

To the Board of Regents:

We, as students, workers, and scholars in the Department of Political Science at the University of Washington stand in solidarity with Black Lives Matter and all uprisings seeking racial justice through police defunding and divestment. The names of Ahmaud Arbery, Bennie Branch, Manuel Ellis, George Floyd, Said Joquin, David McAtee, Tony McDade, Nina Pop, Breonna Taylor, and so many others, are still fresh in our mouths as we mourn their deaths and demand justice for their murders. They are the latest victims of a system of state-authorized violence that for centuries has enabled white vigilantes, slave patrols, and now the police to terrorize with impunity. From the laws of slavery to the Black codes to Jim Crow, despite decades of anti-racist struggle and reform, our laws and institutions still value social order for a privileged few and the preservation of property over Black lives. This has yielded not only racial violence, but disparities in wealth and property ownership, public health crises, voter intimidation and suppression, punitive social programs, and a system of education often committed to ‘diversity, equity, and inclusion’ in name only.

As scholar activists, we know that collective institutional action in tandem with individual activism is essential to affecting structural change. For educational institutions, the time for feigned neutrality or intellectual detachment is long past. In short, institutional inaction and silence reinforces white supremacy. Black activists and people of color have taken the lead in upholding and realizing ideals of justice, democracy, and equality *for everyone*. Likewise, student activists have mobilized to [end exploitative carceral labor practices](#). In contrast, we find that the responses by our federal, state, city, and university leaders are wholly inadequate in addressing contemporary racial injustice and state violence. In order to make our campus community a livable space for all students, and especially Black students, [we join and uphold the calls](#) from campus and Seattle-area community leaders to decriminalize and demilitarize UW.

Our demands below offer an immediate path for the university to decriminalize campus and protect vulnerable campus workers. Under [RCW 28B.10.550](#), the University of Washington’s Board of Regents has the power to prescribe the “conditions and regulations” of UWPD, the campus police force. By taking seriously these demands, university leadership can take an active role in addressing the over-policing of and violence against Black and brown bodies:

- End collaboration between Seattle PD and Campus Security when detaining individuals on all three of UW’s campuses;
- End the mobilization of SPD to address all public safety needs on UW campuses (especially, but not limited to, the use of police during wellness checks);
- End the use of police as additional security for campus events;
- Disarm Campus Security officers at all three UW campuses;

- End the use of patrol dogs on all three UW campuses;
- Ban the hiring of police officers with professional disciplinary records

In addition, we call on the Board to institute additional reforms around budgeting, cooperative agreements between SPD and UWPD, data collection and oversight:

The demilitarization and divestment of UWPD must begin with university budgeting and shifting institutional priorities, particularly during this financial crisis. Currently, the police department's budget is categorized under the Office of Student Life and accounts for [55-60 percent of that budget](#). We suggest that the Office of Student Life take leadership on this issue by reducing the size of the UWPD force and diverting discretionary funds toward its essential community programs, including the Counseling Center, Community Standards and Student Conduct, Disability Resources, Health and Wellness, Q Center, and Student Veteran Life.

Currently, the university [maintains a collective agreement with SPD](#) that enables UWPD to patrol Greek Row and adjacent University Park. These Incident Prevention Teams (IPTs) shield the broader campus community from SPD jurisdiction. However, IPTs also raise urgent questions about over-policing within our own community. We urge the board to limit SPD and IPT access to the university and broader campus community by: (1) maintaining any collective agreements that grant UWPD jurisdiction in SPD-controlled areas; (2) limiting the use of IPTs in policing issues that could be remedied through community and public safety programs; and (3) severing any collective agreements that grant SPD access to the university and campus community.

We also call for structural changes within UWPD's organization to improve transparency, data collection, and public oversight. Given what we know from decades of academic research about the disproportionate effects of police violence on people of color, we know the value of dependable, accurate, and centrally available data. On-campus police forces must make information about their budgets, protocols, and tactics publicly available. UWPD's "[complete lack of transparency around budgeting matters](#)" has long been an institutional problem of which university leadership is well aware. UWPD must also improve the availability and accuracy of its self-reported data on [Citizen Complaints and Internal Investigations, as well as Use of Force Incidents](#) and disaggregate this data by race, gender, and age. Additionally, UWPD must begin to report disaggregated data on [Part II crimes](#), including minor offenses that contribute to over-policing. To date, there has been no public-facing effort to correct this lack of transparency.

Through the Campus Security Advisory Committee (CSAC), the administration currently has a means by which to improve and expand community oversight of UWPD, yet this committee lacks the most basic standards of transparency and good governance. According to [the only](#)

[publicly available report](#), there are currently no laws, regulations, or UW policies that directly govern the Campus Security Advisory Committee. Reform of CSAC must begin with (1) the regular publication of meeting reports and recommendations from the committee, and (2) the creation and publication of explicit laws and policies to govern committee operation.

Finally, we acknowledge that these calls for racial justice are happening during a global pandemic, which has disproportionately affected campus workers of color facing increased economic precarity, including medical staff, food service workers, and custodians. Therefore, we urge the university to also use its power as a financial borrowing institution to ensure the health, safety, and continued employment of those made even more vulnerable by the current economic downturn. This includes the provision of [requested personal protective equipment](#). Commitments to ending racial injustice can begin by ending state-sanctioned violence against black and brown bodies but they must continue by addressing systemic income and wealth inequality.

In Solidarity,

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