

**Final Report of the Portland State University  
Ad Hoc Committee on Public Safety and Emergency Operations**

**Committee:**

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**I. Introduction**

Portland State University (PSU) is a community...within a city. If PSU were a city, with over 30,000 students, faculty and staff, it would be Oregon's 15th largest. As such, PSU faces the same safety and security issues of any city this size, plus it has the unique set of needs you would expect from an enterprise serving the many roles of an urban university. Besides being an educator and researcher PSU is:

- an employer
- a purchaser
- a real estate developer
- a community partner
- an expert advisor
- a business accelerator
- a work force developer

From a safety and security standpoint, the many roles, geographical location and complexity of its operations put Portland State University into a category of its own.

**II. The Charge to the Committee**

PSU has been working over the past year to align its emergency operations with new Homeland Security requirements. Additional work has been done as a result of the "Virginia Tech recommendations." This Ad Hoc Team was formed to help the V.P. for Finance and Administration assess options for further development of this critical service area. Specifically, the team convened campus wide focus groups on these issues. These focus groups responded to the questions below and the information, responses and ideas resulting from these discussions were organized and submitted to the V.P. Finance and Administration in the form of recommendations. These recommendations were intended to inform the V.P. Finance and Administration of the campus' opinions; with the

understanding she would be adding her own perspective to the final report to the Chancellor.

### **III. Focus Group Questions**

The following two questions were asked of all seven focus groups the committee convened:

**Question #1:** Given the unique characteristics of our Urban Campus, what is the best way to notify PSU community members in the event of a safety and/or security emergency?

**Question #2:** With the goal of improving campus and officer safety and security, which alternative best serves the needs of PSU: transitioning the Campus Public Safety Office (CPSO) to a full service police department; contracting with an existing department (such as the Portland Police Department; Oregon State Police etc.); creating an OUS system wide Police Department with a PSU branch; or leaving the status of PSU's Campus Safety Department as is?

### **IV. Support Materials**

In order to inform discussion on these two questions, each focus group member was given background materials. The summary documents did two things:

1. They listed PSU's current procedures for communicating with their constituents, as well as planned enhancements and methods still under consideration.
2. They listed four possible options for serving campus safety and security needs. This document was a matrix of options and a listing of the different levels of authority associated with each option.

The support materials were reviewed by the Committee and the group Facilitators made a great effort to present them in a manner that would prompt reasoned responses, but not influence the participants. **See appendices for these documents.**

### **V. Focus Groups**

The seven focus groups represented as wide a range of Campus perspectives and interests as possible, given the Chancellor's extremely short timeline. The Committee decided to target each focus group, however every session contained individuals who were not part of the targeted group and a particular effort was made to include at least one student in each group. Focus groups were facilitated by members of the committee and approximately 140 members of the campus community participated. **See appendix 1 for the Committee's contact information.**

The Focus Groups were:

- Campus Public Safety Officers and staff
- Facilities and Planning
- Student Affairs
- Students
- Faculty

- Academic Deans
- All Campus

## VI. Testimony

**Question #1- Communications-** PSU is a fluid community populated by groups and individuals who are constantly on the go. Its facilities are a patchwork of public and private spaces commingled with businesses, open spaces and cultural buildings; located within the University District, PSU sits in the middle of Portland's major transportation hub. Creating a system that addresses the permeability of the campus boundaries, while enabling PSU to communicate with their full community in the event of an emergency, is both critical...and...daunting.

The consensus of the Committee (this was also supported by Focus Group testimony) is that the methods PSU currently uses are slow and unwieldy. All-campus emails can take an hour to process and with the various filters in use on PSU's networks, can take up to seven hours to fully post. When sent to all users simultaneously, campus wide emails also run the risk of overwhelming the I.T. systems. Announcements can be posted on an emergency web page and while this has the benefit of being quick to post and has little impact on the network's carrying capacity, it assumes enough people are looking at the homepage of PSU's website to see the message and spread it. Phone trees are also in use but they require frequent training and the periodic updating of contact lists. PSU uses its campus radio station KPSU to notify students, but the only place on campus this is audible is through the intercom system in the Smith Student Union. While other forms of local media are available, by the time a response has been composed and distributed, the crisis may have passed and PSU is left having to explain their response.

Clearly, PSU's current communication methods are not fast or flexible enough for their needs. Fortunately there are new technologies that come closer to providing the full range of options needed to communicate with users in the event of an emergency and PSU has invested in one. 3N, (National Notification Network) a messaging service that is deployed off campus and is separated from PSU's main I.T. systems will enable communication by:

- campus phone
- cell phone
- home phone
- email
- pager
- fax
- instant message system
- text message (SMS)

However, 3N is a voluntary notification system that relies on the user to both opt in to the system and manage their contact information. While this means many PSU users will not be on the system, it is likely that over time most will want to receive notifications and will opt in.

In addition to modes of delivery, there was also a great deal of discussion about what needs to be communicated and to whom. All agreed that a threat to life warrants a response, but there were differing opinions about whether the communication should be

targeted to the area of campus that was immediately at risk or the whole campus. In the initial rollout of the 3N system, PSU will be able to send campus wide notifications telling users to stay away from a particular area; in subsequent versions, the goal is to create user groups that will enable 3N to target notices down to the building level. However, as the focus groups pointed out, there are many areas of the campus where electronic messaging will not work at all. For example, the basements of many buildings are the least connected areas on campus and yet house some of the most vulnerable members of the PSU community. Communicating an emergency to these areas in a manner that does not incite panic will be a real challenge.

The focus groups generated several new ideas which were a combination of low and high tech; one of these ideas (see **Emergency graphic below**) is already in use. Adoption of any of the focus groups' "new" ideas will entail additional cost and training.

New ideas:

- Install "panic-buttons" that are connected to the CPSO dispatcher- in every classroom.
- Improve the University's blue light system or replace it with a three color (red, yellow, green) light system that would be visible in common areas of the university and would be connected to the emergency phone system.
- Develop a building and floor level monitor system, with a designated "last man out" who would report to public safety and give the all clear sign when their area was safe to occupy.
- Use online social networking communities such as Facebook and MySpace to direct PSU users to go to a notification page on their website in case of emergency.
- Create a message that can overwrite screen savers on PSU network computers. This message would "pop up" on screens and inform users about the emergency.
- Talking fire alarms are now possible and could be programmed to voice a set of "canned" emergency messages. These messages would be the same used by 3N.



As PSU continues to grow, its emergency communications systems, policies and procedures will need to keep pace. Not only so they can communicate effectively with

their faculty, students and staff, but so they can communicate with the lessees in their buildings and their good neighbors in the University District. To this end, Vice President of Finance and Administration Dr Lindsay Desrochers has committed to funding a full time Emergency Management position. In the interim, training of campus managers and other employees in FEMA's Incident Command System has been continuing over the past year and a half. The individual who eventually fills the new Campus Emergency Manager position will work together with Chief Soto to incorporate the findings of this Committee into a comprehensive Campus Communications strategy.

**Question #2- Public Safety Options-** This topic generated a great deal of interest at PSU and while the Committee was in session, the student newspaper ran four articles on the issue. The focus groups were asked to review a matrix of possible Public Safety Options and respond to these options, keeping in mind that the goal of this process was to craft a model that met the unique safety and security needs of the PSU campus and its officers. Although a support document listed four options, the facilitators made it clear that the characteristics of the options were not fixed. In fact, focus groups were encouraged to "mix and match" characteristics, if by doing so they could create a new model that better served PSU.

Since each Focus Group was asked to refer to the matrix and consider the authority inherent in each Public Safety Option, the report follows this format as well. **See appendix 2 for this document.**

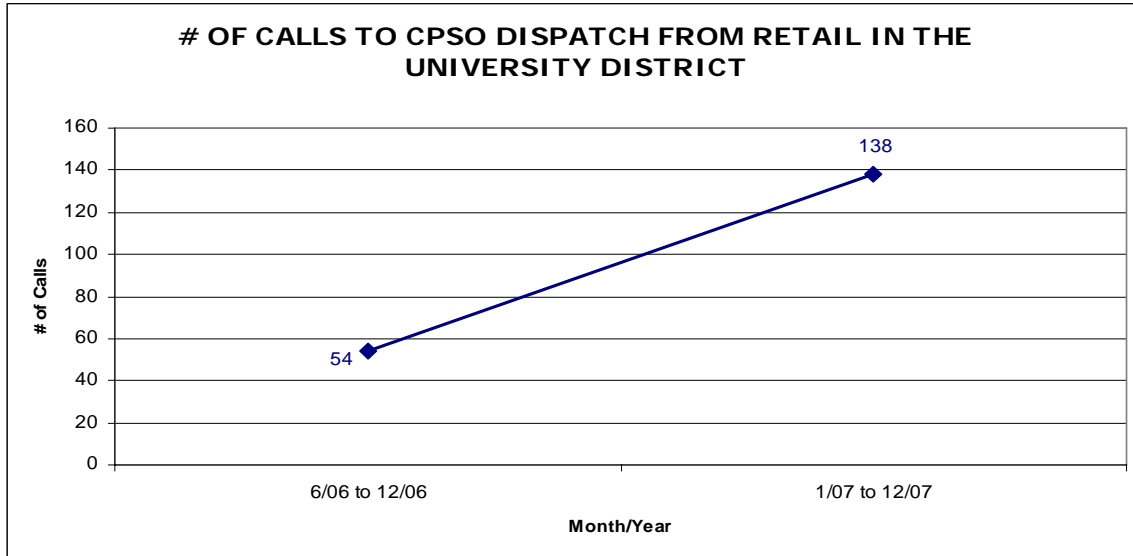
### **Authority**

**Felony/Misdemeanor Arrests:** PSU Public Safety already has this authority so discussion was limited to the nature and frequency of felony and misdemeanor arrests in the community. The Committee learned that both types are increasing and that the frequency with which these arrests involve an armed suspect is increasing as well. However, PSU officers are unarmed and many focus group members expressed concern for officer safety. Others felt that PSU officers were doing an excellent job now (unarmed) and that they did not see the need to arm them, given how quickly the Portland Police Department can respond to a call. CPSO officers responded to this by explaining that PSU calls to Portland P.D. were not a first priority. The times/days when trouble was most likely to occur were the same for Portland P.D. and PSU and Portland P.D. could only respond to PSU calls after their own priority calls were answered. When Portland P.D. does respond to a call involving weapons- regardless of the type of weapon- they come in large numbers and fully armed. This is a sensitive issue at PSU and there was much debate about whether a strong show of armed force -whenever a weapon is involved- is always necessary on a college campus.

Several groups mentioned that PSU officers understand campus culture better than "regular" police and this makes them more effective when dealing with student behavior. Point of fact, PSU officers do have a unique understanding of campus culture since nearly all of them are taking courses or pursuing degrees and are students themselves. As a result, they may better appreciate that many students experiment with risky behaviors as part of their learning process. Many PSU community members expressed their appreciation for officers who use their discretion and PSU's internal disciplinary procedures to deal with student conduct; they preferred to see students learn from their mistakes on campus without being swept up into the criminal justice system. People felt

managing student behavior using local controls was consistent with the values of the campus community.

Another concern is that PSU is getting bigger and more complicated, with more mixed use facilities being built that contain businesses as well as academic space. From a public safety standpoint, this means PSU officers are being asked to respond to calls from businesses housed in their buildings. As **Chart #1** demonstrates, to the extent we are able to capture this data; PSU's changing relationship with the business community is resulting in more calls to their Campus police.



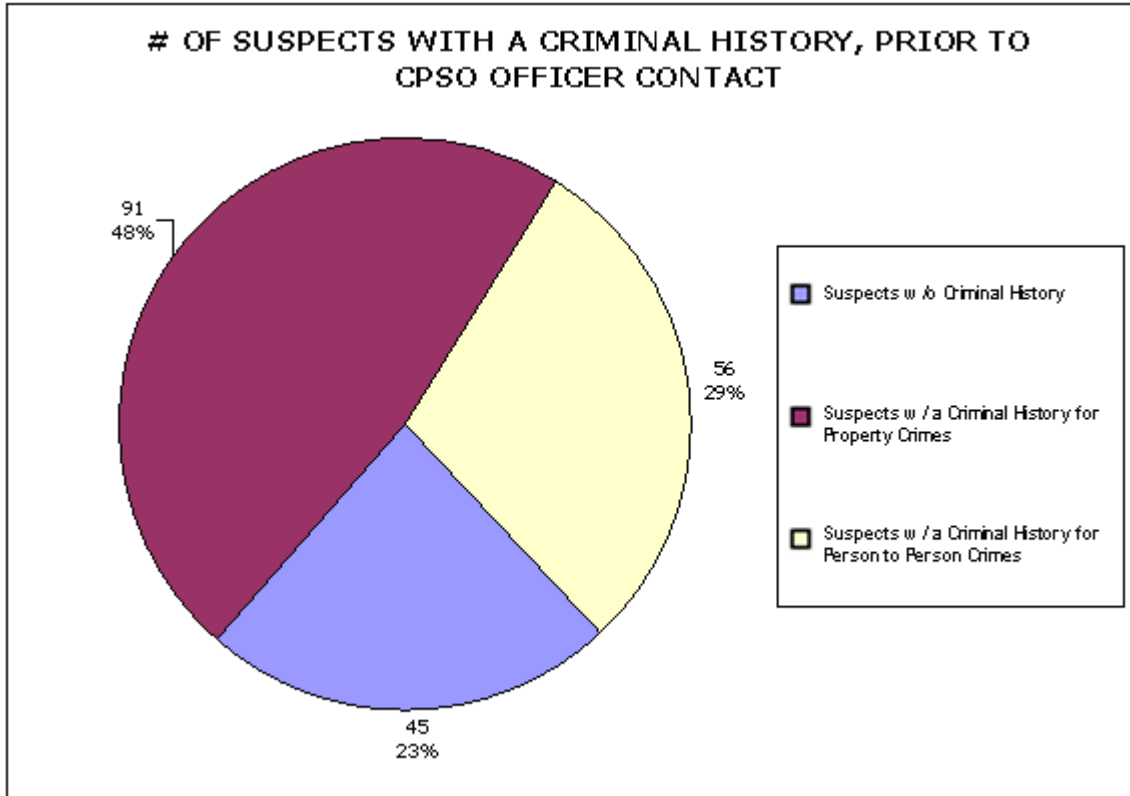
**Chart # 1**

**Source: Clery and CPSO**

**Violation Authority:** Of the four options discussed, only PSU's public safety program does not have violation authority. Once the focus groups understood that (according to ORS 153.008) a lack of Violation Authority meant PSU officers were not able to issue citations resulting in a fine, i.e. cite minors in possession of drugs or alcohol, it was difficult for them to understand why they did not have this authority. Since the vast majority of offenses committed on campus have to do with minors in possession, it seems odd that CPSO officers have to call in Portland P.D. for these offenses. Since the offense results in a fine it was understandable that CPSO would want this authority; it would require a statutory change to give PSU officers this authority.

**Guns:** Since carrying guns would require CPSO officers to pass police academy training-which is now statutorily denied them-it is unclear how PSU officers could be armed any time soon. In addition, the increased liability this would create for PSU presents a serious impediment to arming CPSO officers. However, there is absolutely no doubt that PSU officers are responding to more and more dangerous situations; since 2004 the annual number of campus crimes involving a weapon has doubled. As the physical size of the campus increases, this number is likely to increase. At PSU however, students are not the cause of this increased threat of violence. Because of PSU's location and access mission, individuals from throughout Portland can come on campus at any time; and they do. Many of them are individuals with criminal histories. Last year, the Portland State campus community suffered 458 crimes (Clery). The vast majority of these (266 or 58%) involved drug or liquor law violations by students and were dealt with

by invoking the Student Code of Conduct. Of the remaining 192 offenses, most were committed by non-students, of which 77% turned out to have prior criminal histories.



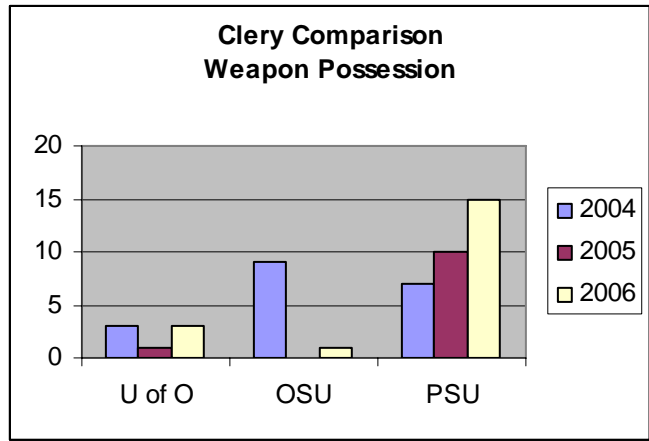
**Chart # 2**

**Source: Clery and CPSO**

Even with the increased likelihood that our officers were dealing with armed suspects; there was a vocal minority who were against arming them. Several individuals felt it was never intended that PSU public safety officers should ever be armed and that being armed, would in fact, make PSU officers less approachable, compromising their community policing mission.

Just as there was opposition to arming PSU officers, there was real concern for their safety and several different scenarios or solutions were discussed by which PSU officers could have access to weapons in the event of an emergency. One idea was to keep a weapon in a special lock box, access to which would be tightly controlled. Another was to divide CPSO officers into two types and arm them depending on their duties. Chief Soto has already begun to deploy his officers by duties and now has Community Service officers who respond to the service calls that are unlikely to require force as well as Public Safety Officers who are prepared to make an arrest. Many campus community members commented on the appropriateness of this two tiered approach.

**Tasers:** Most of the discussion on “police tools” focused on guns; weapons such as Tasers got little attention from the group. However, as **Chart #3** illustrates, crimes involving weapons are on the rise at PSU and consideration of non-lethal tools that will provide their officers with a means of self defense seems appropriate at this time.



**Chart #3**

**Source: Clery and CPSO**

**Probable Cause/Warrant Searches-** All of the options under consideration already contain this provision; there was no discussion on this topic.

**Civil Protection on Arrests-** All of the options under consideration already contain this provision; there was no discussion on this topic.

**Transport Liability-** The focus groups were surprised to learn that only PSU has transport liability for suspects; there was little discussion beyond this.

**Basic Training (DPSST) -** PSU officers receive six weeks of training. Because the Oregon Revised Statute under which they were created does not designate them as sworn police officers, they are not eligible for the 16 weeks of training City or State Police receive. Many focus group members were surprised to learn this; they thought CPSO officers were fully licensed police officers. Chief Soto explained that PSU officers get additional training to help them deal with individuals with mental health issues, armed individuals, etc. but that the training is discretionary, intermittent and under funded. Many felt PSU officers should receive at least as much training as Portland P.D. since they had to deal with the same criminal elements. Some respondents went so far as to suggest PSU officers should get more training since they had the added element of having to deal with students.

**Reporting System-** All of the options under consideration already contain this provision; there was no discussion on this topic.

**Retirement System-** There was no discussion on the retirement system for public safety officers per se, however it did come up that the public safety program at the University of Oregon pays a 10% salary premium for officers who are commissioned or become commissioned during their employment there, even though the University of Oregon uses the Eugene Police force to make on campus arrests. This would seem to put PSU at a competitive disadvantage when hiring.

**Scope of Authority-** PSU is located in the University District, a specially zoned part of Portland. The boundaries of this district define PSU's scope of authority. When called by individuals and businesses within the district, CPSO responds. As PSU continues to grow this scope of authority will put additional pressure on PSU's public safety department. In addition, new PSU buildings are likely to be built using a mixed use

funding model. This will mean more businesses and student housing will be commingled with academic space, further complicating PSU's communication and public safety needs.

**Governance-** Besides guns, governance was the topic that engendered the most discussion. With near unanimity, focus groups wanted PSU to maintain control of its public safety program. Whether the new program was to be a PSU "precinct" of an OUS Police Department...or...PSU's public safety program was to be converted into a full police department, the vast majority of respondents did not want to contract for service with either Portland P.D. or any branch of the Oregon State Police and lose local control of CPSO.

## **VI. Discussion and Recommendations**

In an effort to hear all voices on campus the Committee convened seven focus groups and listened to approximately 140 individuals give eight hours of testimony. As would be expected, ideas about how best to address PSU's emergency communications and public safety needs covered the full spectrum. Some of the more unusual ideas were to include nuclear fallout drills (a la the 1950's) in the emergency communications system, while others felt that if everyone could carry concealed weapons on campus there would be no need for a public safety program.

While hearing all voices was important, it was the Committee's responsibility to sift through the testimony and make recommendations that best address PSU's unique set of needs.

**Question #1: Communications-** Notifying the whole PSU community in the event of a safety and/or security emergency will require an array of methods. The Committee suggests these principles be used to guide the development of a better emergency communication process:

- Clarity in both its design and implementation
- Flexible and provides PSU with multiple ways to inform the community
- Redundant and robust
- Designed so PSU can follow-up calls with more information or instruction
- Utilizes both high tech and low tech communication methods
- Able to reach multiple constituencies
- Designed with clearly defined threshold events which trigger a message
- Tested regularly- but never to the point where it could be ignored

Whatever system or set of tools PSU eventually employs must also provide the community with information about what to do...once they receive the information. This implies continuous training of some type.

**Question #2- Public Safety Options-** The PSU community must understand there is no perfect safety plan and that whatever option (or variety of options) is adopted, it is impossible to cover every emergency situation. Regardless of their preparations and vigilance, given the fact there have been over 40 shootings at American schools since 1996, there is the possibility that PSU will experience an active shooter incident on their campus at some point in the future.

Public Safety Options that would be acceptable to the Campus community include elevating the current PSU Campus Public Safety operation to a “regular” police operation or creating an OUS police force, but one in which full operational authority is delegated to the campus. Between these two options exists a third, which would involve having PSU public safety officers trained as police officers in the Department of Public Safety Standards and Training (DPSST) system and then qualifying for weapons use on a specific weapons training schedule. The Campus policy might also include having weapons available in the Unit headquarters under lock and key for potential violent situations or on the night shift.

Here are the principles the Committee recommends to guide further development of PSU Campus Public Safety:

- Local control is of paramount importance with backup from the City or other police departments as necessary.
- Maintain community policing focus, especially in relation to the management of student issues.
- Public Safety Office should have an urban focus with an appreciation of the diversity inherent in an urban setting.
- Public Safety officers should have complete training and authority over all types of campus crimes. They should also have knowledge of the Campus culture and the ability to work effectively in this environment.
- Within statutory limits and under careful control, PSU officers should have the tools they need to deal with a growing number of weapons related incidents including weapons training and access to weapons under certain circumstances in order to protect students, faculty, staff and others in the University District- as well as the officers themselves.

**VII. References and Appendices:**

1. Committee names and contact information:

<u>Committee Names</u>	<u>Contact Information</u>	<u>Staff Names</u>	<u>Contact Information</u>
Dr. Ron Tammen	5-8443	Mark Wubbold Debbie Kirkland	5-2933 (wubbold@pdx.edu) 5-5878 (kirkcladd@pdx.edu)
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Lt. Craig Whitten	5-4006		
Dr. Sharon Blanton	5-9144		
Dir. Julie North	5-9790		
AVP Dan Fortmiller	5-4446		
Dir. Robin Pierce	5-4310		
Dr. Mark Chubb	5-8298		
Dr. Rod Diman	5-5271		
Nanette L. Yragui	5-8197		
Dir. Julie Smith	5-4467		
John Brown	thisisjohnbrown@gmail.com		

## 2. Support Documents for Focus Group Questions

### Question #1- Communications

#### Emergency Communications Methods

##### Current

1. email all users – time to process is about an hour
2. Post announcements on an emergency web page
3. human runners
4. phone trees
5. KPSU and news media

##### Planned

1. Launch 3N solution to include sending messages to:
  - a. Campus phone
  - b. cell phone
  - c. home phone
  - d. email
  - e. pager
  - f. fax
  - g. instant message system
  - h. text message (SMS)

##### Under Consideration

1. clocks with text messages and audible alarms
2. increased use of video monitors placed in building lobbies
3. portable public address systems that can be taken to areas as needed

##### Questions for Focus Groups

1. Which communication methods make you feel safest?
2. Which communication methods do you have available to you?
3. Which communication methods do you use most frequently?
4. Would you be willing to incur a charge for receiving an emergency text message?

## Question #2- Campus Safety Options

Date: February 6, 2008  
Campus Public Safety Office



**Please Note:** The characteristics of the models listed in the "Options" chart below are not fixed. Focus group participants may wish to propose mixing and matching characteristics to create a new model. The Committee seeks feedback that will best serve the PSU of today and tomorrow, which as an Urban University has unique Public Safety needs.

### Public Safety Options

AUTHORITY	OPTION 1 (CURRENT): PSU PUBLIC SAFETY	OPTION 2: OREGON UNIVERSITY SYSTEM POLICE DEPT.	OPTION 3: PORTLAND STATE UNIVERSITY POLICE DEPT.	OPTION 4: EXTERNAL CONTRACTS (OSP/PPB)
Felony/Misdemeanor Arrests	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Violation Authority	No	Yes	Yes	Yes
Guns	No	To be determined by OUS discussion	To be determined by PSU discussion	Yes
Tasers	No	To be determined by OUS discussion	To be determined by PSU discussion	Depends
Probably Cause/Warrant Searches	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Civil Protection on Arrests	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Transport Liability	Yes	No	No	No
Basic Training (DPSST)	6 Weeks	16 Weeks	16 Weeks	16 Weeks
Reporting System	Clery	Clery/Uniform Crime Reporting (UCR)	Clery/UCR	Clery/UCR
Retirement System	PERS	Public Safety	Public Safety	Public Safety
Scope of Authority	University District	OUS Schools	University District	Depends
Who Governs?	PSU	OUS	PSU	Contractor

### Current Three (3) University Law Enforcement Models

AUTHORITY	PORTLAND STATE UNIVERSITY - PUBLIC SAFETY OFFICE	UNIVERSITY OF OREGON - EUGENE POLICE DEPT.	OREGON STATE UNIVERSITY - OREGON STATE POLICE
Felony/Misdemeanor Arrests	Yes	Yes	Yes
Violation Authority	No	Yes	Yes
Guns	No	Yes	Yes
Tasers	No	Depends	Depends
Probably Cause/Warrant Searches	Yes	Yes	Yes
Civil Protection on Arrests	Yes	Yes	Yes
Transport Liability	Yes	No	No
Basic Training (DPSST)	6 Weeks	16 Weeks	16 Weeks
Reporting System	Clery	Clery/UCR	Clery/UCR
Retirement System	PERS	Public Safety	Public Safety
Scope of Authority	University District	Depends	Depends
Who Governs?	PSU	Contractor	Contractor

3. For an overview of how PSU's Public Safety program compares to other Universities, review the Department of Justice's Office of Justice Programs- *Campus Law Enforcement, 2004-05* By Brian A. Reeves, Ph.D.

The full document is available at: <http://www.ojp.usdoj.gov/bjs/pub/pdf/cle0405.pdf>