

Immediate Actions on Policing

The national uprising over questionable actions of police officers have led to a rapid reconsideration of policing laws, polices, and standards across the nation. In our own state, Governor Ned Lamont signed into law sweeping changes aimed at increasing the accountability of state and municipal police officers. *An Act Concerning Police Accountability* (H.B. 6004) makes sweeping changes to the authority, membership, and responsibilities of the Police Officer Standards and Training Council (POST); allows cities and towns to create civilian review boards; makes body and dashboard cameras mandatory; bans chokeholds and strangleholds; provides police officers with whistleblower protections; and creates a new independent office to conduct investigations. While I am confident that our police officers meet a high standard of professional policing, I am directing UConn's Police Department (UCPD) and other UConn leaders to take immediate steps to provide assurances to our students, their families, and me that we are adhering to the highest standards of policing and accountability at each UConn campus.

The following actions should be implemented immediately:

1. Create Advisory Committee on Policing (ACP)

- Committee will include selected faculty, staff, and students with a broad range of perspectives. This group will study the relevant issues and advise the Associate Vice President for Public Safety and me on the trends and best practices associated with policing at a major universities.

2. Implement supplemental training for police officers

- Identify and/or develop trainings for police officers that address the sensitivities around race/ethnicity, gender, LGBTQ, and other student communities, and that supplement traditional police training with leadership and conflict resolution training appropriate to campus environment.

3. Improve student access to mental health services

- Reallocate university resources in UCPD and other sources to Student Health and Wellness (SHaW) to support a comprehensive review of mental health services. Experienced consultant has been hired to analyze our service operation and make recommendations on how we might improve mental services for our students.

4. Improve dialogue between police and students

- Convene a working with students, Student Affairs and Public Safety leadership to discuss police response to residence halls. Discuss common calls for service and determine if there is another way to handle them.

5. Restart student Husky Watch program

- Select and train a cadre of undergraduate students to be paid interns in UCPD serving as liaisons between UCPD and the student body. These students will complement the work of professional police officers, help them understand student considerations, help students understand police considerations, and intercede in situations where student peer influence could be more effective with other students as police serve as backup. This program was in existence for several decades but was nearly eliminated in 2013-2014. The structure and policies are in place, but we will review its mission and practices and make necessary changes to ensure that the outcomes enhance student safety and meet the needs of the student employees and University.