# ASUCD 2020-2021 Reimagining Public Safety

# Abstract

An urgent need exists to reimagine the system of public safety on college campuses. National incidents such as the 2020 murder of George Floyd and local occurences such as the 2011 Davis pepper spray incident are symptoms of deep-rooted, systematic racism and violence that have been pervasive in society and the police system for generations. In this report, the ASUCD Reimagining Public Safety Task Force, a completely student-led team under the ASUCD Executive Office, seeks to bring the student voice

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# I. Introduction

## History of Policing at UC Davis

The murders of George Floyd, Breonna Taylor, and countless other individuals have forced the US into a national reevaluation of its policing systems. Racism and violence have been prevalent in the American policing system since its creation (Blain 2020). Activists have

also engaged in conversation surrounding reimagining campus safety, perhaps most notably through a recent petition calling for the abolition of UCDPD (Adejunmobi 2020).

## History of ASUCD Reimagining Public Safety Task Force

In January 2021, ASUCD President Kyle Krueger and ASUCD Chief of Staff Allie O'Brien hired three undergraduates to serve with them on the ASUCD Reimagining Public Safety Task Force. These students included Megan Chung, Rashita Chauhan, and Thomas Phillips. The ASUCD Reimagining Public Safety Task Force (often referred to as "the Task Force" throughout this report) was formed in order to better understand and relay the student perspective on campus safety. The Next Generation Reforms Task Force held town halls for undergraduate students to share their perspectives. However, the ASUCD Reimagining Public Safety Task Force recognized that the students who are the most impacted by policing may be the least comfortable with coming to such town halls. Furthermore, though making up a disproportionate amount of the campus community, students are frequently underrepresented in conversations on public safety. The ASUCD Reimagining Public Safety Task Force sought to increase representation of the student perspective in an objective, research-based manner, and to make policy recommendations based on this student perspective.

Together, the members of the Task Force spent four months conducting literature reviews and listening sessions in order to better understand the student perspective on policing. The ASUCD Task Force presented twice to the Next Generation Reforms Task Force, which incorporated some of this Task Force's recommendations into its own report. The ASUCD Task Force presents its own report to the Chancellor in order to fully convey its understanding of the student voice on campus safety. These recommendations are specific to public safety on Davis's main campus.

# II. Methodologies

## Literature Reviews

**Academic Articles:** To gather information about national and international trends in public safety, the Task Force obtained 15+ academic articles, many of which are listed in the bibliography. These included scientific studies, legal theses, and literature reviews. The scientific studies and literature reviews were assessed for their methods, findings, and policy implications in addition to relevant background information they described. Relevant sources and theoretical analyses were drawn from legal theses.

**Journalistic Articles:** The Task Force used journalistic articles to obtain information about distinct policy reforms that different nations, cities, and universities are adopting across the world. Of the articles used, most came from local news sources, including university newspapers, as well as reputable American media companies. These articles were reviewed to provide insight into feasible policy updates, and also provided a gateway to academic articles.

**Reports:** To gauge the effectiveness and determine the best model of implementation in regards to a crisis response team, the Task Force utilized city reports evaluating their pilot crisis response programs.

## Listening Sessions

The second method of data collection the Task Force employed consisted of student listening sessions. Information was shared with the Task Force in full confidentiality, and all identifying information has been separated from the student sources.

The Task Force held both formal and informal listening sessions. Formal listening sessions were conducted with an outline of topics prepared by the Task Force, which allowed students to give both specific feedback on the Task Force's policy proposals, and broad feedback on systems of policing and campus safety generally. Informal listening sessions generally covered the same topics, but they were unstructured conversations, typically led by the students sharing their perspectives.

Outside of these listening sessions, the Task Force analyzed student input at the UCOP Campus Safety Symposium, looked through social media posts, followed the work of student organizations advocating for reimagining public safety, and reviewed past ASUCD resolutions and Aggie articles to understand the student opinion on campus safety. This Task Force believes that it is necessary to meet students where they are -- many students are already speaking loudly and publicly about policing; listening sessions are not the only way to receive valid input.

The Task Force's listening session sample size was under 10 students, though many of those the Task Force heard from recounted not only personal experiences and opinions, but also those of their friends, or other students with whom they had previously discussed policing or campus safety. Thus, the scope of the Task Force's listening sessions was much broader than 10 students. The large majority of students that the Task Force spoke with were from historically marginalized communities that have histories of over-policing. Due to the Task Force's small primary sample size and the need to protect the identities of listening session participants, the Task Force will not release more specific demographic information.

The Task Force publicized itself as a listening session host primarily via social media and email, performing outreach through student organizations and other networks. Despite its efforts, the Task Force met many barriers in performing outreach that are worth noting and taking into consideration in future outreach processes.

The first barrier the Task Force faced was the COVID-19 pandemic. The UC Davis student population has faced extreme "Zoom fatigue" and increased stress levels, decreasing many students' willingness to participate in conversations of this nature. Consequently, outreach was more difficult than expected in a virtual format.

Next, due to the small size of the Task Force, the Task Force did not have as many personal connections to students and student groups on campus as is ideal for an outreach-based task force. The Task Force discusses the ways in which personal relationships can be used to better understand the student opinion on campus policing in Policy Section 6, Future Outreach.

Lastly, long-standing frustration with policing task forces (Gardner 2021), ASUCD, and administration hindered the Task Force's ability to receive input from students. The Task Force acknowledges that historically, both ASUCD and campus administration have failed to listen to and act on the concerns of marginalized students on campus, including concerns about campus police. This severed trust is an understandable consequence of historic institutional failures, and is something the Task Force keenly acknowledges and

important to allow folks to voice their concerns about public safety, but marginalized individuals are often underrepresented in listening sessions due to discomfort interacting with the policing

As was discussed in the UCOP Public Safety Symposia, UCDPD should improve the accessibility of demographic information about individuals stopped by the police, with comparisons to demographics of the campus and local community for accountability (Waters et al. 2021).

**Sub-Recommendation 1.1.3: Improve access to armament protocol**
During listening sessions, students conveyed that many community members avoid calling campus police for fear of an armed officer arriving at the scene. UCDPD should provide accessible information detailing when to expect officers to arrive armed versus unarmed via a link on a central website home page. Campus must ensure that students do not avoid calling for help for fear of an armed officer showing up unexpectedly. [See Policy Area 3: Disarmament for more information on officer arms].

**Sub-Recommendation 1.1.4: Improve detail of public budget**
The budget that UCDPD currently allows public access to is wildly insufficient. The budget for the main campus police department, which totaled almost 8 million dollars in Fiscal Year 2020-2021, is composed of only two line items, "Comp (Salary and Benefits)" and "Other Operating Expenses & Supplies" ("UC Davis" 2021). This is not sufficiently transparent.

UCDPD should greatly increase the specificity of public budget information, including breakdowns of individual salaries and equipment costs. Listening sessions suggest that students seeking budget information are most concerned with access to specific information such as spending on weapons of different types, and this should be honored. The New Orleans Police Department website serves as a model of such specificity ("Mayor" n.d.).

**Sub-Recommendation 1.1.5: Improve detail and accessibility of officer training overviews**
Basic information regarding officer trainings is vaguely discussed in the public UCDPD policy manual. However, this information should be more detailed, and should be more easily accessible. The task force recommends including a link to information about officer trainings directly on the UCDPD website home page.

**Recommendation 1.2: Publicize existing UCDPD policy beyond website**
As it stands, UC Davis students are largely unaware of UCDPD policy. If administration wants to receive quality feedback from students regarding reimagining campus public safety, and if students are to feel welcome and safe on campus, online information about UCDPD policy is insufficient.

Administration should consider additional ways of publicizing UCDPD policy, such as offering detailed presentations at orientation, pamphlets across campus, and/or campus-wide emails. The information conveyed through these avenues should be similar to the information outlined in Recommendation 1.1, including information such as demographics, officer trainings, presence of arms, and budget.

## Policy Area 2: Crisis Intervention

*As the conversation surrounding reimagining American public safety grows, Eugene Oregon's Crisis Assistance Helping Out On the Streets (CAHOOTS) program has caught national attention. The CAHOOTS model offers a paradigm shift for crisis intervention, emphasizing the role of unarmed health professionals as first responders in de-escalating nonviolent crises. Instead of relying on armed police response to mental health and other nonviolent crises identified by 911 dispatchers, Eugene sends one (1) paramedic and one (1) mental health professional to the scene. This model has been replicated outside of Eugene, most notably through the Denver Support Team*

**Sub-recommendation 2.1.1: Redetermine with a crisis team and the community when dispatchers should direct calls to the new CAHOOTS-style team. Then, retrain dispatchers to identify these circumstances.**

The success of CAHOOTS-style programs relies on the proper modification of dispatching protocol. The Denver STAR program has successfully avoided any incidents requiring police backup by using the following guidelines for dispatchers (Christianson 2021):

- Denver STAR *is* dispatched if a call is for an intoxicated person, a suicidal series, a welfare check, an indecent exposure, trespassing, or a syringe disposal.
- Dever STAR *is not* dispatched if a call includes indication of weapons, threats, violence, injuries, or serious medical needs.

The Task Force believes that UC Davis must work with the community to outline a similar set of guidelines determining when it is proper to dispatch its crisis team as a first response. UC Davis may model its policy after those of CAHOOTS and Denver STAR, but it is important for UC Davis to review these guidelines in partnership with its community to ensure that its policies are a good fit for Davis. Once guidelines are determined, it is important to properly train dispatchers, and thoroughly publicize these decisions to the UC Davis community so that callers are aware of what type of service they will receive.

**Sub-recommendation 2.1.2: In the short term, train existing UC Davis paramedics in mental health and crisis de-escalation to serve as first-responders.**

While UC Davis is in the process of hiring a full-time mental health first responder team (see Recommendation 2.1.3), UC Davis should train existing campus paramedics in mental health intervention and crisis de-escalation to use as first-responders to CAHOOTS-type crises instead of police. During listening sessions, students indicated increased feelings of safety and trust in interacting with campus paramedics, in comparison to campus police. Even with identical mental health and de-escalation training, unarmed paramedics have a less threatening presence than police.

**Sub-recommendation 2.1.3: In the long-term, hire a 24/7 mental health team, potentially in conjunction with the City of Davis or Yolo County.**

UC Davis should seek to hire and train a 24/7 mental health and crisis intervention staff to serve as unarmed first-responders to CAHOOTS-type crises. For financial reasons, it may make sense to share crisis response staff with the city and/or county.

It is important to adapt a 24/7 on-call system rather than a daytime hours system, because a large number of mental health crises occur at night. For example, Denver STAR was

operational from 9am-6pm in its first six months, servicing a total of 748 calls. However, dispatchers recorded that if STAR had been operational at night, an additional 2,546 calls could have been routed to the first-responder team. ST

2021). Arms have not been used by a UCDPD officer on main campus in the past two years (Sheffield 2021, Beermann 2021).

During Task Force listening sessions, students conveyed their discomfort with armed campus police, especially those officers on patrol, responding to mental health crises, or responding to non-violent crimes. Students cited how rarely they suspected officers need to use force on the Davis campus as a prime cause for their discomfort. Some students even indicated that they refrain from calling for help when they need it for fear of an armed police of

**Recommendation 4.2: Reevaluate affiliation with the 1033 Program at a school-wide level.**

  While supplies from the 1033 Program are not utilized within UCDPD, the Task Force understands that other departments on campus have received and utilize equipment from the program. Though the equipment being accepted is non-weaponry, students reported in listening sessions that sheer affiliation with the program appears to reaffirm its use and continuation. Given the disproportionate impacts of the 1033 Program on communities of color (Davenport et al. 2018), the Task Force believes that UC Davis administration should attempt to distance itself from the program in its entirety. [See also Section V: Area of Further Research].

## Policy Area 5: Financial penalties and liability insurance

  *In July 2020, New York state senators proposed a bill requiring all police officers to "obtain liability insurance and maintain coverage during the course of their employment as a police officer"* (S8676 2020). *This legislation, inspired by the work of academics like Noel Otu and Deborah Ramirez, has the potential to reduce police misconduct by imposing financial penalties for officers who violate the civil rights of citizens. As UCDPD does not carry a liability insurance plan or economically penalize police officers who engage in misconduct, this Task Force recommends that the UC Davis administration adopt a system similar to that proposed by the New York state legislators.*

  *It is crucial to note that the Task Force believes insurance is not a sufficient solution to police misconduct. If a system as significant as public safety relies on financial penalties to minimize poor officer behavior, that system is fundamentally flawed and must be changed in the long-term. Insurance is a targeted solution to eliminate potential "bad cops" from the current policing team, but the elimination of a few "bad cops" is not a comprehensive solution to police violhice*Recommendation 4.3: Reevaluic.

insurance firm to hold police officers accountable for their actions. However, the defining feature of the system proposed by this Task Force is the presence of premiums that rise with misconduct, not the existence of a private insurer per se. It seems possible for the school administration to conceive a system similar to that proposed in New York, whereby individual officers are required to pay out of their own pocket for liability coverage and must pay higher sums of money if they engage in minor acts of misconduct--note that officers should be immediately removed for any instances of major of misconduct or criminality.

**Recommendation 5.2: Consider purchasing a private liability insurance plan**

Many police agencies across the country carry private liability insurance plans which cover the cost of payoffs in instances of misconduct. Legal academics, such as John Rappaport of the University of Chicago Law School, argue that these private insurance plans help combat police misconduct by introducing a third party, i.e. the insurer, that invests resources into measures which improve officer behavior (Rappaport 2016, Rappaport et al. 2019). In police departments with private liability coverage, the insurers often spend money on efforts such as police education and violence reduction training, as they do not want to suffer the financial burden of a liability payoff. By purchasing liability coverage for the campus police department, the UC Davis administration might decrease the likelihood that officers will engage in misconduct. However, the Task Force acknowledges that such a decision would likely involve a UC-wide shift that is beyond the power of UC Davis' chancellor, so the Task Force does not heavily emphasize the recommendation for purchasing private liability coverage.

Abolition is not an immature framework, nor is it uninformed. The words "abolition" and "defund" are defined slightly differently by different individuals, but they both encompass broader paradigms that view social programs as a more useful solution to crime than punishment. The abolitionist perspective holds that crime can be minimized by meeting holistic community basic needs, and abolitionists often view the current criminal justice system as so inherently flawed that it is necessary to rebuild a completely new safety system from the ground up to put a stop to current injustices (Illing 2020).

The abolitionist movement is not specific to campus police. When UC Davis students say "abolish the police," they are typically speaking to American policing broadly, not only UC Davis Police. The vision is generally not to abolish campus police, and replace these officers with City of Davis police instead. The vision is to rework the entire system of public safety in America such that marginalized communities do not have to fear officers that are meant to protect them, and such that individuals do not need to turn to crime to meet their basic needs. Abolitionists range in their preferred timeline for these changes, with some individuals preferring immediate dissolution of policing systems, while others advocate for "incremental abolition" over time (Waters et al. 2021). It is important to note that the strain of abolition which advocates for the immediate dissolution of police departments does not expect crime to immediately disappear, rather, it holds that communities can respond to most crime in ways that are more restorative than sending individuals through the current justice system.

As abolition increases in popularity amongst students, its significance cannot be ignored, downplayed, or overwritten by administration or ASUCD. Listening to the student perspective on campus safety requires listening to and understanding abolitionist movements on campus.

**Recommendation 6.2: Recognize student frustration with task forces.**

Many students refuse to speak to campus task forces regarding policing on campus, including the ASUCD Task Force. This is for two primary reasons: 1) task forces have been historically ineffective at remedying issues with campus safety, and 2) some feel that reform-based task forces legitimize a broken system of policing, and should not exist at all (Gardner 2021).

This resistance to speaking with task forces and people with institutional power is the price UC Davis and ASUCD are paying for having broken trust with many in the UC Davis community

administration and ASUCD. It is important to research, understand, and listen to the student voices that already exist, whether via student organizations, on- or off-campus advocacy groups, social media posts, demonstrations and protests, or other avenues, before expecting students to take extra time to speak with ASUCD and administration directly.

It may be the case that students are much more comfortable talking to certain campus representatives than others about public safety. For example, campus counsellors, social workers, and advisors often have closer relationships with larger numbers of students than do administrators. These campus representatives may be a more comfortable first line of contact for students who would like to give their feedback regarding campus safety.

With that being said, transparency is crucial, and students should be well informed of where their feedback will be sent. If information is passed up to high-level administrators from these closer representatives without explicit and continuous student consent, community trust will be broken.

**Recommendation 6.4: Make all feedback opportunities quick and simple by default, with options for lengthy input.**

It is important that giving input is easy for students, but it is also important that students feel they are able to fully express their viewpoints at length if they so prefer. For instance, if a new policy has been proposed that administration is looking to receive student input on, administration should consider including a one-question survey in a campus-wide email. This survey could include a text box for optional elaboration, and an email to set up a listening session if students would like to speak directly with administration regarding the policy.

**Recommendation 6.5: Address the knowledge gap between administration and students.**

As discussed in Policy Area 1: Transparency, many students are largely unaware of UCDPD's current demographics, budget, workload, and policy. This must be remedied in order to receive meaningful feedback from students in the future. [See relevant recommendations in Policy Area 1].

# V. Areas of Further Research

In addition to the recommendations that this Task Force officially proposes, certain areas require further research and future action.

**Area 1: Disarmament**

In Recommendation 3.1 of this report, the Task Force urges increased disarmament of campus PD, and details the student input we have received on the appropriateness (or lack thereof) of armaments in a variety of circumstances on campus. While the Task Force acknowledges the desire for specific disarmament percentages in these recommendations, there is a lack of data on current UCDPD armament percentages that would be required to make these recommendations [See Policy Area 1: Transparency].

The Task Force believes that UCDPD should publicize current police armament data and reevaluate the necessity of armaments in non-violent and mental-health related circumstances.

barriers may be discouraging submissions, such as requiring an individual to access the internet, enter a police facility, or interact with police officers. Ideally, there should be flexibility in submissions, but administration, in collaboration with students and community members, should further research how students and community members would feel most comfortable completing this process if it is to be pursued.

Second, it is necessary to consider who will review post-interaction surveys. Students are often most uncomfortable with information entering the hands of the UCDPD. Considering alternative review methods, such as the PAB or other independent bodies, is recommended.

Third, UCDPD must consider the confidentiality of survey respondents. Even if all demographic information is separated from surveys, due to the low crime rate in Davis, specific survey responses might be easily recognizable. Considering this, UCDPD and administration must determine how to best separate identities from surveys, and be very transparent with the community if this separation is not entirely possible.

It is important to note that none of these considerations will affect the rate of survey responses if they are not publicized to the community. If post-interaction surveys are pursued, administration and UCDPD must work together to ensure that the community is aware of all of the benefits and risks of filling out post-interaction surveys.

It is crucial to understand that even if all of these cautions are considered, many students and community members may never feel fully safe filing a negative post-interaction survey for an officer. It is dangerous for the department to assume that all positive post-interaction survey responses are genuine. The Task Force's listening sessions suggested that students may feel intimidated by post-interaction surveys, and offer positive responses as a way to avoid punishment. The Task Force's listening sessions suggested that if UCDPD were to use post-interaction surveys as a measure of police performance, students would question their integrity and the integrity of the department.

Thus, rather than using post-interaction surveys as a holistic measure of police performance, this Task Force preliminarily recommends using post-interaction surveys solely to catch complaints.

# VI. Conclusion

sees its recommendations as the first steps in an ongoing conversation to improve public safety for UC Davis students, and to better represent students in conversations on public safety.

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