



California Community Colleges

SYSTEM WEBINAR SUMMARY (AUGUST 2022): CAMPUS CLIMATE & PUBLIC SAFETY

This webinar discussed democratizing public safety, including the connections among unconditional belonging, campus climate, and public safety, and the importance of transforming structures and cultures. Guest speakers included Board of Governors (BOG) President Pamela Haynes, Student Senate President Clemaus Tervalon, Amber Wade, Chief of Napa Valley College Police Department, and Don Mueller, Chief of Cerritos College Police Department.

Why are We Reimagining Campus Policing?

- COVID-19 exacerbated racial and socio-economic disparities, and social unrest related to George Floyd’s murder revealed deeply rooted and persistent racial injustices, providing lessons and a catalyst for change.
- Students of color have experienced the same profiling on our campuses as in their wider communities, leaving them with added trauma and feelings of vulnerability and exclusion. We must prioritize efforts to improve campus climate and policing to provide a sense of unconditional belonging for our students—feelings of acceptance, security, and support built on trust and positive relationships.
- Our efforts to reform are particularly important due to the broad impact we can have on policing, since most police officers in California receive training at community colleges in the form of police academies or service training.
- The Chancellor’s [Call to Action](#) recommended a systemwide review of law enforcement officer and first responder training and curriculum, and the BOG tasked a Reimagining Campus Policing Task Force with making recommendations for reforms.
- To come up with its recommendations, the task force reviewed the research literature, spoke with national experts, and consulted with colleges across constituency groups. The group held four meetings for discussion and development of recommendations.
- Major categories of the task force [recommendations](#) include:
 - Aligning policy to evidence-based practices related to definitions of “first responders,” accountability, and training/professional development;
 - Collecting data and ensuring transparency;
 - Improving diversity in hiring and retention; and
 - Increasing support for campus reform through establishing principles for interactions and including students’ voices and experiences.

What are Some Key Steps to Implementation?

- The Chancellor’s Office will be convening a working group of college stakeholders and national experts to support the colleges’ work, as well as developing a data infrastructure to track the efforts.
- Colleges should be working to identify advisory committees, develop public safety compacts, and revise their policies around policing.

How is [Napa Valley College](#) Implementing Effective Community Policing Practices?

- Being highly visible on campus, referring students to campus and community resources, and focusing first on education and compliance rather than punishment;
- Developing a crime prevention program on campus and providing classes on crime prevention, reporting options, and available resources;
- Connecting with the Napa community and training police staff on community characteristics and local issues;
- Increasing involvement with the campus community, being transparent, and actively seeking input; and
- Creating a [Campus Assessment Response and Education \(CARE\) team](#) to respond to reports of concerning behavior and identify resources to maintain wellbeing.

What has [Cerritos College](#) Done to Build Relationships and Help Campus Police Support Student Success?

- Recognized that the municipal policing model is not applicable to campus policing—campus police are not an outside force coming to “police” the students, but rather a part of the college family and part of students’ success system;
- Rewrote the department’s [mission statement](#) to emphasize the department’s support for diversity, equity and inclusion and its commitment to serving the college without discrimination or bias;
- Embedded officers into all student services programs (e.g., Umoja, Puente), assigning a particular officer to be liaison to each program who attends some of their events and meetings;
- Changed hearts and minds of its officers by changing policies (e.g., prohibiting choke holds) and training practices (e.g., de-escalation and crisis intervention, cultural awareness) and supporting officers to build relationships with students; and

- Getting officers out of cars to be on foot or bicycle, often wearing polo shirts rather than traditional uniforms or including patches on uniforms related to events like pride month or support for veterans.