

Campus Safety Community Report

“The safety of our community is our highest priority.” — Chancellor Jeremy Haefner

Community Commitment

The Campus Safety Department aims to create a safer and more secure campus for all community members by engaging with stakeholders, reviewing data, and fostering open dialogues. Through honest, collaborative, and proactive engagement, we seek to identify concerns, promote well-being, and build a culture of safety that empowers everyone to thrive and learn.

Purpose of Report

The Campus Safety Community Report provides information on our community engagement efforts and strategic considerations. This report outlines our recent community engagement and visioning efforts. The report highlights strategic planning efforts that include:

- An external review of Campus Safety operations (Healy+ Report)
- Insights we learned from other universities
- Community engagement and listening session insights
- Clarifying the issues
- Launching the Campus Safety Advisory Council
- Next steps

External Review | Healy+ Report

In February 2023, DU retained a nationally recognized professional services firm, Healy+, to conduct a comprehensive assessment. The firm specializes in advising on safety, security, emergency preparedness, and regulatory compliance in higher education. This public safety management study evaluated the department’s model and operations, strategy, organizational climate, policy, training, and community engagement. The full report was not distributed broadly given the sensitive nature of the campus safety information it contained.

Their recommendations included 1) developing a community vision and mission for Campus Safety, 2) investing in community engagement, 3) strengthening training, 4) modernizing DU’s response to mental health and substance abuse emergencies, and 5) enhancing expertise, equipment, training, and technology to address active violence swiftly and effectively. The report specifically reinforced our concerns about an increase in the number of violent crimes near DU and slowing response times from the Denver Police Department.

Based on Healy+’s evaluation, the Department of Campus Safety launched a two-part community engagement initiative to: 1) create a Campus Safety Advisory Council and 2) initiate

a series of on-campus listening and engagement stakeholder sessions to gather insights into the community's experiences and reactions to potential strategies for addressing targeted violence on campus. Independent from the Healy+ Report, Campus Safety also visited other universities' campus safety operations to explore alternative models and opportunities for improvement.

Insights We Learned From Other Universities

Over the last 18 months, members of the Campus Safety team visited eight universities and consulted with numerous others to explore leading practices at other institutions specific to active violence, event management, and mental health crisis response. Institutions were selected based on their existing practices, location, or recommendations from experts in the field.

Benchmark institutions included:

- RIT*
- UC Davis*
- Colorado School of Mines*
- CU Boulder
- BIOLA University
- Portland State University
- Northwestern University
- University of Notre Dame

*Three Highlights from Other Universities

In our research of mental health response models, UC Davis' program, [Health 34](#), inspired us to imagine our own. Health 34 is a mobile, unscheduled mental health support unit that prioritizes preventative and proactive care, increasing access and removing barriers to mental health resources 24/7/365.

The Colorado School of Mines also provided valuable inspiration. Mines employs four response coordinating case managers as a part of their Student Outreach and Support team to support the mental health and well-being of the Mines student body. These case managers serve as the "on-call" responders to emerging mental health crises that arise after hours and over the weekend. This model highlights the importance and need to provide after-hours mental health care to our community.

The Rochester Institute of Technology (RIT) Public Safety Department aligns closely with DU's Campus Safety Department, serving as unarmed security. Eight years ago, RIT adopted an "access to arms" model in response to escalating safety concerns. This model incorporates rigorous access controls and safety protocols while providing the university with a proactive defense in the case of a mass violence event.

What is *access to arms*? RIT has trained campus safety officers who have access to weapons stored in secured locations. Officers are prepared to take immediate action and stop an individual from actively harming others. This may include actively engaging the individual, containing them in a specific area, or evacuating individuals to safety.

They do not openly carry weapons during their day-to-day routine patrols. Officers act as a first response to active violence until police units arrive. RIT's program was initiated in 2018 and has been without incidents or use since.

Community Engagement & Listening Sessions Insights

What

Between November 2023 and May 2024, the Campus Safety Department has actively engaged with the DU community through 27 listening sessions and over 20 community meetings, totaling 85 hours of involvement. These sessions took place across campus, involving small groups, affinity groups, academic colleges, and administrative teams. A total of 458 students, faculty, and staff participated. In addition to these sessions, Campus Safety fostered connections with students during the fall and winter quarters by hosting dinners with various student organizations. Moreover, our relationship with the Undergraduate Student Government (USG) has been reinforced through quarterly lunches with the president and bi-weekly meetings with the student wellness and safety senator.

Why

Campus Safety's community engagement program is our commitment to building relationships across campus, assessing current sentiments, and developing a foundation for strategic initiatives that align with the diverse needs of our DU community. Recognizing the imperative for a more robust community engagement direction, we hired Julianne Toce, as our director of community engagement. The objective of our most current round of listening sessions was to gather feedback on various mental health and crime response models from a diverse group of community members.

How

Listening sessions aimed to collect feedback, identify areas for improvement, and address vital safety issues within the community. When individuals requested additional time to express concerns, Campus Safety Leadership held individual meetings with them.

Engagement sessions were facilitated with a commitment to openness and attentive listening, guided by the following principles:

- Continuously seek input and feedback across all community segments in shaping improvements to our campus safety policies and practices.
- Promote a culture of mutual respect, understanding, and collaboration, where safety measures are integrated seamlessly into our educational mission without compromising academic freedom or inclusivity.

Guiding Questions

During sessions, facilitators sought feedback on three primary questions:

1. How can we better engage the community in conversations about both physical and psychological safety?
2. How can we better respond to urgent mental health issues?
3. How can we improve our readiness to respond to active violence?

What We Learned

First, we learned how generous our community is with their time and how diverse their experiences are when it comes to safety. Discussions revolved around the intricate factors that contribute to psychological safety and security and the need to effectively respond to serious mental health incidents and active threats of violence. Voices amplified the need for mental health crisis services for students, employees, and unaffiliated individuals who visit our campus. Faculty and staff requested support and training to respond to mental health challenges more effectively. Most participants reported feeling comfortable communicating their safety concerns to Campus Safety. When asked about DU creating a mental health crisis response service, participants preferred calling Campus Safety for such a service over calling the existing anonymous crisis line, calling 911, or seeking a Denver STARS responder.

As we shared information on the “access to arms” model, participants asked about the possibility of arming officers versus providing them with access to arms. These conversations delved into safety protocols, training requirements, legal nuances, ethical standards, and how different approaches might be adapted to our campus context. There was no universal agreement on a single approach, and some constituencies raised concerns over the negative consequences of arming campus safety officers in any way, citing research on school shootings. Our research reviewed data from the [Violence Prevention Project](#), recognizing that the data only includes incidents with more than three tragic fatalities and lacks incidents below that threshold or with no injuries or fatalities. Participants voiced the need for transparency, data, and communications exceeding typical modes.

On balance, the “access to arms” model emerged in response to community feedback that strategically balances DU’s commitment to campus security with a desire to preserve a sense of welcoming and inclusive community with unarmed officers.

A Sampling of Different Voices

(The following are a sample of anonymous quotes taken directly from our real-time engagement tool during presentations.)

“Having armed officers on campus or having arms available to officers would not make me feel safer.”

“I feel vulnerable and unsafe on campus because I believe the BOT (Board of Trustees) and University leadership often do whatever they want to do without really caring much about the PEOPLE of the DU community.”

“I feel safe on campus, although I have seen an increase in crime.”

“I view campus safety as our most accessible option for safety concerns, but they aren’t a substitute for the police.”

“I am a little bit uneasy about this (access to arms) but would support the idea. I think students need to know that campus safety could be armed if needed. I think that there needs to be strict protocols around storage.”

“Would likely be in support (the access to arms model) with thoughtful and detailed protocols, transparency, and regular training, including how to respond to mental health crises.”

“I think given how long DPD (Denver Police Department) takes to respond to calls, I would not be against trained campus safety officers having access to arms. I don't think they should open/conceal carry but have arms on campus.”

“People do not take time away from studying within reason for general wellness. Professors as well as staff are not as trained as they should be or aware of concerning (mental health) signs.”

Summary by Topic

Perceptions of Safety	Mental Health	Active Violence
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Concerns about camera coverage, adequate lighting, parking lots security, and unlocked buildings • Safety concerns closer to the light rail and areas adjacent to campus at night • Political events across the country impact the psychological safety of affinity and other groups • Lack of awareness of available resources and what to expect from campus safety • Concerns about institution communication 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Mental health concerns and in-person support for emergent issues • Tension between public access to spaces and the psychological safety of employees • Discomfort with uniformed officers responding to a mental health crisis • Lack of training for faculty and staff to address mental health concerns 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Concerns about active violence • Concerns about Campus Safety considering access to arms • Concerns around officers openly carrying firearms • Concerns about DPD response time and effects on psychological safety • Necessity for officers to be trained and competent in de-escalation, implicit bias, and the use of lethal force.

(All qualitative data can be found [HERE](#))

Clarifying the Issues

Community-Based Mental Health and Psychological Safety

Listening sessions explicitly solicited information on our community’s psychological safety and mental health concerns, exploring strengths and gaps in our emergency response capabilities. Responses from these sessions are consistent and reinforced DU’s data from the National College Health Assessment (NCHA) and DU-EMS calls. DU, like many universities, is experiencing elevated reports of anxiety, depression, loneliness, and suicide ideation. Data and feedback from listening sessions confirm a strong desire for increased access to counseling and support 24/7 with in-person options, like the Denver STAR program.

Crimes and Active Violence

Historically, DU has experienced low crime rates in the surrounding area and on campus. Since 2021, our district (District 3) has seen an increase in violent crimes, including murder, aggravated assault, and crimes against persons. Below is a comparison of the crime at DU in 2019 and 2023. Additionally, Campus Safety responds to threats of violence across campus, in our mental health clinics, and at the Ricks Center for Gifted Children and Fisher Early Learning Center.

DU Service Categories	2019	2023
Non-emergency Calls	29,222	17,057
Emergency Calls	5,458	6,697
Total Number of Reports	1,110	934
Medical Assists	219	282
Wellness Checks	95	101
Offense Reports	609	572

Denver Police Department Relationship

In September 2022, DU partnered with DPD to engage off-duty DPD officers to patrol areas adjacent to campus, with particular attention to the RTD station and campus perimeter. The partnership aims to strengthen the DU-DPD relationship and improve DPD response times to critical incidents. In 2024, the Denver Police Department (DPD) Performance and Transparency dashboard reported that emergency response times have recently slowed from 13 minutes to 17 minutes in District 3 (DU’s district). In studies of active violence, response time is critical, and the combination of an increase in nearby crimes and the Denver Police Department’s slower-than-expected response times has led DU to re-evaluate campus safety’s preparedness to respond to active violence.

Launching the Campus Safety Advisory Council

In the Fall 2023 quarter, the Chancellor formed an advisory council made up of key administrative roles, representative positions, and faculty experts. The council is chaired by the Senior Vice Chancellor for Operations and Strategic Implementation. Members are listed I Exhibit C.

The Campus Safety Advisory Council is committed to cultivating a culture of safety, well-being, and inclusivity within our diverse academic community. Our mission is to collaborate with Campus Safety leadership, fostering an environment where individuals can confidently thrive and learn. This council has met twice, with meetings scheduled for the spring and summer quarters, and will continue to meet quarterly to provide feedback and formal support on campus safety matters. These meetings facilitate open dialogue among various stakeholders, including students, faculty, staff, and, when necessary, local law enforcement.

Council Scopes and Responsibilities:

- **Data Analysis:** Regularly review and analyze incident data, helping to identify patterns and areas of concern.
- **Community Feedback:** Provide a platform for community members to voice their safety concerns and suggestions.
- **Policy Review:** Examine existing safety policies and propose new initiatives when necessary.
- **Preventative Engagements:** Review and suggest strategies to prevent campus safety incidents. This includes awareness programs, self-defense classes, and safe transport options.
- **Annual Reports:** Evaluate annual reports summarizing Campus Safety efforts, achievements, crime data, and recommendations for further improvement.
- **Community Surveys:** Conduct surveys that allow us to collect feedback from the University community and assess perceptions of safety and security.

Next Steps

Campus Safety will improve DU's readiness for routine and predictable incidents based on listening sessions, local and national data, external expertise, and benchmark studies.

Community Engagement

Campus listening sessions proved invaluable in the process, and we are grateful to our community for the meaningful engagement.

We will continue our commitment to community engagement, seeking input and feedback from the Campus Safety Advisory Council and community members to inform and refine our campus safety policies and practices.

Campus Safety plans to improve the quality and quantity of information available to the community. Regular engagement sessions, community reports, publicly available information on training and services, and safety indicators should be expanded to foster a shared journey toward a safer, more engaged, and resilient campus community.

If you're interested in scheduling an engagement session with Campus Safety leadership, please email Community Engagement Director Julianne Toce at

Julianne.Toce@du.edu. Additionally, there are upcoming community coffee hours where you can have conversations with her and Chief Michael Bunker:

Beans Coffee Shop

Tuesday, May 14, 10:30 a.m.-12:30 p.m.

Wednesday, May 15, 9 a.m.-11 a.m.

Thursday, May 16, 10 a.m.-12 p.m.

Mental Health and Behavioral Interventions

DU plans to integrate 24/7 in-person mental health crisis resources for all DU students, faculty, and staff into the existing DU mental health support systems.

Drawing from models at UC Davis and Colorado School of Mines, Campus Safety advocates for hiring mental health providers specializing in behavioral intervention, crisis response, wellness education, and training. The proposed model aligns better with a new standard of care that reduces the necessity for a response by a uniformed officer.

DU plans to invest in a mobile mental health vehicle that can be deployed on campus to respond to mental health crises, offer post-crisis presence and support, and serve as a visual reminder of DU's commitment to mental health.

Active Violence and Access to Arms

The Campus Safety Department will invest in emergency response preparedness that includes an access-to-arms model, improving its capabilities to contain and reduce the harm from an act of mass violence on campus. As stated elsewhere in this report, this approach does *NOT* arm campus safety officers for their daily shifts. Campus safety officers will remain unarmed for their duties.

Campus safety officers will have access to firearms in cases of active mass violence events. A specialized team of officers will undergo rigorous training to meet the highest of standards and operate under stringent policies and protocols. Weapons will not be visible in the campus community, outside of instances of active violence. Officers will also modernize and reform the equipment in their belts, removing batons and adding tasers. Campus safety officers will wear body cameras to provide accountability and transparency to the community.

Summary

As we bring this report to a close, we are ready to take a significant step forward in our ongoing commitment to campus safety. We affirm our collective dedication to nurturing a safe and supportive environment for all members of our diverse academic community. This decision to update our model, rooted in inquiry, inclusive dialogues, and careful consideration, reflects our shared values and dedication to the safety of our students, faculty, and staff.

In our journey, we recognize the multifaceted nature of safety concerns, especially amidst the complexities of mental health crises and potential threats of violence. As we begin to strategize on the implementation of these recommendations, we do so with a deep understanding of our

shared responsibility to uphold the principles of inclusivity, openness, and accountability. It is through our collaborative efforts and unwavering commitment to continuous improvement that we will navigate the challenges ahead.

In the spirit of community partnership, we embrace this opportunity to further enhance our campus safety measures while fostering a culture of trust, respect, and support. As we move forward, our dedication to creating an environment where every community member can thrive, learn, and contribute to the collective pursuit of knowledge and excellence is paramount.

Respectfully Submitted,

Michael Bunker, Chief of Campus Safety

Eric Hartman, Executive Director of Risk Management

Julia Richman, Senior Vice Chancellor of Operations and Strategy

Julianne Toce, Director of Community Engagement for Campus Safety

Appendix

Exhibit A is a snapshot of District 3 crime data reported by the Denver Police Department.

Exhibit B shows District 3, highlighted in yellow.

Exhibit C is the list of Campus Safety Advisory Council members.

Exhibit A

NIBRS Crime: Year to Date

Crime Category	2021	2022	2023	2024
Violent Crime	195	249	273	232
sexual-assault	22	32	38	24
robbery	56	79	79	56
murder	5	1	2	4
aggravated-assault	112	137	154	148
Property Crime	2838	2911	2793	1704
theft-from-motor-vehicle	921	1059	1011	459
larceny	636	509	566	532
burglary	431	290	391	221
auto-theft	846	1039	820	486
arson	4	14	5	6
Other Crimes	1035	1108	1160	1137
white-collar-crime	82	83	98	66
public-disorder	596	702	610	490
other-crimes-against-persons	89	132	163	206
drug-alcohol	103	52	84	126
all-other-crimes	165	139	205	249
Total	4068	4268	4226	3073

Exhibit B

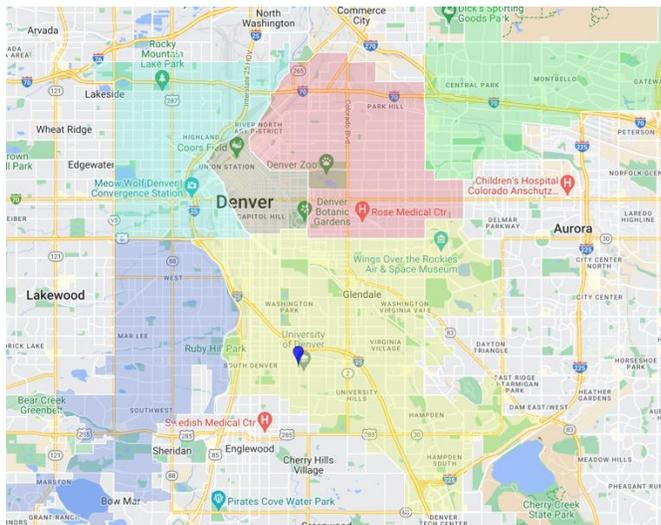


Exhibit C

Campus Safety Advisory Council Membership

Julia Richman, SVC for Operations & Strategy Implementation	Stephanie O'Malley, Assoc. Vice Chancellor for Community & Gov't Relations
Aimee Hamilton, Associate Professor	Anne De Prince, Professor & Assoc. Vice Provost for Public Good Strategy & Research
Shira Good, Associate Vice Chancellor of Communications & Issues Management	Annecoos Wiersema, Executive Associate Dean of Academic Affairs, Sturm College of Law
Eric White, Sergeant, Campus Safety	Kristin Deal, Assistant Vice Chancellor
Shawn McVey, HR Partner	Lynn Coutts, Associate Vice Chancellor, Deputy Athletic Director
Detric Robinson-Miller, Director of Residential Education	Brian Schreckinger, Director of Community Commons
Christopher Miofsky, Associate Director FSL	Julianne Toce, Director of Community Engagement
Mattie (MJ) Hyde, USG President	Shevene Cole, GSG President
Joe Ponce, Staff Senate Representative	Ajenai Clemmons, Assistant Professor of Public Policy
Michael LaFarr, AVC, Health & Wellness	Mike Bunker, Chief of Campus Safety
Stephanie George, Faculty Senate Representative	Melissa Polk, General Counsel