

Report of the Ad Hoc Committee on Safety in a Diverse Environment

Submitted to the President and Provost
February 28, 2005

Introduction

On November 21, 2004, Penn student Warith Deen Madyun and three companions were stopped by the Penn Police on Locust Walk in the course of pursuing the perpetrators of a theft that had just occurred nearby. While the four individuals met the description of the suspects that the police were looking for, the interaction between Warith Deen and the police raised concerns in the community about the safety and security of, in particular, African American males on campus.

In light of this incident, President Amy Gutmann directed Interim Provost Peter Conn to convene an ad hoc committee to look closely at issues of diversity and security on our campus and to make recommendations for further work to be done to ensure a safe and comfortable environment for all members of our community.

The Ad Hoc Committee on Safety in a Diverse Environment, comprised of students, faculty and staff, met on five occasions and had thoughtful and productive discussions. Committee members wish to acknowledge the cooperation and participation of the Division of Public Safety¹ throughout the Committee proceedings. The report and recommendations of this Committee follow in five parts. First, the report discusses the context in which the issue of racial tension arises at Penn. The official charge of the Committee follows this section. Third, the report articulates steps that have been taken by the Division of Public Safety since last spring to address recommendations made by the Ad Hoc Committee on Racial Profiling (*Almanac* April 24, 2004). Fourth, the report recommends further action to be taken by the University in order to improve and strengthen relationships between the Division of Public Safety and members of the minority community, in particular. Finally, the report articulates the steps that will need to be taken in order to implement these recommendations.

I. Background and Context

The University of Pennsylvania is situated in the heart of West Philadelphia, a vibrant and diverse urban environment. As such, it both benefits from and is challenged by the economic, racial, ethnic, cultural, and social diversity that defines urban life in America. Penn, as a complex and diverse institution, periodically confronts serious concerns about racial discrimination. We are by no means alone in confronting this challenge. Urban environments nationwide face crucial issues of racial bias and stereotyping and other forms of systematic and invidious discrimination, which disproportionately affects African American males.

The fact, however, that racial discrimination is a national problem does not in any way relieve this University of its obligation to address it. On the contrary, Penn has a responsibility as a premier educational institution to forthrightly and aggressively find new solutions to this persistent problem. In 2002, the University's Board of Trustees reaffirmed their commitment to diversity by adopting the following statement: "Penn rejoices in the rich diversity of persons, groups, views, and academic disciplines and programs that grace the campus of the nation's first university. Tapping our diversity to strengthen ties across all boundaries enriches the intellectual climate and creates a more vibrant community. Fostering and nourishing this diversity, especially among students, faculty, staff, and trustees must remain central to the core missions of the University."

Clearly this is not the first time that Penn has been challenged to find new ways to improve the climate on campus for all members of the community—nor will it likely be the last. We further recognize that the steps we recommend in part four of this report are not the first that have been developed on this subject. Indeed, part three of the report lays out in detail actions that have been taken in response to an earlier report.

¹The Division of Public Safety is comprised of six departments: Penn Police, PennComm, Fire and Emergency Services, Security and Technical Services, Special Services, and Finance and Administration. The Penn Police Department includes 99 sworn police officers who are University employees and have the same law enforcement authority as their colleagues in the Philadelphia Police Department. For additional information about the Division of Public Safety please see www.publicsafety.upenn.edu.

In short, this is an ongoing process in which we need to remain vigilant and attentive. We are responding to the most difficult and complicated of societal issues and we continue to find new paths and new paradigms in order to make steady progress.

In addressing the task before the Committee, the group started from the proposition that we live in a society in which some members of certain groups often pay a price for who they are and how they appear. The Committee acknowledged this reality and the limits it places on solutions. The Committee nonetheless enthusiastically embraced the challenge before us—the need for all members of the Penn community to take responsibility for building bridges between and among all of us as well as the need to enhance feelings of confidence and trust between the police and the community. To that end, the Committee reaffirmed the principle that the University, and DPS, remain vigilant in their commitment to respect the individual rights and civil liberties of all members of the Penn community when interacting with the Penn police. Finally, the Committee recognized the need for the established mechanisms and institutions at Penn to be part of an ongoing effort to strengthen the rich diversity of our University while establishing a safe and secure environment for Penn and the West Philadelphia community.

As a recent National Academy of Sciences report concludes, "research on public opinion documents the profound gulf between the races in the United States in people's views of the legitimacy of the police."² The level of trust in the police—any police in any city—is far lower among historically disadvantaged minority groups than it is among white Americans. At the same time, all of us depend on the police to ensure our safety, often by putting their own safety in jeopardy. Our task is to acknowledge the tensions that arise from conflicting perceptions, and to do all we can to foster respect and mutual understanding.

II. The Charge of the Ad Hoc Committee on Safety in a Diverse Environment

President Gutmann presented the Committee with the following charge:

The Committee will look closely at the relationship between the Division of Public Safety (DPS) and people of color, most specifically African American males. The Committee will review relevant police policies, procedures and reports, specifically focusing on the report submitted last spring by the Ad Hoc Committee on Racial Profiling. The Committee will present concrete suggestions on how to improve relationships between DPS and community members of color in order to foster an environment in which all members of the Penn community can flourish, feel safe and achieve mutual respect.

III. Update to the Community Regarding the Division of Public Safety's 2004 Ad Hoc Committee on Racial Profiling Report

Submitted by Maureen Rush, Vice President, Division of Public Safety

Racial profiling is a serious concern nationally, and for our community. Professional police departments concerned about their communities have developed bias based profiling policies to ensure that their officers are treating all citizens equally and with respect. To meet this goal, in January 2001, the Penn Police Department issued Directive Number 87, Bias Based Profiling. Three years later, the Ad Hoc Committee on Racial Profiling benchmarked the UPPD's policies and procedures regarding bias based profiling, as well as community oriented policing measures, with other colleges and universities, as well as with municipal police departments. After extensive national research, the Ad Hoc Committee found that the UPPD's Bias Based Profiling policy is largely consistent with national standards.

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²Committee to Review Research on Police Policy and Practices (2003). *Fairness and Effectiveness in Policing: The Evidence*. Washington, D.C.: National Academy of Sciences.

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The following section provides an update on initiatives that were recommended in the spring of 2004 by the Ad Hoc Committee on Racial Profiling and also details other relevant programs that were initiated prior to the Ad Hoc Committee's work. The programs and the status of their completion are as follows:

1. Training for all Division of Public Safety Personnel:

• Form a DPS Advisory Board³ Training Committee:

At the request of the Vice President of Public Safety, Professor Dennis Culhane, Chair of the DPS Advisory Board, appointed a subcommittee on training to assist the Vice President of Public Safety in developing a multi-year training curriculum on diversity and supporting issues. The training subcommittee is chaired by Ms. Jeanne Arnold, Executive Director of the Office of Affirmative Action. The subcommittee met on November 22, 2004 and consulted with a national training consulting firm on February 24, 2005, that will assist DPS in developing training for 2005 and beyond. The subcommittee will review training materials before their implementation. DPS's goal is to deliver training to members of the division in the spring and summer of 2005, which will enhance their "cultural competency" or improve the ability of officers to deliver services to a diverse community.

2. Develop Communications for the Community on Interactions with the UPPD:

• Develop an Informational Brochure for the Community:

The UPPD, in partnership with the University of Pennsylvania's minority coalition student leaders, developed a brochure entitled *The Law and You at the University of Pennsylvania*. This brochure offers detailed suggestions for citizens on how to respond to interactions with law enforcement officers, as well as an overview of legal guidelines under which law enforcement officers must operate when stopping citizens for investigation. This document could facilitate additional interaction and inspire feedback from the community.

3. Review and Reporting of Data:

In order to reinforce the integrity and spirit of the Bias Based Profiling policy the following changes were made to the UPPD policy:

• *An annual review of aggregate data on pedestrian and vehicular stops, citations, arrests and searches by perceived race, ethnicity and gender will be conducted and presented annually to the Division of Public Safety Advisory Board.*

• *The Chief of Police will review officer level investigations on pedestrian and vehicular stops by perceived race, ethnicity and gender, and the proportion of stops leading to citations, arrest or search by perceived race or ethnicity and gender on a monthly basis.*

• *DPS has entered into a consulting engagement with Dr. Lori Fridel of the Police Executive Research Forum (PERF), a national law enforcement think-tank, to assist DPS in developing the statistical analysis methodology for the data being collected on pedestrian and vehicular stops. Dr. Fridel presented an overview of her credentials and expertise in this area to the DPS Advisory Board members at the Board's January 31, 2005 meeting.*

4. Citizen's Complaint Process:

Several years ago the Citizen's Complaint Process was revamped. As a result, citizens were able to access the complaint forms, which may be faxed, e-mailed, mailed or hand delivered to DPS, and an explanation of the process through the following means:

- DPS website at www.upenn.edu/police/complaint.htm
- DPS Headquarters, 4040 Chestnut Street
- Penn Resource Centers

• *In 2004, DPS added the following organizations to provide additional methods through which an individual could file a citizen's complaint:*

- United Minorities Council (UMC)
- Undergraduate Assembly (UA)
- Graduate and Professional Student Assembly (GAPSA)
- Office of Community Relations

³ The DPS Advisory Board is comprised of Penn faculty, staff and students, including: Dr. Elijah Anderson, Jeanne Arnold, Dr. William Baxt, Christopher Bradie, Glenn Bryan, Erin Cross, Dr. Dennis Culhane, *Chair*, William Gipson, Barry Hilts, Dr. Sean Kennedy, Dr. Peter Kuriloff, Dr. David Mandell, Gabby McLane, Fatimah Muhammad, Philip Nichols, Dr. Howard Stevenson, Barry Stupine, D. L. Wormley and Wendy White. It was established to advise the Vice President of Public Safety on the strategic direction of DPS in order to maximize the quality of life for the Penn and University City communities. The Advisory Board assists DPS in educating the Penn community about the programs and services it offers and also advises the Vice President about services desired by the community.

5. Customer Service Programs:

In order to increase the effectiveness of services to our community DPS developed the following programs:

• 24 hour Division of Public Safety Customer Service Feedback Telephone Line:

Community members can call (215) 573-TALK (8255) with comments, questions, critiques, complaints, kudos and ideas. Action will be taken immediately by the appropriate DPS Department and the individual filing the feedback will, if appropriate, receive a response.

• Division of Public Safety Customer Service Feedback Web Site:

Community members can submit comments, questions, critiques, complaints, kudos and ideas via the DPS web at www.publicsafety.upenn.edu. Action will be taken immediately by the appropriate DPS Department and the individual filing the feedback will, if appropriate, receive a response.

• Division of Public Safety Customer Service Kiosks:

Community members can access the DPS Customer Service Kiosks in the lobby of the Public Safety headquarters 24 hours a day, 7 days a week. Individuals can learn what's new at DPS, as well as log onto the DPS Customer Service Feedback Web Site, file a Citizen's Complaint, or review the Daily Crime Log, among many other options.

• Customer Service Surveys:

Any community member receiving a service from Public Safety is contacted and asked to provide feedback on their level of satisfaction with the service rendered. A monthly report is generated detailing the level of satisfaction of the Penn and/or West Philadelphia community members. These monthly reports are posted to the DPS web at www.publicsafety.upenn.edu for the community to view.

6. Community Policing Programs:

• Continue to attend West Philadelphia community meetings:

The Division of Public Safety is represented at ten monthly community meetings. This gives members of the West Philadelphia community an opportunity to provide feedback to the Vice President of Public Safety and/or the Chief of Police. All of the community groups have been notified about our Customer Service Feedback Telephone Line and Customer Service Feedback Web Site.

• UPPD Detective College House Liaison Program:

The UPPD Detectives interact daily with members of the community. The UPPD has enhanced the College House Community Liaison Program. Detectives are assigned specific College Houses, and are the primary liaisons regarding crime prevention, outreach and investigative services for the College House residents. Each assigned detective will work closely with the College House Faculty Masters and House Deans in developing proactive programs and responses to a variety of issues and concerns of the residents. The primary goal of this program is to foster and strengthen the working relationship between the UPPD, students, faculty and staff.

• UPPD Supervisory Patrol Zone Program:

The Chief of Police has designed a new program that will assign specific zone responsibilities for UPPD supervisors. The primary goal of this program is to enhance communications and trust between the UPPD and the community. The supervisors will work closely with the community on crime prevention, quality of life enhancement programs, special events and other proactive projects. More importantly, it will put a face to the name of UPPD supervisors. The supervisors will also introduce officers under their command to opportunities to engage face-to-face with community members.

7. Bias Based Profiling Policy Review:

While the Ad Hoc Committee on Racial Profiling found that the UPPD's bias based profiling policy is largely consistent with national standards, nonetheless, the Vice President of Public Safety has charged the Chief of Police to continually benchmark national law enforcement best practices as they relate to biased based profiling policies and to enhance the UPPD policy when appropriate.

IV. Additional Recommendations Made by the Ad Hoc Committee on Safety in a Diverse Environment

1. Create opportunities for candid and consistent communication between and about DPS and the Penn community, particularly the minority community.

- Explore ways to use the College Houses more effectively, e.g. create separate break-out discussions of racial issues. These sessions should begin early and continue throughout the academic year. Guest speakers, including Penn faculty members, could be invited to participate

in order to enhance discussions. The dialogues may also be hosted by other venues such as the cultural resource centers. These conversations, when combined with other University initiatives, offer the opportunity to address issues of racial differences and conflict in a more holistic way, which is appropriate for a University that seeks to educate and elevate its citizenry.

- Encourage the minority coalitions, class officers, athletic teams, other student leaders and administrative offices to update the community about relevant issues with DPS, as needed. Encourage the Graduate and Professional Student Assembly and the Black Graduate and Professional Student Assembly to do the same for the graduate and professional student population.

- Develop a “Frequently Asked Questions” (FAQ) regarding police procedures and protocols to be shared with the Penn community and published in *The Daily Pennsylvanian*, and in *Almanac*, as well as other newspapers and newsletters. Post the FAQs on minority coalition websites and the DPS website.

- Work with the graduate and undergraduate Deans to spread the word about DPS/community outreach initiatives through the schools, e.g. Undergraduate Advisory Boards.

- Develop a partnership between DPS and Penn resource centers and student organizations to spread the word about DPS/community outreach initiatives.

- In order to foster and enhance positive relationships and correct misperceptions that sometimes develop about West Philadelphia (particularly when there is an up tick in crime), solicit the input and aid of the Office of Community Relations, Civic House, the Center for Community Partnerships, and other University entities that are already deeply involved in working with our West Philadelphia neighbors.

- Improve continuity in interactions and communications from year to year between the community and DPS. This may be accomplished, in part, through surveys, brochures, videotapes.

- Develop a central means to communicate to students, perhaps through the web, which establishes an “electronic community” for information sharing and up-to-date news.

2. Develop creative opportunities for community members to get to know, and be known by, officers from DPS in order to develop more positive, enduring relationships.

- Continue to introduce police officers to all of the resource centers on campus. Develop useful information about our student population to share with them. Develop and distribute information describing the mission of each of the minority coalition groups to be shared with all members of DPS.

- Consider posting profiles of police officers on the DPS website, and in other venues, to provide “snapshots” of the officers.

- DPS will continue to participate in the First Thursday meetings with the West Philadelphia community (and other meetings or conversations with the community). These provide good opportunities for exchange of information and concerns between UPPD and residents.

- Create small group sessions including the Vice President of Public Safety and the Chief of Police, other officers and student groups. Videotape a small group session between students and the police which could then be used for wider dissemination.

- Each of the constituency groups represented by the minority coalitions will develop programming that will contribute towards a meaningful and positive relationship between DPS and minority students.

- Conduct periodic surveys of our students, faculty and staff to measure levels of comfort and frequency of social interactions among diverse groups as well as gauge reaction to DPS. Develop this survey instrument in consultation with the key stakeholders as well as expert survey professionals.

- Expand opportunities to get to know police officers outside of their work, e.g. in sports settings or informal social gatherings. Reinstate a DPS “open house.”

3. Expand upon diversity training and accountability.

- Clarify how diversity training is being conducted for DPS and specifically what “cultural competency”⁴ means and make this infor-

mation available to the broad Penn community. (Please note that the process for diversity training is described in Section III, Number 1 of this report.)

- Utilize the DPS Advisory Board Subcommittee on Training to assess training outcomes, and regularly report to the community.

- Bring in and/or organize an interactive group to provide training that deals with sensitive issues such as race and gender.

- Review the availability of citizen’s complaint forms to ensure there are adequate locations for the community.

V. Next Steps

With this report, the Ad Hoc Committee concludes its work. This, of course, is not the end of the process. Rather, these recommendations are presented to the President and Provost for their review. Upon approval or revision, the final set of recommendations will be assigned to the appropriate University departments for implementation, including the Division of Public Safety, the Office of the Vice Provost for University Life, the Office of Community Relations, the Office of College Houses and Academic Services, the resource centers, and the schools, among others.

In addition, the standing committees of University Council—particularly the Pluralism, Safety and Security, and Community Relations Committees—as well as the advisory board for the Division of Public Safety, must continue their work in making appropriate recommendations and reporting on their work to the community in these important areas.

It will also be crucial to have the leadership engaged on the faculty, student and staff level in order to help promote these initiatives and raise awareness among the widest possible cross section of the Penn community. The Committee remains hopeful that if the entire Penn community engages in this important work, we will make significant progress.

Respectfully submitted by,

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⁴ Cultural competency has been defined as respecting and valuing others backgrounds, beliefs and norms. It refers to three distinct behaviors—seeks to understand differences and similarities of others; objectively accepts differences and similarities of other cultures; and incorporates knowledge of cultural differences and similarities into day-to-day activities.