March 12, 2013

Professor Robert Kyr and Members of the University Senate

Dear Professor Kyr,

We understand the great amount of important work before the Senate this spring will preclude further presentation and discussion by the University of Oregon Police Department on the issue of possible police officer arming.

As you recall, we were originally to present to the Senate in January, but the appearance was rescheduled to allow for the attendance of President Michael Gottfredson. Our appearance in February was truncated and moved to March at the request of the Senate in consideration of that meeting's dense agenda.

We greatly appreciated the time and attention of the Senate when we provided information and fielded questions at the Senate’s November 2012 meeting. The questions and input of Senate members helped to inform the content of the subsequent campus forums and other discussions.

Large campus forums were held to answer questions about possible campus police arming, and to collect feedback from attendees. Those events were Monday, February 11, 6:00–7:30 p.m. in the Global Scholars Hall Great Room; Tuesday, February 26, 4:30–6:00 p.m. in the EMU Fir Room; and Wednesday, March 6, 11:30 a.m.–1:00 p.m. in the Knight Library Browsing Room. The president and members of his leadership team attended each of the meetings, and written comments were collected and have been forwarded to the president.

In addition, there were a series of “coffees with the chief,” smaller, informal discussions and opinion sharing opportunities with UOPD Interim Chief Carolyn McDermed and other UOPD staff members (Tuesday, February 19, 3:30–4:30 p.m. in the EMU Walnut Room; Thursday, February 21, noon–1:00 p.m. in the EMU Board Room; Wednesday, February 27, 4:00–5:00 p.m. in the EMU Walnut Room; Friday, March 1, noon–1:00 p.m. in the Bean Complex Moore Dining Room; and Tuesday, March 5, noon–1:00 p.m. in the EMU Walnut Room).

Thanks to the members of the Senate who participated in these open opportunities, along with other members of the campus and community.

These meetings were the most recent and most public meetings in a broad campus discussion and engagement effort that spanned months, and involved a variety of student and employee groups and individuals.
All UO employees and students with university e-mail addresses (about 28,000 addresses) were sent notification e-mails on February 5 and again on February 25 regarding the issue and campus discussion. The message contained a summary of the issue of possible campus police arming, a link to more information on the subject, a description of the input process, and the dates of the campus public meetings.

The question about arming UO police officers can be decided by the State Board of Higher Education if the UO chooses to forward a recommendation for its consideration. Informed public input is an important aspect of the consideration.

Since early February, campus community members have been able to send comments via e-mail for consideration by President Gottfredson. Comments may be submitted to campuspolicing@uoregon.edu through March 15. After that date, the president will begin his deliberations on whether or not to request arming authority from the state board.

Information about campus policing and the issue of police arming remains available online at around.uoregon.edu/campus-policing, and information on the University of Oregon Police Department is available at police.uoregon.edu.

Individual members of the Senate are welcome to request further information or meetings with UOPD staff on this or any other issue of campus safety; please send us an e-mail to police@uoregon.edu, or call 541-346-8335.

Thanks again for the Senate’s time, and we look forward to future discussions on campus safety issues.

Sincerely,

Kelly McIver
Communications Director
University of Oregon Police Department