



building
momentum

Community Safety Advisory Group: Committee Updates

Amid a national reckoning regarding the relationship between law enforcement and marginalized communities in 2020, President Robert A. Brown established the Community Safety Advisory Group (CSAG). This 30-person committee, composed of students, staff, and faculty, seeks to enhance responsive and proactive efforts for community safety at Boston University. CSAG advises University leaders and the Boston University Police Department (BUPD) on supporting and improving physical and psychological safety and security, particularly for underrepresented communities.

CSAG works in the following ways:

- Creating and submitting recommendations to senior leadership that promote the physical and psychological safety of all members of the BU community by acknowledging safety concerns and well-being on campus.
- Reviewing the University's protocols for engaging BUPD and the Boston Police Department to address conflicts and promote appropriate departmental coordination (e.g., [Residence Life](#), [Sex-Assault Response & Prevention \(SARP\)](#), and Student Health Services).
- Encouraging direct input from the BU community on campus safety to ensure that CSAG's work is a visible, responsive, and practical resource to all.

What We've Done

Last fall, CSAG submitted a recommendation suggesting the University enhance the current police-led response to mental health emergencies by adding on-site clinicians or mental health professionals to the process. Emergency responses to mental health-related calls comprise a large proportion of the interactions between BUPD and members of the BU community. Studies show that mental health issues are rising on college campuses, especially for students of color and those identifying as LGBTQIA+. A growing body of scholarship supports that enhancing police response by including clinicians is a more effective model and is already well-established in community settings and emerging on college campuses.

Crafting the Recommendation

During a research phase of 15 months, CSAG consulted with BUPD leadership, Residential Life, and Student Health Services to better understand the current approach. They also interviewed public safety representatives from peer institutions, including large private universities with urban campuses like BU's. CSAG examined research literature on alternative response models and met with experts with experience implementing this model in local police agencies. The committee is currently waiting for feedback from senior leadership about the recommendation.

Where We Are Going

CSAG is currently focusing on prevention of and response to sexual misconduct at BU. The group has created three subcommittees to tackle this work.

The Response Subcommittee seeks to improve existing practices regarding BU's responses to incidents of sexual assaults, including victim services and processes for investigation and adjudication of incidents brought forward. They will emphasize the concerns and experiences of marginalized groups. The subcommittee is scanning for innovative policies and responses to sexual misconduct incidents at other AAU institutions (*i.e.*, *mediation models*, *restorative justice approaches for those accused*, and *victim support models*). This group plans to schedule interviews with key staff members who oversee current responses to sexual misconduct.

The Awareness Subcommittee aims to assess, evaluate, and improve awareness of sexual misconduct at BU, especially among marginalized groups. Currently, they are brainstorming more effective communication mechanisms that CSAG could use for collecting community input and having a more robust web presence.

The Prevention Subcommittee will craft recommendations for improving existing sexual assault prevention efforts, especially the reach and impact of such efforts for marginalized students and identify new prevention opportunities. Thus far, they've compiled contacts for major undergraduate student organizations addressing sexual assault prevention and survivor advocacy on campus and plan to have listening sessions with these groups.

Connect With Us

CSAG aims to have open and ongoing communication with the BU community. You can learn more about our work on [our website](#). We'd love to hear your feedback on the issues our group focuses on. If you have questions, concerns, or information you'd like to share, feel free to email us at csag@bu.edu. We look forward to launching more convening spaces and listening sessions with our community in the forthcoming academic year.

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