
The University Senate

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UNIVERSITY OF MINNESOTA

Campus Safety Committee (CSC)

Monday, November 27, 2023

Minutes of the Meeting

These minutes reflect discussion and debate at a meeting of a committee of the University of Minnesota Senate; none of the comments, conclusions or actions reported in these minutes reflect the views of, nor are they binding on, the senate, the administration, or the Board of Regents.

[**In these minutes:** Welcome, Introductions, and Safety Moment; Update on CSC Presentation at November Diversity Community of Practice Meeting; Presentation of UMN Campus Safety Report from June 2023; Collecting Feedback from Groups Consulted on the CSC Definition of a Culture of Safety; New Business]

PRESENT: Edgar Arriaga (chair), Joseph Alf, Jovany Betancourt, Austin Chanen, Jessica Larson, Adam Negri, Terry Niebeling, Ashok Singh, Barry Standorf, Julie Thompson, liz thomson, Ian Tonks, Andrew Whitman

REGRETS: Lamija Alisic

ABSENT: Clara Hanson, Joshua Ichen, Soyun Lee, Rebecca Sedivy

GUESTS: Kari Nolan, assistant director of safety communication, Government Relations

OTHERS ATTENDING: Jaclyn Adair, Jessica Broesch, Janelle LeBlanc

1. Welcome, Introductions, and Safety Moment

Professor Edgar Arriaga, chair, welcomed members and guests, and used this [slide deck](#) throughout the meeting. He introduced a resource that was shared at the November 16, 2023, Diversity Community of Practice (DCoP) meeting titled [The Institutional Role of Campus Policing for Black Undergraduate Students: A Critical Race Phenomenological Study](#). He also shared [ground rules for engagement](#), established by the committee.

2. Update on CSC Presentation at November Diversity Community of Practice Meeting

Arriaga, Joseph Alf, and Ian Tonks from the CSC attended the DCoP Meeting on November 16th, as well as Nick Juarez and Kari Nolan. Arriaga, Tonks, and Alf shared a bit about the topics that were presented at the DCoP meeting and the feedback received. Arriaga shared with DCoP members a brief history of how the Campus Safety Committee began in 2020 and its work to date.

Tonks talked about providing the DCoP members with a [Google form](#) on which they could share

their feedback on the six topics that CSC has committed its efforts to (community engagement, safety across campuses, accountability structures, safety alerts, classroom safety, and building access).

3. Presentation of UMN Campus Safety Report from June 2023

Kari Nolan, assistant director of internal communication, Government Relations, University Relations, said in her role, she works with communications regarding safety issues at the University, and today would be sharing [information](#) particular to resident students.

Nolan said that surveys and focus groups have been used to interact with students regarding their experience of safety on campus; in the fall of 2022, spring of 2023, and again in fall of 2023.

Nolan shared key findings from the fall 2023 survey:

- A majority of students (88%) feel that the University provides the resources they need to feel safe. Students are most aware of Safe-U Alerts, Gopher Chauffeur, and 624-WALK.
- The majority of resident students that were surveyed have *not* used these resources because, they said, they have not had a need for them.
- There was mixed information regarding Safe-U Alerts; students feel that the majority of “safety information” that they receive is through Safe-U Alerts; but from fall of 2022 to spring of 2023, the percentage of resident students who felt they were well informed about safety issues dropped from 68% to 55%.
- Regarding a culture of safety: students were quick to note that a culture of safety includes mental health and safety as well as physical safety, lab safety, and classroom safety.
- Students indicated that the term “culture of safety” means that everyone is responsible for and should be accountable for safety in the University community.

Based on the research done, Nolan said, the following opportunities for improving a culture of safety include:

- Establishing consistent communications during and after incidents
- Supporting Housing and Residential Life (HRL) in sharing such information with students
- Increasing the capacity of Gopher Chauffeur and 624-WALK to reduce wait times
- Amplifying University safety initiatives in student-centered channels

When looking at data from spring 2023 compared to fall 2023, all categories assessed improved, Nolan said. Awareness of safety initiatives on campus has gone up and reasons may include a [monthly safety newsletter](#), a postcard communication campaign to resident students listing safety resources and information, and stepped-up efforts on the part of HRL.

Nolan then invited committee members to discuss how these findings might align with the work that the committee is doing regarding creating a definition of a culture of safety. Comments and questions from the committee included the following:

- The Department of Public Safety (DPS) has contracted with a consultant to review *how* the University implements its Safe-U Alerts and information from the data Nolan has compiled as well as feedback from the CSC should be shared with the consultant.
- The CSC’s definition of a culture of safety includes many of the same components noted in Nolan’s survey data
- How to define a culture of safety will most likely vary among demographics

- Safety is situational - sometimes people won't get involved with a survey or a focus group, for example, if the topic is not currently relevant to them

Committee members discussed the mechanisms for sending and the timeliness of Safe-U Alerts. Arriaga shared comments from the November DCoP meeting that indicated the purpose of the Safe-U Alerts is unclear to many people. He added that that is good information for those working on reviewing and improving Safe-U Alerts to consider.

liz thompson asked if there was a plan to do the survey of students more regularly. Nolan said the intention is to survey resident students twice a year and that University Relations had funded the focus groups (done by an outside consultant). There is no plan right now to do the focus groups consistently. The focus groups were formed, Nolan said, because some of the survey questions were quite broad and there was more specific information she hoped the focus group setting would uncover. thompson said she was happy to see that the collected data was being used to dive even further into the issues.

Arriaga noted that because of how long it takes for data to be available from the Student Experience at the Research University (SERU) survey, it may not be an accurate representation of what is happening at the current moment in terms of the perception of safety at the University. Looking deeper into the gathered data, whether it is from SERU, student safety surveys, or focus groups, is a valuable exercise as it may illuminate a broader variety of perspectives based on particular identities, Arriaga said.

Arriaga asked Nolan if there is a plan to give a similar survey to graduate students or populations that are *not* residents of the campuses? Nolan said the survey administered to residents was initially administered to all students, and the response rate (from non-resident students) was so insignificant that the findings were not reported. Graduate students did participate in the focus groups, Nolan said, and they provided significant information regarding lab and classroom safety that they recommended be included in a definition of a culture of safety.

Lastly Nolan noted that University Health and Safety, led by Katherine Bonneson, is in the early stages of creating emergency preparedness and classroom safety information that can be located in classrooms so that it is readily accessible.

Hearing no further questions, Arriaga thanked Nolan and moved to the next agenda item.

4. Collecting Feedback from Groups Consulted on the CSC Definition of a Culture of Safety

Arriaga gave a summary of the work that had been done up to this point regarding developing a definition of a culture of safety. Establishing a definition of a culture of safety, Arriaga said, would help the University community have a baseline for defining what safety should be at the University.

At the November 16, 2023, DCoP meeting, the following prompts were presented to the committee members as they reviewed the proposed definition draft:

- Items missing?
- Fundamental issues or problems?
- Perspectives that are missing?

- General comments

The [feedback](#) provided by DCoP members was fairly limited in scope and didn't provide any additional information about how to improve the definition as the CSC moves forward in its consultation process.

Arriaga said next steps include sharing the draft definition (with a feedback form) more broadly to gather input from people who feel strongly about the safety issues. The form should be fairly simple given everyone's workloads, he said.

He then invited committee CSC members to respond to the question: "What is the best way to collect feedback from the community regarding the CSC's proposed definition of a culture of safety?" Comments included:

- Reach out directly to student groups and ask for time on their meeting agendas, especially groups that represent minority students. Start by sending an email to the groups asking if they would like someone from CSC to join their meeting, or if it is something they would discuss and respond to on their own.
- Provide a slider bar/likert scale to evaluate the proposed definition.
- Make sure there is an explanation about *why* the CSC is asking for information. Help those being asked for feedback see how participating will be of benefit to them. It has to be more than "just general information."
- Include the feedback form in the monthly safety update email - would have to partner with University Relations
- Make clear where the definition of a culture of safety will appear; is it for an external (to the University) audience? Will it appear on a website? Is it for prospective students? The specific purpose of the definition of a culture of safety needs to be identified and shared broadly.

Arriaga said his understanding of the purpose of the definition of a culture of safety is that it would be clearly associated with any safety initiatives that are happening around the University system.

5. Old Business/New Business

Arriaga turned to the remaining business items. He reminded committee members of the preferred topics for engagement that had been voted on:

- Accountability structures
- Classroom safety
- Community engagement
- Safety alerts

Arriaga asked Janelle Broesch if there was anything she would like to contribute regarding the status of the work being done by the institution on safety alerts. Broesch said the University's DPS has contracted an outside consultant to do a review of the University's alert system practices, how the University compares with benchmarks and best practices, and to prepare a report within the next 90 to 120 days. Broesche said the information would be shared with the CSC and that she would determine if there are opportunities during the review for the consultant to meet with the CSC.

Committee members had a brief discussion regarding the tools available, within a classroom, to lock down that classroom in the event of a threatening situation. Arriaga referred to previous presentations and discussions held by the CSC. He noted that three components are considered critical for classroom safety:

- Infrastructure and technology for remove locking or remote access (the discussions around this topic proved quite controversial at the earlier meetings)
- Education for everyone using classrooms
- Opportunities for practice drills and learning situations

Arriaga noted that, along with discussion at the DCoP meeting about classroom safety, he had received an email, as chair of CSC, with a question regarding what training and preparation the University is providing faculty in the event of active threat situations. There are many groups and individuals who are having conversations regarding this issue.

Arriaga asked, because questions regarding classroom safety are coming from many different constituencies, how can the CSC move beyond discussion and engage with administration to be more consistent and clear about this issue? Broesche said the DPS team, the risk management team, and the University of Minnesota Police Department (UMPD) are all working on this issue, and are currently developing training resource materials. Infrastructure and technology for auto-locking classrooms is part of the safety equation that will undoubtedly take more consultation, time, and resources, she said.

Arriaga asked the committee to consider one final question: Should there be a mechanism on the CSC website (which is part of the University Senate Governance website) to receive questions regarding safety concerns from the University community? After a brief discussion during which concerns were raised (personnel required to manage it, potential access issues), Arriaga said they would continue this discussion in future meetings.

Hearing no further business, Arriaga thanked committee members and guests and adjourned the meeting.

Geanette Poole
University Senate Office