

BRIDGEWATER STATE UNIVERSITY POLICE DEPARTMENT

Ten-Point Roadmap for Improvement and Change in Support of Bias-Free Policing

I. Staffing and Recruitment

1. Improve front-line police officers' compensation.

- Low compensation relative to other area police departments makes it difficult to attract and retain the most qualified officers available – especially officers of color. The department experiences continuous talent drain.

2. Right-size the department, adding a sufficient number of officers to allow more community outreach activities and to address long delays in completing police academy training.

- The department is small relative to call volume and frequency of serious incidents, meaning that an “everyone on deck” approach is needed just to keep up with calls. Outreach suffers.
- Because of chronic understaffing, it can take years for an officer to complete basic police academy training. At best, this makes for an undesirable situation; at worst, it could be dangerous.

3. Expand the cadet program by one student-cadet.

- The cadet program has been extremely successful at producing outstanding officers of color for the department (and for other police departments), but the BSUPD has had difficulty retaining them and only has funding for one student-cadet at a time.

4. Hire one or more non-sworn community affairs liaisons.

- Because of the department's small size, every officer has to function as a generalist. But there are many calls that a civilian staff member could more appropriately handle; and they could be specially trained to operate in a range of sensitive situations.

5. Fund police officer recruitment.

- The department has no funding to advertise broadly or to visit communities of color to mount recruitment drives. It would be extremely beneficial to expand recruitment activities beyond online postings.

II. Policies

6. Review departmental policies and training.

- Review existing policies regarding response to resistance (use of force); responding to reports of suspicious activity and trespassing; and conducting traffic stops. Adopt new policies concerning the handling of disorderly conduct, resisting arrest, and interfering. Replace the department's existing policy on fair and impartial policing drawing on the forthcoming ACLUM-BSU model policy.
- Continue to provide fair and impartial policing training; de-escalation training; and mental health response training.

7. Equip every officer with a body-worn video camera.

- Body cameras have become indispensable in modern policing. Using them increases transparency; provides for faster resolution of complaints; and provides training opportunities. Not having or using body cameras decreases legitimacy and trust with the community.

8. Add a prominent BSUPD designation to every officer's uniform.

- Include unit designation: i.e., patrol, detectives, command, etc.
 - Serves to distinguish BSUPD officers from officers of other police departments; identifies every officer's unit and primary function.

III. Community Relationships

9. Create a community/police advisory board to advise the chief of police on matters of policy and student engagement.

- Engages community members; provides public backing for police procedures; serves as a resource for the chief to stay connected with students and others.

10. Re-establish direct, personal relationships with diverse student groups.

- Meetings with student groups such as MIB have diminished; they should be re-established.

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