

Syracuse University Community Review Board Annual Report 2024

Letter From the Chair

Dear Syracuse University community,

On Feb. 24, 2020, Syracuse University contracted with Paul, Weiss, Rifkind, Wharton & Garrison LLP to conduct an independent review of its [Department of Public Safety \(DPS\)](#) following a series of bias-related incidents that occurred on campus in Fall 2019 and student protests that followed those incidents in Fall 2019 and Spring 2020.

On Feb. 22, 2021, The Honorable Loretta E. Lynch of Paul, Weiss, Rifkind, Wharton & Garrison LLP, submitted the "[Report Of Independent Counsel To Syracuse University Regarding The Department Of Public Safety](#)" (Independent Counsel Report). The report recommended the creation of a [Community Review Board \(CRB\)](#) to provide community input and accountability for DPS. The recommendations were implemented by the University and resulted in the creation of the CRB.

This report is broken up into three parts:

Part I – Review appeals of Dispositions of Civilian complaints against DPS Employees: This part of the report will discuss the process the University community must follow to file an appeal.

Part II – Review of DPS Standard Operating Procedures (SOPs), Trainings and Key Community-Facing Functions: In this part, we will report on our four assessments of DPS's policies and procedures to ensure they conform with standards of community policing.

Part III – Community Review Board Composition and Overview: This part sets forth our final recommendations for the structure and procedures for the CRB, and outlines

the tasks completed by the CRB. This can serve as a model to other universities seeking to establish their own CRB or similarly situated board.

We would like to thank all of those who engage with and support our work to ensure transparent and equitable policing on campus. The CRB operates independently from DPS but has an important relationship to further build with DPS. The CRB looks forward to continuing to serve the entire University community in the next academic year.

Sincerely,

Mary Kiernan
Chair, Community Review Board

Part I: Review Appeals of Dispositions of Civilian Complaints Against DPS Employees

DPS investigates complaints against its employees as part of its internal review process. If the employee or complainant is not satisfied with that outcome, an appeal of the disposition can be filed with the CRB. The CRB shall review the disposition as an independent review of the substantive matter. The CRB is independent from DPS and is not intended to replace DPS's internal review and disciplinary procedures. The following process, as described in the Independent Counsel Report, outlines the steps and procedures involved in an appeal.

1. A community member must file a complaint with DPS.
2. Once the complaint is investigated fully and reaches a final disposition, then an appeal can take place.
3. If either the DPS employee or the complainant is unsatisfied with the disposition, they may submit an appeal form (found on the CRB website) to the CRB within 14 days of the date they are notified of the results of the investigation. Any appeal not filed within 14 days shall be dismissed.
4. The CRB will convene a confidential meeting to hear and deliberate on an appeal within 30 days of the date it receives the notice of appeal form.
5. The chief of campus safety and emergency services or the chief's designee shall address the CRB regarding the investigation and the basis for the disposition. The complainant and the DPS employee shall be permitted to address the CRB, should desire to do so.
6. In reviewing a disposition, the CRB may: A. agree with the disposition; B. disagree with the disposition and recommend an alternative disposition; or C. recommend reopening the investigation.
7. The CRB shall submit a brief written analysis of each complaint and investigation and its recommendation to the Chancellor or the Chancellor's designee for a final determination as to the disposition within 14 days of the appeal hearing. The CRB shall simultaneously notify the parties of its recommendation. If the CRB's recommendation is not unanimous, the recommendation shall state the number of members who dissented and the basis for the dissent.

8. The Chancellor or the Chancellor's designee shall review the CRB's recommendation and make a final decision within 15 days of receipt.

DPS Investigations Completed During the Board's Annual Term (July 1, 2023 – May 1, 2024)

During the current review period, as requested by the CRB, DPS received three Internal Affairs complaints. All three complaints were founded and all three resulted in discipline to the employees identified. One resulted in the termination of a non-sworn member of DPS, one in the suspension of a sworn member and one in a verbal coaching session of a sworn member.

Additionally, the DPS investigated two Quality of Service complaints. These both identified sworn members of DPS, and both were investigated by the appropriate first line supervisor and both were deemed unfounded.

Appeal of Dispositions of Civilian Complaints Against DPS Employee

No appeals were filed with the CRB during this reporting period.

Part II – Review of DPS Standard Operating Procedures (SOP), Trainings and Key Community-Facing Functions

The CRB has the power to review and comment on any prospective SOPs and trainings. At the CRB's discretion, topics of review can include: DPS investigations completed during the CRB's annual term, including any patterns of conduct that may be observed in those complaints and investigations; DPS files regarding public comments from civilian members of the University community concerning DPS employees, including any patterns of conduct that may be observed in those files; DPS Weapons Use Reports that were filed during the CRB's term; Bias-Related Incident Reports for investigations completed during the CRB's term; as well as additional topics of concern that the CRB identifies or that are raised by the University community.

Review of Standard Operating Procedures

During this reporting term the CRB reviewed four SOPs and one training curriculum and they are outlined later in this report.

Body Worn Cameras

After research, DPS policy review and seeking input from the campus community regarding the Body Worn Camera Policy, the CRB recommended a video buffering time of 120 seconds. The 120-second buffering time was also supported by a majority of the Student of Color Advisory Committee.

Recruitment and Selection

The CRB reviewed and supported proposed policy revisions to the Recruitment and Selection SOP which states that DPS will conduct an annual analysis of the recruitment plan that is to be reviewed by the chief of campus safety and emergency services. The annual report will include progress toward its stated objective, revisions to the plan as needed and demographic data of sworn personnel.

The CRB also reviewed and supported revision to Recruitment and Selection policy that established a written directive that governs the records of all candidate selection materials.

Career Development

The CRB reviewed and supported a new SOP pertaining to career development for all DPS members. The policy outlines program goals, training requirements, program responsibilities and succession planning.

Non-Sworn Personnel

The CRB reviewed and supported a new SOP pertaining to DPS non-sworn personnel training. The SOP includes orientation, pre-service training and in-service training.

Training Reviewed

Trauma-Informed Police Training

The CRB is reviewing proposed trauma-informed training for DPS police dispatchers and campus peace officers. The training, offered through the University of Buffalo, Center for Social Research, Institute on Trauma and Trauma-Informed Care, is designed to:

- Increase understanding of trauma.
- Create an awareness of the impact of trauma on behavior.
- Develop trauma-informed responses.

Non-Sworn Training SOP

CRB has reviewed and supports the Non-Sworn Training SOP but recommends that de-escalation training be included as part of in-service training for non-sworn personnel that interact with the Syracuse University community.

Policy Review

The CRB's Bylaws and Procedures V1, B1 require that the board reviews and comments on any prospective SOP and trainings.

The DPS shared four SOPs with the CRB for review during this evaluation period. Those were:

- BWC Policy (2015-2)
- Recruitment Policy (2014-7)
- Career Development (2023-5)
- Non-Sworn Training (2024-X)

Bias-Related Incident Reports for Investigations Completed

There have been six bias incidents during this evaluation period. All were investigated promptly, resolved and are currently closed. The [bias incident report tracker](#) lists the date of the incident/report, location, details, narrative and case status.

DPS Weapons Use Reports

There were two Weapons Use forms completed during the evaluation period. One report was completed when a sworn member of DPS displayed their duty weapon while confronting a non-affiliate with two edged weapons and one was completed after a sworn member of DPS took a non-affiliate into custody that was in possession of a handgun.

Part III – Community Review Board Composition and Overview

CRB Structure and Mission:

The mission of the CRB is to ensure transparency and increase an equitable approach to safety and security on campus. The CRB is independent from DPS and is not intended to replace DPS’s internal review and disciplinary procedures.

The CRB comprises 11 members: three undergraduate students, one graduate student, one law student, two faculty members, two staff members and two administrators.

Current CRB Members:

- [La’Kesa Allen](#), community standards coordinator, Office of Community Standards
- [Mary Grace Almandrez](#), vice president of diversity and inclusion, Office of Diversity and Inclusion
- [Linda Baguma](#), undergraduate student, College of Arts and Sciences
- [Jordan Beasley](#), undergraduate student, College of Arts and Sciences (co-chair)
- [Avva Boroujerdi](#), undergraduate student, Whitman School of Management
- [Rebecca Reed Kantrowitz](#), associate dean, Hendricks Chapel
- [Mary Kiernan](#), associate teaching professor, Falk College of Sport and Human Dynamics (chair)
- [Lindsey Oliver](#), graduate student, College of Law

- [Maria Pettolina](#), professor of practice, Forensic and National Security Sciences Institute
- [William Simurra](#), graduate student, Maxwell School of Citizenship and Public Affairs
- Staff TBA

Support to the Community Review Board

- [Abby Perer](#), associate general counsel, Office of University Counsel
- [Alyssa Campbell](#), associate general counsel, Office of University Counsel

Advisors

The CRB has two advisors. Bethaida “Bea” González, former vice president for community engagement, former special assistant to the Chancellor and former dean of University College, is the senior advisor to the CRB. Melvin “Tony” Perez, former chief of public safety for Monroe Community College and deputy commissioner for the New York State Division of Criminal Justice Services, serves as the CRB’s expert law enforcement consultant.

Operations of the CRB

All meetings of the CRB are virtual since online students are eligible for appointment to the CRB. The forums are delivered in a hybrid format.

The CRB invited students, faculty and staff to a forum on Nov. 14, 2023, to review new and updated proposed SOPs. The 2024 Annual Forum was held April 2, 2024. Both forums were hosted in the David B. Falk College of Sport and Human Dynamics.

Tasks Completed by the CRB Since its Inception:

1. Created a webpage which outlines the DPS complaint process and subsequent appeal process performed by the CRB.
2. Hosted regular monthly meetings to keep board members apprised of current issues.
3. Developed an online form for appeal submissions and a dedicated email account to facilitate communications regarding appeals filed with the CRB.
4. Drafted and implemented a confidentiality and conflict of interest policy for all CRB members.
5. CRB members were included in new DPS chief interview and selection process.
6. Provided Chief Craig Stone and Deputy Chief John Sardino with recommendations to amended “Internal Affairs” language in its SOP that clearly outlines the standard of proof for completed investigations.
7. Reviewed and made recommendations for SOP regarding Arrest, Detention and Transportation of Arrestees as it pertained to arrests in an academic setting.
8. Reviewed SOP addressing Exculpatory Evidence.
9. Held Universitywide forum regarding proposed SOP recommendations.

10. Held hearing regarding Internal Affairs complaint appeal and made finding recommendations to Chancellor.
11. Held Annual Forums in 2022, 2023 and 2024.
12. Reviewed and made recommendations regarding Police Research Forum training aimed at defusing critical incidents.

The following SOPs were reviewed this board term:

13. Reviewed, researched and made policy recommendation regarding Body Worn Camera Policy after seeking community input during open forum. Prior to making its recommendation, CRB requested and was provided a presentation by DPS personnel on the functions of body worn cameras. The CRB's recommendation was to increase buffering time from 30 to 120 seconds. This will allow review of 120 seconds of video before body worn camera recording is activated by DPS member.
14. Reviewed and researched new Career Development SOP. Sought University community input during open forum before supporting policy as proposed.
15. Reviewed Recruitment and Selection SOP. Sought University community input during open forum before supporting policy as proposed.
16. Reviewed and researched new policy regarding training of non-sworn DPS employees. Sought college community input during annual forum before supporting policy as proposed.
17. Reviewed and made recommendation regarding trauma and trauma-informed care training.

Closing

The CRB would like to thank the University community for its input and support during this term as we strive for continuous improvement in enhancing public safety at Syracuse University.