical Nursing
Kate Phillips, Assistant Professor WSAP

4 Staff members

Kwasi Boaitey, LMSW; Employee Assistance Program, PhD student WSE
Robert DeLeon, Advisor, Greene Center for Career Education, Genesee Staff Council
Jessica Guzman-Rea, Director, Burgett Intercultural Center
Katie Papas, Robins Library, Genesee Staff Council

7 Undergraduate Students

Ivana-Re Baldie, Vice President Douglass Leadership House, 2019-2020
Steven Colberg: President, National Society of Black Engineers
Mauricio Coombs, Vice President, Black Student Union
Justyna Goraka, SA President
Amanda Liang, SA Senator
Christabel Kirenga Ntete: Vice President, Pan-African Students Association
Devon Rogers, SA Senator

1 Graduate Students

Robert Hoggard, PhD student WSE, Development Associate, Rochester Regional Health

2 Service workers

1199SEIU: Elizabeth Davila, Administrative Organizer
Local 200: Calvin Ott, union representative

2 Community members and alumni

Zola Brown, President; 19th Ward Community Association
Miles Perry '20: President, BSU 2017; President, Pride Network 2017-2018