

February 22, 2022

Dear University of California Police Department (UCPD) Chief of Police Search and Hiring Committee,

We write to you as representatives of the Graduate Diversity Council (GDC) in the Department of Environmental Science, Policy, and Management (ESPM). The GDC is a graduate student organization that works for an anti-colonial and anti-racist university and builds community that celebrates the work of historically excluded researchers and educators. As a group of masters and PhD students working for justice and as members of the campus community, we wish to share our thoughts on the UCPD Chief of Police search and hiring process.

We have observed that the practice of policing is reactive and does not prevent harm because it does not solve the conditions that produce harm. In fact, policing is a source of harm for many in our department and the broader campus community, particularly Black, brown, and Indigenous people; trans and gender-nonconforming people; system-impacted and formerly incarcerated people; unhoused people; and disabled and/or neurodivergent people. Additionally, these identities overlap in members of our community, which further compounds the harms of policing. These harms are not theoretical; UCPD has targeted members of the GDC directly with surveillance and harassment, which makes it all the more difficult for our members to conduct their research, teaching, coursework, and service.

With the understanding that policing does not prevent and actually often causes harm, we advocate for:

1. Reduction in the scope of responsibilities allocated to UCPD;
2. Reduction of funding allocated to UCPD and reallocation of funding to community safety and care programs;
3. Reduction of UCPD's workforce; and
4. Disarmament of UCPD officers, not just of traditionally "militarized" technologies but also of all ballistic weapons.

Eventually, we wish to see the complete dissolution of UCPD. We realize that defunding, disarmament, and reinvestment will not happen overnight and must be intentional to fully integrate community interests and build true safety. Therefore, **the primary qualification for the next UCPD Chief of Police should be a willingness to reduce the scope of UCPD's role on campus and UCPD's budget in collaboration with the campus community.**

### **Reducing UCPD's scope and resources**

For the past few decades, the state legislature has incrementally reduced its financial support of the University of California system, and we feel the consequences in our own department. Over the past few years, ESPM has lost full-time professional staff employees in communications and administration, and our two Graduate Student Affairs Officers do the work of four full-time employees. Graduate student instructors in ESPM are also responsible for teaching more students than ever before due to reduced funds available for teaching, resulting in over 65 students now assigned per graduate student instructor.

We have heard from UCPD officers that they are demoralized, that they feel they do not have the financial resources to do their jobs, and that they are understaffed. This is true of every department on campus; it is not unique to UCPD. **What is unique to UCPD, however, is that they have received budget increases every year for at least ten years. From FY18-19 to FY20-21 alone, UCPD's budget increased from \$13.9 million to \$15.8 million, an increase of nearly 14% in only two years.**<sup>1</sup> And these figures don't even include recharge! We can only imagine what our department could do with a 14% increase in budget.

Against this backdrop of financial challenges, UCPD should not receive any funding increases going forward. In the short term, UCPD must learn to work with the funding already allocated to them, and in the longer term, they must actively participate in the process of reducing their budget, transferring some services out of their department (e.g. crisis response and complaints and investigations against officers), and ceasing the provision of other services (e.g. patrols) that for members of the GDC have made campus less, not more, safe. The next UCPD Chief of Police must support these reductions in services and financial resources.

### **Building and supporting true campus safety and wellbeing**

**Myriad non-police services actually build public safety and wellbeing. Some of these services are already being developed on campus but are underfunded and under-supported.** One primary example is University Health Services's forthcoming Stepped Care 2.0 and Compassionate Crisis Response programs. We are thrilled about this rethinking and expansion of healthcare services and believe that funds should be taken from UCPD's annual budget to fully support these new programs in perpetuity. Furthermore, we wish to see Facilities Services comprehensively staffed to allow for rapid 24/7 lockout support. More financial and staffing resources are also needed to support basic needs (e.g., housing, food, and healthcare), Disabled Students Program staffing and technological accommodations, and case management services for violence and trauma recovery (e.g. after experiences of interpersonal violence and/or police harm). Many simple infrastructural solutions can also improve safety without police (e.g. better lighting and higher quality locks), and unarmed security staff can provide any remaining security necessary.

The objectives outlined in this letter are consistent with graduate student positions and administrative commitments to reimagining campus safety services.<sup>2,3,4,5</sup> Our incoming Chief of Police should support these positions and commitments.

Sincerely,

The Environmental Science, Policy, and Management Graduate Diversity Council

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<sup>1</sup> [July 2020 UC Regents meeting.](#)

<sup>2</sup> [ESPM graduate student letter.](#)

<sup>3</sup> [Graduate student instructor union UAW 2685 recommendations for policing.](#)

<sup>4</sup> June 18, 2020 letter from Chancellor Christ that committed to "identifying opportunities to move responsibilities currently housed in the police department to other campus units."

<sup>5</sup> University of California Office of the President Presidential Campus Safety Plan that has committed to the "repurposing of sworn officer positions or FTE to other safety, wellness or social service roles, and re-distribution of campus operating budgets" ([action 2.1.ii](#)).