University of Massachusetts Amherst
POLICE REFORM INITIATIVES

September 14, 2021

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Overview

For law enforcement and public safety agencies across the country, May 25, 2020 has been forever earmarked as one of the worst police related tragedies in history. Never before have multiple cell phone video angles and body worn camera images been broadcasted across the world as horrific actions by a Minneapolis police officer led him to holding his knee on the neck of an unarmed African American male for over 9 minutes. While most deaths caused by police have not been captured on cell phone videos for the world to see, this one has been eye opening for some but not eye opening for others. Worldwide protests and calls for action have resulted in communities demanding change. While some have demanded actions such as defund and abolish the police, others are simply calling for consistent humane and compassionate policing, specifically towards BIPOC citizens.

This atrocious murder, coupled with the COVID 19 pandemic and subsequent economic turmoil, have rightfully called for needed change. This report will review various actions taken on by UMPD since George Floyd's murder.

While most campus public safety agencies have not engaged in excessive force incidents and gross police misconduct, we are not immune to the possibility of misjudgment. UMPD will continue to do everything it can to prevent failures in judgment. Most campus public safety agencies have the authority to arrest, authority to use reasonable amounts of force when overcoming resistance, and discretionary enforcement so the opportunity still exists. Fortunately for UMPD, May 25, 2020 wasn't the first date of recognition of needed change and implementation of best practices in policing. The following report outlines UMPD's past practices, initiatives completed since May 25, 2020, and ongoing opportunities for the future.
UMPD Prior to May 25, 2020

- Structured within Student Affairs and Campus Life at UMass Amherst with intentionality around the student leadership team and collaboration
- Prioritizes Committed to Community Policing & Engagement, including the creation of the Residence Liaison Officer program to better connect with residential students. Officers who are hired at UMPD have to be fully committed to outreach and engagement as it is described in the job description of an UMPD officer.
- UMPD has been embedded in the New Students and Family Orientation programs and welcomes students to campus with education
- Student centered, compassionate, and focused on student well-being
- Participation in Student Advisory Board and Student Leaders Roundtable
- Weekly participation in Assessment & Care Team (ACT) meetings
- Extremely thorough background checks and hiring process to confirm we are hiring the right police officer candidates for the campus. Vetting and screening consists of a diverse hiring committee with campus constituents from across campus.
- Focus on crime prevention and engagement before crimes occur
- Officer complaints are very rare but every complaint is individually investigated and taken seriously. The complaint form and process are readily available: [https://www.umass.edu/umpd/citizen-complaint-form](https://www.umass.edu/umpd/citizen-complaint-form)
- Focus on bias free policing. Implicit Bias Training is ongoing and UMPD data is analyzed regularly.
- Emphasis on hiring applicants from diverse backgrounds and recently modified the hiring process to offer more opportunities
- Driven to build and leverage partnerships at the individual and organizational level
- Thorough policies, procedures and review of extremely rare Use of Force Incidents. This includes submission to the FBI's new national Use of Force database.
- Exhaustive data analysis to assess racial profiling and officer misconduct
- Police accreditation since 2011
- Commitment to ongoing high levels of professional development and training in skills such as deescalation, mental health crisis response, sexual assault and Title IX, diversity and inclusion, first aid/CPR
- Focus on collaboration with partners from across campus such as the Center for Women & Community, Stonewall Center, Department of Athletics, CMASS, academic departments such as Legal Studies and College of Education
- Committed to external partnerships and engagement with off campus partners such as the Town of Amherst and Hadley and the office of Off Campus Student Life
Immediately After George Floyd’s Murder


2. On June 4, 2020 UMPD issued the following statement to the UMass Amherst community:

   The leadership of UMPD and the local campus leaders of the New England Police Benevolent Association and International Brotherhood of Police Officers are united in condemning in the strongest possible terms, the wrongful actions as well as the failure to intervene that led to the death of Mr. Floyd. We are angry and deeply frustrated that the actions of those former officers have stained the good work of officers across the country who work hard to build relationships in their communities.

   We understand that relationships between police and many communities in the United States are broken and that trust has been lost. We know that it is critical for us to understand the systemic failings that have created these fractures. As part of our commitment to the communities we serve, we explicitly prohibit and train against racial profiling. We are also continuing to train our officers in implicit bias awareness, police legitimacy and procedural justice, trauma informed practices, de-escalation, and crisis intervention.

   UMPD deeply values the positive daily interactions that we have with our campus and local communities. We care about how we carry out our duties and responsibilities, and also how we engage in our individual interactions. We are committed to building trust and confidence so as to counter negative stereotypes that people may have about the police. This will require listening compassionately to the voices of our community and committing to productive, transformative dialogue and committing to do everything in our power to contribute to police and judicial reform. In the coming months there will be opportunities for continuing and deepening the conversation about the role of community policing as well as gathering concrete recommendations to guide our future steps.

   We remain committed to being your UMPD.
UMass Amherst Participation in Divided Community Project

In May 2020, UMPD applied for and was accepted into a national three day virtual academy titled the Divided Community Project. Administrators from multiple large and small peer institutions across the country came together and worked on strategies to prevent and respond to controversial or divisive campus issues. A team of UMass Amherst stakeholders, including UMPD, participated. The sessions were extremely valuable as lessons were shared and learned from other campuses. UMass Amherst students were also included. We use these types of opportunities to improve our services to the community. When the Divided Community Project concluded, campus partners re-evaluated several campus protocols such as response after a bias incident and structures for events such as controversial speakers. The campus bias reporting protocol was recently updated. The Campus Incident Rapid Response Team (CIRRT) was recently created.

UMass Amherst Student Advocacy

Between May 25, 2020 - July 2020, various students across campus collaborated together and presented several campus calls to actions, specifically related to UMPD. The two primary student organizations who presented their demands and calls for action to the University were the Racial Justice Coalition (RJC) and UMass for Black Lives (UBL). The RJC was led by two undergraduate students and UBL was led by a graduate student. While both groups were calling for various campus wide demands related to increasing diversity and inclusion efforts while becoming an anti-racist campus, there were also very specific actions demanded for UMPD. Over time, several SGA leaders became fully ingrained in the RJC’s divest from the police initiatives.

RJC Demands for Divesting from UMPD

1. Invest in new and existing public safety resources at UMass by reallocating UMPD funds to better serve the community.
2. Disarm UMPD.
3. Defund UMPD safely and systematically.
4. Remove UMPD presence, including police cadets, from all residential areas.
5. Increase transparency by releasing complaint and Field Investigative Observation forms.
UBL Foundational Action Items


UMPD Student Engagement Process & Spring 2021 Outcomes

- Between July 2020 and April 2021, UMPD engaged in numerous virtual meetings with the RJC, unpacking each demand and exploring potential resolutions. The initial meetings consisted of a lot of educational information regarding how UMPD and other campus departments come together to keep students safe. For the most part, there was a lot of misinformation about UMPD versus all police departments across the United States so UMPD management explained step by step how it assists students in crisis during frequent calls such as mental health, alcohol emergencies, sexual assault, etc. UMPD spent significant amounts of time explaining the role of student police cadets who conduct foot patrols on Thursday, Friday, and Saturday nights while focusing on the Southwest area residence halls. The hypothesis presented by the RJC students was that UMPD intentionally overpoliced BIPOC students who live in Southwest. RJC students also indicated UMPD intentionally staffed BIPOC student events with more police officers than non-BIPOC events. Lengthy discussions were held about UMPD’s need to carry weapons in case there was ever a violent attack on campus. Students were educated about national active shooter situations, the need for a rapid response, the availability or lack of availability from other nearby police departments, and other limitations which could potentially endanger campus constituents. Deep dive conversations and explanations were provided as well as critical UMPD data sets. These data sets included some of the following:
  - Well being checks
  - EMS assists
  - Alcohol overdoses
  - Mental health crisis
  - Budget breakdown
  - UMPD equipment
  - Data broken down by demographics:
■ Use of Force
■ Protective Custody
■ Arrests
■ Traffic Stops
■ Citizens Complaints

UMPD management also explained how we collaborate with other campus departments to assist students. Some of the RJC demands oversimplified defunding solutions by moving funds and transferring responsibilities to other campus entities such as Residential Directors and UHS. In order to unpack the dynamics and explore various options, a subcommittee was formed within the RJC and named the Public Safety Infrastructure Group. This subcommittee met from October 2020 - February 2021 and consisted of the following departments:

➢ Residence Education
➢ Center for Counseling & Psychological Health (CCPH)
➢ UMass Emergency Medical Services (EMS)
➢ UMPD
➢ Racial Justice Coalition (RJC)
➢ University Health Services (UHS)
➢ Dean of Students
➢ Center for Women & Community (CWC)

This was very informative for everyone involved as the students learned how each office operates and how after-hour crisis situations are resolved. For example, the students learned UHS and UMass EMS currently lack 24/7 capacity to divert life saving emergencies away from UMPD.

• UMPD also engaged in multiple meetings with UBL. These were also very productive, breaking down the specifics about UMPD. The desired outcome requested in these meetings was more transparency, specifically around training and data.

**Review of Each Demand**

1. Invest in new and existing public safety resources at UMass by reallocating UMPD funds to better serve the community.
Campus on call structure - DOSO, Residential Education, and CCPH are currently exploring reporting structures which may divert some non-emergency calls away from UMPD.

CCPH currently exploring the feasibility of Northampton based Clinical Support Options mobile crisis responders’ ability to come to campus when CCPH is not open.

2. Disarm UMPD

Proposal was thoroughly reviewed as there would be significant impacts for the campus. A review of threats was conducted and many mitigating factors were assessed:

- US Secret Service: Mass Attacks in Public Spaces


- Alternatives to UMPD versus an off campus armed police force such as Amherst Police, Hadley Police, Mass State were explored and revealed the following reality:
  - Limited availability to respond to campus
  - Time to arrive on campus to mitigate an active threat would be significantly delayed as minutes and seconds matter
  - Campus layout, access, knowledge of building locations and interior would be extremely prohibiting
  - Personnel management and policies would fall upon the off campus police department’s policies as it pertains to procedures such as use of force and crisis response. UMass has no authority of external police officers hired, trained, managing their expected outcomes, accountability, etc.
  - Off campus agencies would not know our students, faculty, and staff
  - UMPD is highly trained and utilizes every tool available, emphasizing de-escalation
➢ UMPD began transitioning rifles to less visible locations inside the patrol cars and the transition should be completed by September 2021

3. Defund UMPD safely and systematically.

➢ Proposal was thoroughly reviewed as there would be significant impacts for the campus. A review of the campus’ needs for faculty, staff, students, and visitors were assessed:

○ International Association of Campus Law Enforcement Administrators (IACLEA) fact sheet: The Value of Campus Public Safety Agencies

○ Alternative full service law enforcement agencies located off campus would have limited availability and reliability for campus needs

○ With over 25,000 calls for service each year, the community confidently relies upon a professional 24/7 police department with dedicated police officers, dispatchers, and residence hall security staff to patrol our 1,500 acre campus with over 31,000 students. Our campus is larger and has more people than many municipalities and towns throughout the Commonwealth.

○ UMass Amherst Police is one of only 7 police departments in Massachusetts who is nationally accredited by the Commission on Accreditation for Law Enforcement Agencies (CALEA). UMPD is continuously evaluated and demonstrates best practices to the protection of the life, health, safety, and rights of citizens. Teams of outside assessors review each best practice which is embedded within policies, procedures, training, culture, and the community’s best interest. UMPD is also accredited through the Massachusetts Police Accreditation Commission which consists of additional standards and reviewers.

○ UMass Amherst continues to be recognized as one of the safest colleges in America:
  https://www.yourlocalsecurity.com/blog/the-safest-colleges-campuses-in-america/

○ Colleges and Universities are legally liable for campus safety and have a Duty to Act:
- 1990 Federal Clery Act
- Title IX Regulations
- Violence Against Women Act (VAWA)
- Drug Free Schools Act
- Mullins vs Pine Hill Manor College - duty to provide students access to safe housing and make reasonable attempts to prevent foreseeable harm
- Nguyen v. MIT - special duty to students contemplating suicide
- Helfman v. Northeastern University - colleges and universities have a duty to take reasonable measures to protect intoxicated students from harms associated with alcohol related emergencies
- Massachusetts General Law, Chapter 75, Section 32A - UMass Police authorized police authority on the UMass campus

➢ Campus on call structure - DOSO, Residential Education, and CCPH are currently exploring reporting structures which may divert some non-emergency calls away from UMPD

4. Remove UMPD presence, including police cadets, from all residential areas.

➢ Proposal was thoroughly reviewed as there would be significant impacts for the campus. A review of the campus’ needs for faculty, staff, students, and visitors were assessed:
  - Police cadets are college students and UMPD trains and mentors these students during their college journey as these students wish to become future police officer
  - This valuable program has been in existence since 2003 and over 275 college students have benefited from the program. Many previous cadets are now employed as police officers across the country in communities such as Las Vegas, the Massachusetts State Police, Fall River, Easthampton, etc.
  - The police cadet program has been an extremely valuable tool for the recruitment of future UMPD officers. This pipeline has helped make UMPD a more diverse agency as cadets have consistently come from diverse backgrounds.
These unarmed and trained student peers have been extremely valuable to campus. They work on Thursday, Friday, and Saturday nights and frequently intervene when they see students in distress, students who are in need of medical attention, and when students are in harm’s way.

5. Increase transparency by releasing complaint and Field Investigative Observation forms.

- New UMPD transparency and accountability website created after consultation with RJC, UBL, Community Police Advisory Board, and SGA students
- [https://www.umass.edu/umpd/accountability-and-transparency](https://www.umass.edu/umpd/accountability-and-transparency)


- Available at any time upon request at [https://www.umass.edu/umpd/request-public-records](https://www.umass.edu/umpd/request-public-records)
- Provided to RJC in 2020 and 2021

**Outcome with UMass 4 Black Lives (UBL)**

Demand: Increase transparency and accountability with training, use of force guidelines, and treatment of BIPOC communities.

- New UMPD transparency and accountability website created after consultation with UBL, RJC, Community Police Advisory Board, and SGA students
- [https://www.umass.edu/umpd/accountability-and-transparency](https://www.umass.edu/umpd/accountability-and-transparency)
- Use of force guidelines are constantly being re-evaluated and were updated July 2021

**State Wide Police Reform Bill**


The bill is very comprehensive and was rolled out into phases, with some mandates beginning right away, others taking effect on July 1, 2021, and new committees will be created to examine strategies which will be implemented in 2022. UMPD examined each mandate closely and made adjustments to various internal policies and procedures. The
majority of the mandates were already in place within UMPD so no changes were needed. Examples of no changes needed included procedures such as de-escalation tactics prior to use of force, not firing a weapon into fleeing vehicles, mandating pre-communication with demonstration organizers, etc.

Other policies needed to be updated and some initiatives such as procedures on the utilization of facial recognition software, body worn cameras, reserve officers or Memorandum of Operations (MOU) needed for school resource officers did not apply to UMPD because we currently do not have these items.

The following is the list of UMPD policies which were updated to comply with the reform bill:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Bias Free Policing</th>
<th>Already in place but the specific definition was updated to read: “policing decisions made by and conduct of law enforcement officers that shall not consider a person's race, ethnicity, sex, gender identity, sexual orientation, religion, mental or physical disability, immigration status or socioeconomic or professional level”</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Racial Profiling</td>
<td>Prohibition policy was already in place but the specific definition was updated to read: “differential treatment by a law enforcement officer based on actual or perceived race, color, ethnicity, national origin, immigration or citizenship status, religion, gender, gender identity or sexual orientation in conducting a law enforcement action, whether intentional or evidenced by statistically-significant data showing disparate treatment; provided, however, that “racial or other profiling” shall not include the use of such characteristics, in combination with other factors, to apprehend a specific suspect based on a description that is individualized, timely and reliable”</td>
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<td>Personnel File Records</td>
<td>Disciplinary items are now permanent. Prior to the reform law, union contracts permitted adverse material be removed after 3 years</td>
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<td><strong>Police Employment</strong></td>
<td>Officers must maintain newly established Peace Officers Standards &amp; Training (POST) certification and can now be decertified by the POST Commission</td>
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<td><strong>Use of Force</strong></td>
<td>Neck restraint and chokeholds are prohibited (never trained or used at UMPD)</td>
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<td><strong>Duty to Intervene</strong></td>
<td>Policy updated to mandate that an officer present and observing another officer using physical force, including deadly force, beyond that which is necessary or objectively reasonable based on the totality of the circumstances, shall intervene to prevent the use of unreasonable force. The mandate to notify a supervisor was already a UMPD policy.</td>
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<td><strong>Internal Affairs</strong></td>
<td>Reports must now be submitted to POST Commission</td>
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<td><strong>Retaliation</strong></td>
<td>Prohibits retaliation if an officer reports misconduct. Specific definition was updated to: “No officer or employee of the commonwealth or of any county, city, town or district shall discharge an officer or employee, change their official rank, grade or compensation, deny a promotion or take any other adverse action against an officer or employee or threaten to take any such action for providing information to the commission or testifying in any commission proceeding.”</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Search Warrants</strong></td>
<td>Places restrictions on no knock warrants and requires pre-approval from a judge. This was not a previous UMPD practice.</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Standards of Conduct</strong></td>
<td>Policy updated to now include the prohibition of submitting false or fraudulent timesheets for hours worked</td>
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Fall 2021 and Moving Forward

- In May 2021, UMPD leadership met with the new SGA president and vice president to discuss past SGA leadership discussions and the pathway moving forward.
- UMPD is excited about participating in the new Building Capacity for Engaging in Transformative Racial Justice Practices initiative. These sessions began in May 2021 and are continuing through Fall 2021. An assessment of outcomes will be conducted once the program concludes.
- UMPD has collaborated with Student Engagement & Leadership management and is continuously reviewing UMPD staffing at special events such as dances and events. This review included the development of a matrix which will help determine the need and range of police officers which might be required at an event.
- August 2021, UMPD will reach out to RJC, SGA, and UBL to re-engage conversations as these organizations have undergone leadership changes.
- When students arrive in the Fall, UMPD will collaborate with Student Engagement & Leadership and initiate ongoing conversations with BIPOC RSOs to educate them about UMPD practices and philosophies. This will also include updates at Student Advisory Board and Student Leader Roundtable meetings.
- UMPD will reach out to the Faculty Senate and other faculty/staff groups to update them about the past year. The Status of Diversity Council will continue to be updated.
- UMPD will continue to conduct at least two Community Police Advisory Board meetings in the fall. Membership includes participation from SGA and GSS.
- UMPD will continue to place emphasis around ongoing training, specifically around Use of Force, de-escalation, and mental health. Prior to the pandemic, UMPD began exploring officers receiving the national 40 hour Critical Incident Training (CIT) for enhancements to mental health crisis response. These face to face courses were halted due to the pandemic but UMPD will begin enrolling officers in these courses as classes become available.
- UMPD will continue to be in the forefront of striving to be one of the best campus police departments in the nation. UMPD will continue with internal discussions amongst officers.
  - Since May 25, 2020, UMPD has participated in over 30 webinars around reimagining policing.
  - On October 22, 2020, I was a police and accountability IACLEA webinar panelist along with fellow panelists chiefs from the University of Houston,
University of Arizona, University of South Carolina, and Tennessee Community College

➢ In May 2021, I became the co-chair of the new MACLEA (Massachusetts Association of College Law Enforcement Administrators) DEI committee
➢ On May 27 2021, I was a redefining transparency MACLEA webinar panellist along with fellow panelists chiefs from Cambridge, Northeastern, and Marquette University

- UMPD has begun recruiting and filling urgent vacancies. Recruiting will intentionally focus around hiring more women and BIPOC applicants.
- As body worn cameras are being examined by the new police reform commission, there’s a potential for a statewide mandate sometime in the near future
- UMPD will continue conducting and exploring various types of Diversity & Inclusion, anti-racist, and historical policing trainings to provide ongoing officer education
- The campus usually disseminates a periodic comprehensive safety survey to students. The last survey was disseminated in 2015 and it was delayed in 2019. In 2020, the survey was delayed due to the pandemic so it will need to be disseminated during the upcoming academic year.

**Summary**

UMPD will continue to evolve and transform with assistance from the community. Stakeholder engagement, public trust, and community engagement are essential. Even though UMPD has not had an officer involved shooting, shown evidence of biased policing, patterns of excessive use of force, and officer complaints, we can always do better. Partnerships with students, faculty, and staff across campus are absolutely essential. We are continuing to explore ways to make the UMass Amherst campus a safer community for ALL constituents.