

Agenda for March 29, 2021

I. Attendance

Noah conducted attendance.

II. Public Comment

There were no public comments.

III. ACPD Presentation

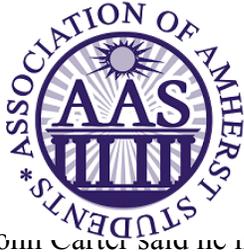
A. Public Safety at Amherst—Setting the Scene

Sofia Guerra and Jeremy Thomas facilitated the ACPD town hall. Comments made by the public will be labeled as “PC”.

Sofia introduced herself as Political Science major and Senator for the Class of 2022. She thanked everyone for attending and appreciates everyone being a part of the process.

Jeremy introduced himself as an English and LJST double major and AAS president.

James “Jim” Brassard thanked the Senate for inviting them. He is the Chief of Campus Operations and oversees a number of operational departments, including Public Safety and ACPD. He will keep his introductory remarks very brief, for John will ultimately share both actions they have taken already as well as their emerging plans. He said these changes are meaningful and will fundamentally change ACPD. This is serious and critical work, and the racial injustices that have existed for generations are calls to action for them. They are rethinking the role of police on campus, but he notes that they also live in a world where threats of violence are a reality. He said they need to reimagine ACPD and be very mindful of how they effectively preserve campus safety. He said John has had numerous conversations with campus constituents, and he is looking forward to a productive exchange.



John Carter said he has been the Director of Public Safety for the last 11 years. He is also a proud parent of a graduate of the class of 2017. He said he has a PowerPoint to share which will outline the progress being made.

John presents his PowerPoint (see 3.29.21 AAS-ACPD Townhall Presentations).

John said that was all, but he wants to end by saying he absolutely believes in this reimagining safety model. He thinks they can do more, and they can do better. He has talked with other senior staff numerous times, presented to his own staff, and has worked with the Office of Student Affairs. Everyone is on board. He said this is just the start of the work. He is pleased everyone invited him here to speak about this tonight.

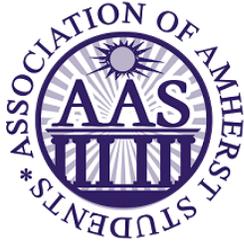
Sofia thanked John. She said she wants to be mindful of people's times, so they will quickly go through one more presentation from Jeremy.

Jeremy said he will keep his remarks brief. He knows they want to get to people's questions and comments. He thanked Jim and John for being here, and he thanked Sofia and Angelina for giving time in this meeting for a conversation.

Jeremy presents his PowerPoint (3.29.21 AAS-ACPD Townhall Presentations).

Sofia said they will now have time for their live Q&A. She will take raised hands.

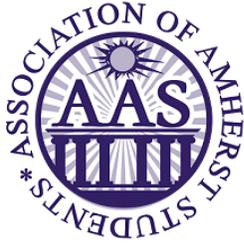
Cole said he is very curious about why [John] thinks unarmed police represents a dramatic shift from what the college has right now. He is thinking about the fact that Amherst town police is a block or two away. He is also thinking about the fact that Mount Holyoke and Smith College both have unarmed police departments with cooperation with their respective towns. He asked, how will disarming ACPD meaningfully change responses on campus to the most extreme scenarios, which by the way we have not seen before?



John said, in not trying to disrespect the folks that work at Mount Holyoke and Smith, an unarmed police department is actually just a security department with some arrest authority. They are very limited in their ability to respond to quite a bit of things. He said if they were an unarmed department, their dependence on the town police will rise substantially. In effect, what they would be doing in this moment is trading the police officers that know their way around campus, have the college philosophy built into their work ethic and know quite a few members of campus as well as the campus itself, intimately, with other police officers who will still carry guns but are strangers on campus

John continued and said the benefit to the campus is not measurable here. He thinks there will be a delay in response by the town of Amherst, which has a fairly small police department. They have a shift supervisor and three or four cars covering this entire town. If they are at an incident in the north part of town, or perhaps at a fatal accident, it could be quite a long time before they get a response from a police officer. He also thinks these officers will be on campus more than students expect when thinking about the duties that are required of an officer. They will not only respond to the active aggressor, but also the intrusion alarms, panic alarms, etc. To finish, John said Mount Holyoke and Smith are actually now separate agencies—they have left the safety consortium. These colleges are wholly dependent on their local hosts.

Eve De Muheto '21 [PC] said she has a quick response about the distinctions between what it would mean to rely on a police force outside of the Amherst College campus police officers. She thinks in the presentation [John] spoke about the dynamic between these officers and students. She said it is important to make clear that, because of the dynamics of policing in general, the distinction between campus officers and town police almost seems exaggerated in terms of what the relationship looks like with students who are uncomfortable with ACPD in the first place. She said an alternative that was raised is potentially having weapons in the facility of the police department rather than on officers as they do the day-to-day activities. She asked, would this be a reasonable possibility?



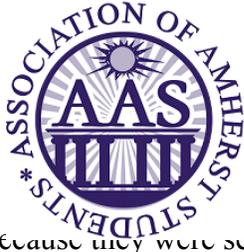
John thanked Eve for her question. Part of his hope is being able to address the underlying relationships between officers and students. In terms of storing firearms at the police station, it again becomes a matter of the response time as officers have to return to the station to get a firearm to address the call. He said he has thought about this alternative quite a bit, and he thinks the practicality of when a police officer would carry a firearm then becomes something that will always be questioned. There are complexities that make this very difficult, however it still something under consideration. He said it will require quite a bit of conversation and research.

Sofia said she has a quick follow-up question. She said if all firearms were held at the ACPD station unless there was an emergency like an active shooter, does [John] foresee this being an option?

John asked, what situations would call for a need to get the firearm? It would absolutely be in response to an active threat, but would it also be in response to a panic alarm? An intrusion alarm? Would it be obtained in the example of the night when a person was out in the woods south of campus with a firearm and intended on committing suicide? There was a concern they could come onto campus with their firearm. Would it be when they are called to investigate a suspicious person that possibly has a weapon? He thinks there are varying degrees where they would have to figure out exactly when and where they would call for a need to receive the firearm. He said this feels very complex to him.

Jeremy said, to clarify, he thinks in the past 60 years there has never been an incident where they have needed to display their firearms.

John said he believes there was one incident, but the point he is trying to make is that they do not know when the night they will need to will be. There were two instances where there were stabbings on campus, and thankfully they were able to take those people into custody without using firearms. However, this could have gone in another direction. One student would have died



because they were seriously injured. What if they get called to a fight that could potentially escalate to involve weapons. He said he is aware students do not always hear about these instances, but people with significant criminal histories have come to campus because it is a great opportunity to steal things. They had one person arrested a few years who was on the Massachusetts most-wanted criminal list. He came here in a stolen car and have been walking around the campus buildings. This is not just about colleges students but also about the threats they face from the outside. There are no gates, no walls, no bubble.

Sofia said, if students are interested, they can keep this specific conversation going during John's listening sessions on Tuesdays at 3 PM and Thursdays at 7 PM, eastern time.

Eve [PC] said, in thinking about how Amherst College is not a bubble and needs to think about outside threats, it makes it harder to understand why the college's policing system still needs to be in-house. The idea of not knowing when things are going to happen is also consistent with police groups—policing is reactionary. She said maybe developing relationships with local police can transmit some of the training of officers.

John said in a lot of what he has read and heard in the past year is that most students want the college to disassociate themselves from local police forces. He asked, is there a preference we use local police rather than our own?

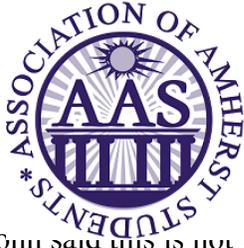
Eve said, personally, when thinking about the situations that would require an armed officer, she sees it being delegated to officers outside of their campus. When thinking about the changes ACPD has already begun doing, it seems like there is a delegation of crisis management within their campus. She said this is something that can still stay within Amherst College and should stay within the people who know our community best. When talking about the presence of armed officers, she does not know if the distinction between and ACPD officer versus outside officer feels different.



Margot Lurie '21 [PC] said her question might be one that cannot be addressed at this time because there might be more information that needs to be gathered. She asked, how much are we spending as a campus community on ACPD right now? Will these new reforms and changes being made to ACPD cost us? She said it sounds like the vision right now is to hire a slew of new officers for ACPD who are not sworn officers but are still serving this community through the Community Safety Officer (CSO) role. This sounds like there being more investment in the police. She said she is really trying to figure out what kinds of resources are being put towards the police and if the money can be used differently to better support students in a way that makes them feel safe on campus, like helping students deal with the mental health crises in ways that do not require armed officers or unarmed officers but rather those trained to deal with these problems.

John said he does not think he can give an exact dollar amount, but what he can say is they are doing a lot of the funding for the CSOs by reducing the number of sworn police officers. The number of 15 officers that Jeremy mention earlier was at our peak a few years ago. They are closer to 10 or 11 right. He said by the way, he is included in that number and he does not do any police work. So, what they have been doing is reallocating money that already exists within the safety budget from one point to another. He thinks the CSOs are being framed as part of ACPD, but really it is more so novice to environmental health and safety which is absolutely no part of the ACPD—these folks are going to be more service-oriented and they will not be acting as police officers.

Samantha Rothberg '21 [PC] said one thing she feels seems easier to change is the calling system. Many students do not feel comfortable interacting with the police department in any capacity, and she is wondering if there was a reason that ACPD felt the need to take calls themselves and determine what would or would not require police action as opposed to allowing students to decide what resources they feel they need to access.



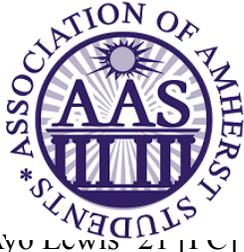
John said this is not within his control. He said the college's dispatch center has always been the dispatch center, and they have always been the after-hours center for other departments. In many ways, this will not change, but what has changes is what they would assign to a police officer. He said they are trying to break the connection that dispatch is only part of the police department which is untrue. He does not know if other offices are prepared to provide on-call numbers that students can call directly. Dispatch just seems to be an easy one-stop call for folks.

Jerome said he has a quick question regarding the new reforms being planned around ACPD. He asked, what is accountability going to look like in the future? Who will ACPD be answering to? He is wondering how ACPD will be held to their word and standards.

John said he is hoping the committee group will help with accountability and transparency. He is personally accountable to Jim, who is accountable to Bidy, who is accountable to the Board of Trustees. There are a lot of eyes on this. He agrees that this process has move slower than he wished, and he wishes he was much further along in this process.

Sofia said she has a quick follow-up question about the advisory group. She said there seems to a lot of institutional representation in the group. Having a DA involved, for example, can make people feel not at ease. She asked, how do you view the proportional representation in terms of student involvement in this committee?

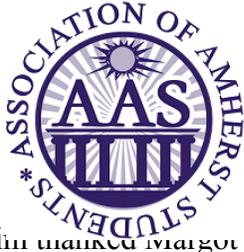
John said, to clarify, DA are the initials of the person not their title. He apologies for this misunderstanding. He said he wanted one person who is an expert in campus safety and one person who is an expert in campus relations and organizational change. He is hoping to have three student representatives put forth by AAS along with representation for faculty, the Office of Student Affairs, the Resource Centers, etc. He is looking for broad representation along with a strong number of students.



Ayo Lewis [PC] said she just wants to remark that students are the ones who live here 24/7. Everyone else in this community goes home at the end of the day. In terms of proportionality, it should be student-led. Regarding the CSOs, she is concerned about how, historically, they have seen people like those in child protective services who are not cops but operate in a carceral way. She asked, how will the CSOs not operate in a carceral way that impacts students of color disproportionately? To anecdote this, her experience as a black student with what she likes to call the “COVID cops” has been terrible. There have been four instances where COVID cops have approached her aggressively in terms of trying to enforce rules, and in some of these experiences she was in the right. She knows the rules straight from Liz Agosto and the CSO interacting with her was uninformed. She asked, how will this not happen with these new safety officers? Lastly, regarding the dogs ACPD might obtain, what breed will they be? Cops with dogs has not been a good thing but rather a point of aggression, especially with people of color. She knows for many students, a dog on campus would be cute. However, if it is a 50-pound German Shepherd, that may not serve the role people think it will serve.

John thanked Ayo for sharing her experience. If [Ayo] would like to talk more about these instances, please reach out to him for he is interested in hearing more. It is great point that non-police folks start, over time, reflecting police values. He said they are very fortunate that their CSOs, so far, have not done anything as drastic, although it is something to stay aware of. He appreciates Ayo bringing this up. In terms of the dog breed, that is also a great point. They will not have a German Shepherd or any other dog with a reputation for aggression. The dogs they are considering are some kind of Labrador mix, and they honestly are big, goofy, and sleepy dogs.

Margot [PC] said, moving forward, she is hoping students receive information regarding ACPD funding. We as students want to know where our money is going, for we are the ones who know where our values lie and want to have access to this data. Regardless of whether the CSOs are under ACPD or not, they are resources that can be used differently.



Association of Amherst Students

Senate 2020 - 2021

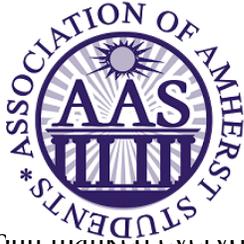
Jim thanked Margot for asking about more detailed information. He said, as John noted, their goal is to reallocate funding, but he is aware budgets are statements of values. He will consider Margot's request.

Bella said her question is more of a comment. She thinks it is great that they have the chance to have this conversation and that they go to a school small enough to make this possible. She thinks it's really important to note that. She also said many of those making comments are seniors. She wants to make sure the college is taking them seriously and will continue to make progress once seniors leave. She said she hopes John, Jim, and the administration understand how important safety is to them. She understands this is [John and Jim's] careers, but students are the ones experiencing it, like Ayo said. We live here and do not leave, so it is really our experience with safety being discussed. She wants to make sure there is no feeling that students have some kind of ulterior motive. Thank you.

John said he hears Bella very much. This is something he really believes in. He said there is a reason he works on a college campus—he chose to. He cares deeply about the safety of students.

Sofia said she hopes everyone hears each other. To wrap things up, the main issues that have been voiced tonight concern firearms, insignificant student representation on the advisory committee, and access to ACPD's budget.

Jeremy thanked everyone for taking the time to be here this evening. His hope is that this is the first of many productive conversations. The point of conversation is for there to be plenty of opportunities for everyone to be heard. He said the requests students are making are the same, so he hopes they do not have to keep having this conversation to the point that it is too late and someone is harmed.



John thanked everyone for allowing him to come here and present. He wished everyone a good night.

IV. Minutes

Lucas motioned to approve the Minutes.

Motion to approve Minutes from the March 22, 2021 Senate meeting and the March 15, 2021 Senate meeting.

Results: passes

V. BC Recommendations

3D requested funding for stamps.

Men's Club Soccer requested funding for goalkeeper gloves.

NISA requested funding for food and a graduation speaker honorarium.

Liberty in north Korea requested funding for book club books.

SEASA requested funding for food.

Drew Health Professionals Society requested funding for food.

Asian Students Association requested funding for food and board games.

Mock Trial requested funding for snacks.

Newman Catholic requested funding for food.

Chinese Students Association requested funding for snack packages and publicity.

Men's Ultimate Frisbee requested funding for coaching.

Fencing Club requested funding for fencing gear.

HEMAC requested funding for six ARMS UMass membership, event fees, two sabers, and educational materials.

Women in Finance requested funding for thank you's.

CAB requested funding for transfer.

Sunrise requested funding for food.

BSU requested funding for March Madness event food.



Lara requested funding for food and supplies for blanket making.

WAMH requested funding for a one-year Spotify subscription.

Women's Club Soccer requested funding for food.

Cole motions to fund the BC Recommendations.

Motion to fund the BC Recommendations for the week.

Results: passes.

VI. On-Campus/Off-Campus Check-ins

There were no updates.

VII. New Business

A. Senate Projects/Committee Updates

Jerome said he is working with Rod who works in campus printing. He has a list of how many employees are on campus, and it is a little less than 300. A student asked if there could also be a list of employees who work at the library and he is working on obtaining that. Rod said he can work with AAS with no charge.

Maira said her and Rebecca are working with a student not on AAS on a pop-up thrift store that will be free for all students. They will definitely need a lot of volunteers to pull this off, so please feel free to message her.

Angelina asked, does the Elections Committee have a practice vote for us?

Maira said they have been working on a practice election for the executive board. It will be coming soon.



Allie said she had met with a lot more first-years and a lot of them came here for the first time this semester. The college has done nothing to help them get acclimated to campus, and she is wondering if they should put together a mixer for new students.

Angelina asked, is anyone on the First-Year Committee interested?

Alexi said yes, that is something the committee can do or help Allie with. The committee's actual things have not picked up yet because acceptance decisions just came out. She said they need to make sure transfer students are included as well because some students were not here last semester or left after a few weeks.

B. Officer Reports

Brooke said the other four college met with the PVTA and forgot to include Amherst College. They have all decided that, because each college is in a different financial situation, everyone will make their own decision regarding PVTA funding. She will have more information soon.

Angelina said elections for the e-board are April 15. General elections will happen April 29. She asked the Elections Committee to stay for a bit after this meeting.

VIII. Adjournment

The Senate adjourned for the day's discussion.

Minute Taker: Allyah Pimentel Landestoy
Length of Meeting: 1 hour and 32 minutes.