March 14, 2022

To: Southwestern Community College District Executive Leadership Team

From: Al Abdallah, Chief Operating Officer, Urban League of San Diego County

Re: Phase 2 Report on Community Based Policing Model

This is the second of four reports that will recap the work that began in May 2021 in which the Urban League of San Diego County (ULSDC) was contracted to provide consulting services to the Southwestern Community College District (SCCD) in its efforts to design a community centered policing model that incorporates at its tenets; diversity, equity, inclusion and community engagement practices as the foundation of Campus Police Operations.

As was stated in my initial report, the task of changing the image and culture of the Campus Police has been and continues to be a collaborative effort. Dr. Kelly Hall, Chief Marco Bareno and I have monthly meetings to discuss the progress of this work and ensure that we are following our plan of action.

This report will highlight the focus group meetings that were conducted from 10/5/21 to 12/16/21. Those groups were the Faculty, Police Advisory Committee, Staff, Administrators, Community Members and Employee Affinity Group.

Faculty – This group was comprised of individuals with a tenure ranging from 3 years to 33 years. We began our discussion with Chief Bareno providing data on pre-COVID service calls as this was an area of concern. Chief Bareno shared that the police received roughly 5,000 service calls in the past year. 400+ calls per month/100+ calls per week. This figure was important to share as it provided a baseline of how busy the officers are on a weekly basis. Of those 5,000 calls, only 5 (.001%) involved use of force and no injuries were reported. The sharing of this data was pleasing to the group. A follow-up question centered on the MOUs in place with other departments. Some group members were concerned that external police agencies were patrolling the campus. Chief Bareno assured the group that that wasn't the case and that MOUs are in place to assist the Campus Police in skill areas that the Campus Police had reduced numbers of officers. For example, SWC doesn't have an Investigative Unit and this is an area were the MOU with the Chula Vista PD would come into play.

Several questions were data and statistics driven. This was not a surprise given that the group was comprised of educators. Questions centered on crime and racial demographic data drove a good part of the discussion. Chief Bareno shared that in 2022, SWC would begin to implement the Racial and Identity Profiling Act (RIPA). The aim of RIPA is to strengthen law enforcement-community relations through collaboration, transparency and accountability.

Some additional takeaways are listed below:

- Create a "Rate My Cop" app for individuals to give feedback to the police from the community
- What's the process to file a complaint? Do the students know and do the officers inform the students?
- The website isn't user friendly and not easy to follow if one wants to file a complaint

- Redesign the website and include a section titled, "Meet the Campus Police" with a video introduction from Chief Bareno and the officers. Have each officer inform the viewer who he or she is. This will personalize the officers to the public
- Create a Student Bill of Rights with a section to file a complaint or compliment an officer
- Implement a Restorative Justice element to the Campus Police and use resistant students to assist
- De-militarize the Campus Police as uniforms with guns and badges are triggers for some individuals
- The power dynamic is out of balance. We must humanize and build relationships
- The ASO President visited with Chief Bareno and Sgt. Suarez after our 9/20/21 meeting. The ASO President was invited to the police station and wants to be a bridge between gangs and the police
- Have an Open House at the Police Station
- We must become relational. We must look beyond the data. The squeaky wheel gets the grease. Not everyone will complete a survey. We must meet each group where they're at and in a venue that works for them
- The onus is not on the community to make things better, it is on the officers
- Peace Officer Standards and Training (POST) guidelines mandate certain actions, so we must explain those guidelines to the public
- We must accept that certain constituencies on campus see the police as a friend versus a foe. All police interactions are not bad. How do we find a balance?

The Faculty focus group had a robust discussion with too many takeaways to list in this document. The prevailing sentiment was that we must have ongoing dialogue. We must create a Chief's Advisory Board including students and that board should meet quarterly. This will assist in building trust within the community.

All of that said, it was also noted that there are not enough officers to do all that is needed. We must make increasing the number of officers needed to patrol the SCCD a priority.

Police Advisory Committee – This meeting began with Chief Bareno and I sharing the Mission Statement and Vision of the Campus Police and the need for us to implement the 21st Century Community Based Policing Model. We shared that we are meeting each group where they're at and that although this is a one year project, our goal is for the relationship between the ULSDC and the SCCD to be ongoing. Many members of this group felt that a partnership between the SCCD and a Community Based Organization focused on civil rights/advocacy took too long to develop.

They felt that the Campus Police survey that was administered before the focus groups were created should be administered multiple times per year as this would allow the police and community to have the most up to date data on whether the relationship between the police and community is improving, remaining neutral or diminishing.

Some additional takeaways are listed below:

- Cultural competency training is needed for police and all departments. We must view law enforcement as a culture and include it in cultural competency training
- What are the roles and responsibilities of the police? They should be working hand in hand with Student Services to deal with students that have mental health episodes. We must invest in a Psychiatric Emergency Response Team (PERT) similar to the model of SDPD
- There was discussion centered on defunding the police versus how do we make the police better without defunding
- Depending on which campus you work at in the SCCD, you will view the police in a different light. The National City campus sees the police more positively than other campuses. Does the survey data indicate that and if not, it should be disaggregated and drilled down further
- What's being done to build trust with students? More engagement is needed

We were able to have dialogue around a number of issues. Sgt. Suarez shared the good, bad and indifferent experiences that he's had as an officer with the Campus Police. This humanized him to the group and he was seen as more than just a uniform.

Many members of the group wanted to see the police as another campus department and not merely a law enforcement agency. They felt that inviting the students to the police station for a meet and greet would allow for an exchange that was non-threatening and the students would be able to view the police station as just another resource center on campus.

The officers must engage in dialogue with the community to seek feedback on what works for them versus what does not work for them. The students and overall community should not be scared and mistrusting of law enforcement. We must reach a point where the police are seen as approachable and everyone feels comfortable with their presence.

Staff – This focus group was well tenured with members ranging from 2 years on the job to 30+ years on the job. The majority were very pro-police, but recognized that law enforcement must evolve. They want to be a part of changing the perception of law enforcement. One member mentioned that he was concerned with school shootings and wants police officers around for the safety of himself, his family and his peers. Another member mentioned that his and other members of his family's interactions with police have not been positive. He felt that the community needs more education and not heavy handedness from police.

Some additional takeaways are listed below:

- Some members would like to see the police walking the campus versus patrolling in cars. The use of body armor is intimidating. Students would be more relaxed if officers were not wearing body armor
- Chief Bareno explained that officers must wear body armor to protect themselves, but stated that they are working to find the "sweet spot" with respect to how much body armor to wear
- Seeing officers walking/biking on campus makes some members feel safe. They want officers to speak to them
- Although some members feel threatened by body armor, others feel safe when they see officers wearing body armor. The level of fear or comfort is predicated on one's past interactions with law enforcement

- Some members would like to see more transparency with the police and were grateful for the focus group meetings
- Some members wanted to see an increase in the number of officers, but Chief Bareno explained budgeting challenges and that the SWC police is not the only department that is challenged for officers at this time

The bulk of this dialogue centered on staffing, transparency, the use of body armor and how many departments the SWC police have MOUs with. It appears that many members are in need of education on what the SWC police do, don't do and a thorough explanation of the department.

During the midst of the discussion, Sgt. Suarez shared that he was newly promoted and that he is changing how officers are being trained in the field and how they conduct themselves. This was pleasing to the group. It was also pleasing to the group to know that a "Meet the Team" video will be created that will allow them to know their officers. This is very important to many factions on the campus.

Administrators – This was a small group which felt that they knew the officers a bit more than other groups. Our discussion began with the question, "What are you seeing and hearing?" We then provided an overview of 21st Century Community Based Policing and how the Constitution gives Police the right to police.

This group saw the police as their colleagues. Despite the fact that some members of the group had poor experiences with the police growing up, they felt that their experiences with the SWC police was different. They have gotten to know the officers as people and not as a marauding force that is out to harm them. In the words of one member of the group, "I play basketball with Sgt. Suarez and Sgt. Gess." That interaction on a human level makes a world of difference for people. It lowers the temperature in the room and people can see the officers outside of a uniform that has brought trauma to many people.

It is for that reason that Chief Bareno shared with the group that he's only worn his uniform three times since assuming the Chief position and that has allowed people to get to know him as a person and not as a cop.

Some additional takeaways are listed below:

- Sharing of officer bios, Meet the Team video and Chief Bareno's State of the Department will be a huge plus for the community
- We must build better relationships with the officers
- Officers showing restraint including the Chief in interactions with those that have committed minor infractions was another huge plus. Chief Bareno showing leniency to a teenager on a skateboard when skateboarding isn't permitted on campus was an example of that leniency
- We must change mentalities with each interaction. We must not have one and done interactions with our community members
- We should start monthly chat and chews with the police and community members. This will allow barriers to be broken down

As stated above, this group saw the police as their colleagues and friends. They felt that a lot of work is needed to change hearts and minds on this subject. They also felt that Chief Bareno's demeanor dictated how the officers are to engage the community.

Having the officers more present and approachable on the campus will make a huge difference. Although the number of officers is less than ideal, this group felt like they could be ambassadors for the department with other community members and students. Having officers sit with them, have lunch with them and just say hi to them is extremely important and breaks down barriers that impede progress in the area of community-police relations.

Community Members – Although this group was small in number like the Administrators, they had a lot to share. The focus of our discussion was similar to the prior focus groups. More visibility for the officers, increased staffing levels, which departments are working with SWC from an MOU perspective and how closely does SWC work with CVPD.

One member referenced the "new age" approach to policing being adopted by CVPD and how effective that model of policing will be. We shared that the work being done by CVPD is 21st Century Community Based Policing and we're mirroring that model at SWC. CVPD is "doing it right" and SWC has every intention of "doing it right."

Some additional takeaways are listed below:

- There's fear in communities of color and police must make a paradigm shift. The existing model of policing is broken
- A campus should be a safe place for everyone and no one should be scared to be approached by police
- How are officers trained and must they adhere to POST? Chief Bareno explained that POST is mandated by the State of California and all officers adhere to those standards
- Chief Bareno shared that the Police Academy training is lacking in the area of Interpersonal Communication skills (IPC), but he's focusing on this training with his officers
- How diverse is the department and is ethnic data collected on arrests? How do we know that racial profiling is not occurring with black men?
- Although IPC training should be required of police, it should be required of staff as well
- Have a section on the website where all data on service calls, ethnicity of those interacted with and arrest data is accessible
- We must acknowledge that the atmosphere with the police is terrible. That said, the Black Chamber of Commerce is here to assist in any way that they're needed

This focus group had a very positive tone throughout. Whether the discussion centered on defunding the police, reallocation of police funding to deal with mental health challenges for students, the shortage of officers and officer training; the end result was a group of community members committed to working with the department because they can see the big picture. They realized that officers cannot do everything. We must work as a collective to solve this problem.

Employee Affinity Groups – This was another small group that had a lot to share. We began our discussion like many others recapping all of the work done with the previous focus groups. This group was brought up to speed on IPC training, lack of adequate staffing, the re-administering of the survey at the conclusion of all group meetings, implementation of an informational kiosk, coffee with a cop, etc.

This group focused on changing the narrative. Why are whites treated differently than people of color? Why are members of the LGBTQ community not treated with equity and fairness? Why are police being asked to do so much with so few resources?

This was a very reflective group that felt that they could play a role in assisting with this work. They'd like to see officers out of their cars and walking the campus. They'd like to see a more community friendly police force down in San Ysidro (one member of the group reference her experience on the San Ysidro Campus).

After eight focus group meetings in 3+ months, a theme was made very clear. The community and the students want to know their police department and don't want to be scared. They want to know that the officers adhere to POST and would like to see an increase in the police presence at all campuses. They feel that there are not enough officers to patrol 24,000+ students, faculty and staff and dollars should be reallocated to allow the officers to embrace the 21st Century Community Based Policing Model that we're advocating. They want to get to know their officers and Chief Bareno. They want to be a part of what we're describing as a paradigm shift and I feel that the recommendations from all involved in this work can make that a reality.

Listed below are some of the items that Chief Bareno has been working on as a result of our meetings. The goal is show results and let those that have participated in these discussions see that their input was valued and changes are being made:

- Combine our department training and de-escalation measures along with cultural diversity training
- Promote campus outreach by partnering with the ASO office
- Participate in community events such as MLK parade, Pride parade, Shop with a cop, K-12 presentations, etc
- Bring back our Student Worker program
- Enhance our recruitment from our SWC Police Academy
- Add our ride-along program to our website
- Our College Police Website is currently being modified to be easier for students and the community to navigate and to be able to access information such as crime statistics, services, personnel videos and classes (RAD class, Active Shooter class and CPR)
- Work on social media platforms such as our Instagram page to share department functions and current events

Future meetings with representatives of ASO and EDI will be recapped in the Phase 3 report.