

Official AS BOD Statement Regarding UPD and Policing on San Francisco State Campus

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As the 2020-2021 Associated Students Board of Directors at San Francisco State University, **we support and advocate for the abolition of San Francisco State University's Police Department (UPD)**. In May of 2020, the President's Office at San Francisco State University released a statement saying, *"We need to recognize and challenge power imbalances and inequities... There is much more to be done. And we all need to do it."*¹ San Francisco State University has consistently noted the vision of Equity and Inclusion, but disregards the actions needed to ensure those truths be followed. We must remind ourselves what enabled the opportunity for equity and inclusion to exist on our campus in the first place: activism, protests, grassroots organizing, and calls for accountability. It must be noted that we as a campus community can never truly attain inclusivity and equity when the lives and safety of Black students are being put at risk by the unnecessary police presence on our campus. **On the path to abolition, AS Board of Directors recognizes the road will not be quick or without struggle, and in turn chooses to remain active and a part of conversations including UPD's defunding and reforming to hold them accountable until the department is abolished.**

That being said, the policing system which was built on and continues to thrive off of racism can not be fixed simply by an advisory council or a reallocation of funds alone. Efforts to simply reform or defund UPD do not confront the issue at hand: As long as UPD is on campus, students' lives are at risk. Even if funds and resources are allocated to non-lethal responses or to adequate mental health resources, police will still be on campus and therefore Black students and members of the campus community will not be safe. Black students deserve safety, not compromise. SF State's UPD has time and time again

¹Mahoney, Lynn. "Cultural Humility in the Face of Tragedy and Turmoil." *San Francisco State University*. N.p., 29 May 2020. Web. 17 July 2020.

proven to be a burden, threat, and barrier for San Francisco State University students far more than they have been a “safety.” UPD is notorious for long response times, inadequate training, no drive for community building, and even being weaponized by faculty to endanger students². As student leaders and advocates, we do not support the continuation of such services on this campus.

We would not be the first facet of education to cut ties with Police Entities. For reference, *“On June 2, the city’s public school board unanimously approved a resolution to end the district’s contract with the MPD that allowed officers on campus as school security. Both decisions were largely driven by student pressure and were the result of several years of student activism³.”* UC Berkeley’s Associated Students has also cut ties with certain policing entities on their campus.⁴ We now have the opportunity to set a backdrop for other Universities to follow.

We have watched the University make statements supporting Black students and the Black Lives Matters movement, yet policing has continued on our campus after our country has shown the way policing targets Black communities. We are complacent in police violence if we do not use our privileged positions as student leaders to put the safety of our students at the forefront of our advocacy to the fullest extent. We have been, and will continue to be, told this goal is unattainable, the same way the founders of the College of Ethnic Studies were when they fought for an equitable education, but this will not keep us from fighting for the safety of students. We recognize the obstacles put in place which make it difficult for us to cut ties with UPD, and we will adjust to keep our vow to abolition and student safety. We will be open to understanding services for students in lieu of UPD (see attachments). We recognize this goal of abolition must be done CSU wide. San Francisco State University sits alongside twenty two other California State Universities, all of which have their own University Police Departments put in place by the CSU Chancellor. We write this to show our CSU sister schools that we can attain this goal of abolishing UPD together with our shared commitment to the safety and wellbeing of our students. As a Board, we must put aside our own biases, prioritize the needs of our students, and ensure that their experiences are heard and validated. Therefore, we the 2020-2021 Associated

² It should be noted in congruence with our support for Abolition of UPD that the University would still be able to Utilize services from San Francisco Police Department (SFPD). This means there will still be police in the proximity of our University if absolutely needed and dozens of students have noted SFPD’s response times to on campus calls have been even quicker than UPD.

³ Retta, Mary. “Minneapolis Public Schools Abolished Their Police First.” N.p., 19 June 2020. Web. 17 July 2020.

⁴<https://docs.google.com/document/d/1IcizW4XSkWduMoMD8tykCOD1dWMxDUx4DFx2y44lrps/edit>

Students Board of Directors at San Francisco State University support and advocate for the abolition of San Francisco State Universities Police Department (UPD).

(ATTACHMENTS BELOW)

Domestic Abuse

Two studies done through the National Center for Women and Policing found:

- around 40% of police officer families experience domestic violence themselves. Also found officers answering calls of abuse victims were between 2 and 4 times more likely to be abusers themselves

Source: www.womenandpolicing.com/violenceFS.asp

What can we do instead of calling the police when experiencing or know someone experiencing domestic violence?

- call domestic violence hotlines (i.e. national domestic violence hotline 1-800-799-7233)
- The national domestic violence hotline offers
 - Crisis intervention
 - Domestic violence education
 - Safety planning
 - Directly connecting callers to service providers like local shelters
 - Referrals to agencies that provide legal, economic self-sufficiency, sexual assault, elder abuse, children's and other related services

Substance Abuse and Mental Health

A study done by RTI international and Temple University have shown that the criminalization of drug addicted offenders is far more harmful to society and the individual than rehabilitation. Criminalization of mental health also burdens tax payers and creates additional barriers to necessary beneficial resources like housing and employment.

What can we do instead of calling police when we are experiencing or know someone experiencing substance abuse or mental health?

Many people would agree addiction is a disease so if we started treating it like one and using drug rehabilitation for drug addicted offenders instead of jail time for 40% of offenders, the criminal justice system would save \$12.9 billion dollars according to the study. Mental illness too needs to be treated as such, and not only would it save money but rehabilitation is shown to decrease the likelihood of repeating crimes and being arrested, unlike all methods used by the criminal justice system which include fines, jailing, and imprisonment.

- call substance abuse and mental health hotlines (i.e. SAMHSA 1-800-622-4357)
 - The calls are free, confidential, and do not require health insurance.
 - The people who answer are trained specialist
 - Provide free referrals w/o insurance

Transphobia

Trans folks face many different barriers everyday for just being who they are and are disproportionately affected by homelessness, unemployment, and many other “criminalized” socio-economic circumstances. Many times when people see trans folks in crisis, they call the police. Police generally arrest trans folks who in reality generally just need support.

What can we do instead of calling police when a trans life is in crisis?

- Call trans hotlines (i.e. trans lifeline 1-877-565-8860)
 - A trans-led hotline (all operators are transgender)
 - The only service in the country with a policy against non-consensual activity rescue because of transgender people’s vulnerable position with the police.
 - Offers direct emotional and financial support in crisis

Homelessness

15% of people incarcerated were homeless in the year before they were first admitted to prison. Many different Law Enforcement agencies have been proven to criminalize the need for shelter.

What should we do instead of calling the police?

- call a local homeless hotline(i.e. San Francisco’s Homeless Outreach Team)

Distress number: (415) 355-7401

General Info: (415) 355-7555

- Utilizes a multidisciplinary approach involving the department of public health, human services agency, SF public library, and the non-profit Public Health Foundation enterprises
- Team provides wellness checks
- Provides street medicine (bring healthcare to assess and establish care for chronic conditions like medical, mental health, substance abuse, and cognitive disorders)

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