

MEETING 11/14/15
IN RE: POLICE BRUTALITY AGAINST LATINX STUDENT NIGHT OF 11/13/15

President Christina Paxson (CP), Brown University:

- “This will mainly be a time for listening, at least on my part”
- “This was supposed to be a welcome, at least that’s what I thought I was here for”
- “We need your leadership now more than ever”
- “We’re really in the second wave of the civil rights struggle in America”
- “South Asian and Pacific Islander students”
- CP was out of town Thursday
- “We’re doing a lot of listening... and I want to assure you that we are learning”
- “Geo had a very unfortunate incident with Brown Police last night... brutality is not acceptable at Brown”
- DPS chief Mark Porter is also here
- “I want to tell you that you should feel safe here, and it breaks my heart that some of you may not... I understand why you feel that way”
- “What I hope comes out of this is that you come out of this better leaders than when you came in”

Geo Cuevas (Dartmouth) speaks about his experience:

- Geo tried to intervene in what he perceived to be an inappropriate situation
- security told him he was trespassing, told him he couldn’t come back
- tried to go to the back, went looking for his host
- grabbed, thrown on to the floor by security, told he was going to be pepper sprayed
- detained outside Machado until Brown students came to identify him

Reading of demands from the delegates attending Latinx Ivy League Conference

- brutality committed by security officers hired by SAO
- demands:
 - sensitivity training for security personnel facilitated by student/faculty experts
 - increase diversity of security staff
 - accountability & apology for the incident
 - establishment of clear communication of expectation between event hosts and security
 - hosts should be alerted of escalating situations, should be allowed to intercede before security action
 - public apology to students, Ivy League presidents on behalf of Brown University by CP
 - clear communications of rights of students, bias report system
 - system for students to voice grievances against DPS and security
 - reimburse Latinx delegates because of their experience, fund next year’s conference

- bimonthly meetings with Christina Paxson and Dean of the College Maud Mandel for students of color
- recognizing that this situation could have been much worse and has ended badly for students in similar situations
- Doleman High School protests
 - school to prison pipeline
- standing in solidarity with undocumented people
- recognizing connection with events at Mizzou, Yale, Ithaca, etc
- demanding immediate action from Christina Paxson, rest of Ivy League
 - will hold universities accountable until action is taken
- recognize past Latinx leaders
 - “we will continue to resist, and we will continue to prevail”
- using platform as Ivy League students to demand change: demanding an urgency in response to match the urgency of the situation

Mike Porter (MP), chief of DPS, Brown University

- “I’m very concerned about last night’s incident”
- immediate investigation
- “This department is a very responsible department”
 - “...we have great engagement with our community. That’s why I launched the investigation”
 - “We will make sure the community is aware of the outcome”
- “We take a strong stance on any violence on this campus”
- “I do apologize for the incident. It was an unfortunate incident... that is not DPS”
 - we are “open”, “nationally accredited”
 - “we are trained annually” on sensitivity
- student asks: what will be the repercussions
 - “obviously I can’t answer this question... until the facts come out”
 - student follows up: what would it be done
 - anything can happen from a reprimand to a dismissal at MP’s discretion
 - “I want witnesses, I want Geo to give a statement... so I can have that information in front of me”
 - “I don’t want to make a decision just based on the police report”
- student demands that officer 201 be fired
 - “there’s video... the evidence is there”
- “I understand your frustration... but as I told you earlier, employees have collective bargaining, they have their rights”
- Geo demands that every officer in the department be talked to about appropriate use of force
 - “today I want the badge to lose”
 - MP “I am often in front of my officers talking about issues like this... I grew up in the inner city of Boston”

- student asks: “how can we ask a brutal institution like the police to hold themselves accountable?”
 - “every organization has to start with themselves”
 - “let me tell you what that [national accreditation] means”
 - “you might not think it’s important but let me tell you why that’s important”
 - outside vetting of procedures from other organizations
 - student: “are you behind the WEB Dubois veil? Isn’t your vision a little blurred?”
 - “even if you might not think it is, we have a very professional, accountable police department”
 - student: “my freshman year they wouldn’t let me go into my dorm because they didn’t think I was a student”
- student: “can you walk us through the steps?”
 - called in deputies, people who were present at the scene
 - contacting witnesses
 - collective bargaining: put the officer on notice
 - for investigations to start usually someone has to come forward, but this time he will go forward even without a statement from Geo
- students: what about the people who weren’t there but still were scared?
 - “I guess everyone has the opportunity to express their feelings”
 - “we’re asking for folks to come forward and give their statements”
 - but the decision will be made by DPS
 - “it can be reviewed” by outside organizations
 - student asking what role students can play to hold DPS
 - “the system has to be the one to hold itself accountable”
 - student “you can’t hold yourself accountable when the system is racist”
- student: “when is DPS going to be defunded from Brown so I can feel safe here?”
 - “why do DPS officers have guns?”
 - “who are you really trying to protect here?”
 - MP “urban campus... this campus is victimized every day by criminals who come onto this campus”
 - MP “day in and day out this officers do a good job of protecting this campus”
 - students: “this is an amazing example of how great DPS is, isn’t it?” “it’s amazing if you’re white”
 - MP “I understand your frustration”
- student: what about DPS crime reports that include vague racial identifiers
 - “what does that mean when all of us in this room match that description?”
 - MP “we worked on Brown students six years ago” on removing racial descriptors
 - “these emails are racist”
 - “who’s ‘medium to dark complexion’? I’m ‘medium to dark complexion’! You could be ‘medium to dark complexion’”
 - MP “we are required by Department of Education to put out a description that includes race... we have taken it upon ourselves to not include race”
- student: “what steps will be taken to make sure” this doesn’t happen “in the first place?”

- “we are taking steps... in our recruitment”
- “we are doing all the right steps to make this department look more like this community”
- “it’s an ongoing process”
- “we know that our engagement with the community has to be ongoing”
- student: how can we make sure next year’s Latinx delegates won’t face this situation again?
 - “The first step is to continue this investigation”
 - the next step is to continue what they’re doing
- student: what about other students who didn’t see the event but still experienced the effects of the militarization of the police?
 - MP offers his contact information to hear thoughts/complaints
- student: your training has been shown to be “largely ineffective”
 - “like a daily reminder, ‘don’t beat up any people of color’”
- student: “I want to hear more from the president! What are the solutions?”
 - MP says it’s sufficient to have the officers trained every year
 - MP “We have great officers who demonstrate great judgment”
- student: do you have training on alternatives to violence?
 - MP: they are trained in de-escalation, verbal communication
 - student: “and they’re getting guns!”
- student: “I still don’t feel safe while this investigation is ongoing”
 - tried to get the name, told they had to leave a message
 - demanding to have the name of the officers “so we can protect ourselves”
 - “I don’t understand why this is part of the investigation”
 - MP: “because it is part of the investigation”
 - student: “this is a slap on the wrist. No, we want something more”
 - demands student involvement in the investigation
 - student: why can’t you just suspend/bench him?
 - student: this is just cause for firing
 - student: “you just don’t want to!”
- student: “why does DPS protect police officers instead of students?”

CP: “We’re not going to solve this today. We’re not.... can you let me talk?”

- “seriously, I’m alright”
- “I’m really sorry that you’re going through this”
- Justice (Brown ‘16): “We’ve been telling you this for three years, you’re not that sorry!”
- addressing arming DPS:
 - decision made in 2006
 - “when a lot of really awful things were happening on campuses”
 - cites Virginia Tech, other campus shootings
 - URI thought they were dealing with an active shooter, unarmed officers had to wait 20 mins for state troopers to show up, but it turned out to be a false alarm
- student: “why are you prioritizing false alarms over Black bodies?”

- CP: "It was a big discussion... if you want to reopen that discussion I'd be happy to"
- Alex Sepolen (Brown '16): "there's a lot of discussion, where's the response? ...what actions are you going to take to fix this?"
- CP: Diversity Action Plan isn't done yet
 - student: we're being assaulted and killed every day, we don't have time to wait a month
 - CP: "you're not waiting a month! we're sending it out tomorrow!"
 - student: where are the new ideas/solutions?
 - CP: "this right now is new! ...we don't have a solution to this right now"
 - student: "we gave you a solution! suspend him!"
 - student: "what if he does it again tonight!"
 - student: "we're still here! we could still be victims of him! do you understand that?"
 - MP: "yes, we understand that"
- Kobe (Brown '19): "I know you know who I am, I know you know who my father is, he's had this conversation with you!"
 - "he's the only Black man in the library system, tell me why you haven't done anything?"
- CP: "when I woke up this morning, I didn't know about this situation"
 - students: "why not?"
 - "I don't know the union rules. By tonight, you will have more information"
 - Floripa: "why don't you know the rules?"
 - Dakota (Brown '16): "he [MP] can tell us! he can tell us, can he be suspended?"
- MP: "you don't have to hide in your rooms"
- Chinedu (Brown '17): "what I'd really like is for you to take of your [role as Brown employee]... arming DPS officers make sense to you.... the chance that this could happen again, while this officer is not suspended, is much higher [than a school shooting]"
 - says MP is not giving any answers
 - "admit you did something wrong, it's not that hard"
 - "take the time to calm down and say maybe I should listen to these students"
 - "students should be on board"
 - "how can I feel safe... when I don't even have a say about who's on DPS or [how these situations are resolved]?"
 - "you say you don't have solutions, you ask us for help"
 - "you can't suspend the officer? find a way!"
 - student: "even though that's not our job, we're willing to help you"
 - "coming out of this, actually listen... I will chase you down and ask you every day what's going on"
 - we're going to bring Mizzou to Brown
 - "The reason that you are here... is not for you, it's not for the corporation, it's for us. So if students don't feel safe, that's something you should take to heart"

- “I know you don’t want to lose your job, but if you do what you’re supposed to do then we’ll make sure you keep your job”
- MP: “so give me chance to look at this investigation”
 - students: “how much time? can we get a timeline?”
 - MP: “let me start today”
 - student: need to take this opportunity to evaluate the whole system
- student: “this is not just about security, this happens in the classroom too”
- CP: was planning to send something out tomorrow, but will send it out tonight that “will have an impact, fast” (unclear if she is talking about the Diversity Action Plan)
 - “well I’ve been talking to a lot of students”
 - “can I tell you what we’re going to do Justice?”
 - Justice: “that doesn’t respond to the demands! Can you respond to the demands you just heard?”
 - CP: “we start looking at this case, then we start looking systematically”
 - Chinedu: “if you think about the diction that you’re using, you’re using future tense stuff even though you’re talking about the present”
 - “you were presented with these demands just now, they want to hear what you’re going to do now”
 - “what they said they wanted is what you should be trying to fix, not these [broad, vague goals]”
 - “do we really [need DPS] at this point?”
 - “Brown is the first time that people have grabbed their purses and crossed the street [when they see me]”
 - “just tell us you’re going to suspend the officer”
 - CP having a secret huddle with MP
 - “I don’t know the union rules, I’m asking”
 - MP “There are times when we say we’re going to take the officer off the streets during an investigation. So we are going to do that”
 - MP “we have in this department tracking and things to make sure officers are documenting their stuff... the only way we can police this department is for the community to assist”
 - MP “All I ask is that you look at what we’re doing today”
 - Alex Karim (Brown ‘17): “why is that relevant? It doesn’t matter what other schools are doing!”
 - MP “I think Brown is setting some models– other schools are taking on models”
 - Justice: “stop bringing in other schools!”
 - Chinedu: “racism exists all over this earth... just listen to us... we’re just here to see you [fix this]”
 - Chinedu: “you see people leaving the room? They aren’t leaving because they have something to do, it’s because they’re leaving because this is emotionally taxing... I’m taking 5 classes... people are dying all around me, I have to worry about whether my dad will

make it home at night, whether my sister is safe at school, and you're trying to tell me that you want an award?"

- "so we have one thing, it might seem like a small thing, but... this officer won't be on duty"
 - MP: "he won't be on the street"
 - suggesting a community advisory board
 - Floripa (Brown '16): "will they be compensated? This is just more student of color labor for you!"
 - "I hear Floripa talking and I hear the pain in her voice and I've talked to Floripa before and it's breaking my heart"
 - "yeah but we have short term steps and longer term steps"
 - student: "can we have the timeline so we can hold you accountable?"
 - "now I proposed a community advisory board and a lot of people clapped at that but then Floripa got very upset"
 - Geo: "we're not saying we won't help you, we're just saying we need to be compensated"
 - CP: "we need people to pitch in"
 - [American Studies faculty?]: split the cost to bring Latinx Conference back in the spring between President's office and American/Latino Studies
- student: "you're up here acting like you don't have any power, you're the president of this university"
 - CP: "we can make change"
 - student: "then do it!"
- students: I've only received disrespect from DPS officers
 - CP: "You're absolutely right, it's not acceptable. Can I fix that tomorrow? No!"
 - students: "Yes!"
- MP: excusing himself to work on the investigation
 - typically an investigation is 7-14 days
- student: "Where can we go to testify? I'm from Princeton, I'm leaving tomorrow, where can I go to testify?"
 - 75 Charlesfield St., people are there right now
- student: bring them here, not to only talk about this situation but culture of police brutality "I wasn't even at that incident and I felt fear"
- CP: commits to creating a community advisory board but not to compensating all students
 - "there are some students who need to be compensated and some who don't"
 - wants to do some compensation through work study (?????)
- CP "It's 2:30 and the longer we talk here—"
- student: "what are you going to do today? This conversation is traumatic for many students, what are you going to do today?"
- student: "be innovative"
- Chinedu: "you're not of color, you can't tell us what to feel... you've never seen DPS coming and thought 'this is it, huh'"

- student: demanding recognition of white supremacy
 - CP “you can use that word if you want”
- Carmen Rodriguez ‘83, former Brown corporation member: “When I was on this campus, I was too afraid to have these conversations... Things have changed... Things are better”
 - Justice: it doesn’t matter if things have changed or are better, they still suck
 - “The point was have things improved”
 - Justice: “no the point is things haven’t improved enough”
 - “I can tell you that it’s because of the people sitting at the front of this room”
 - student: “it’s because of students who put in labor!”
 - “sometimes it really takes a white person to speak about these issues”
 - “where Chris [CP] is coming from is genuine... even when she has come up with resistance from members, she has stood steadfast for diversity”
 - Alex Karim: “how dare you tell us we’re lucky for what we get!”
 - Justice: “how can you tell us we’re lucky to have her? We’ve been yelling at her for 4 years!”
- Rodriguez ‘83 having a secret huddle with Justice trying to tell xem she’s “sorry [xe] feel[s] that way”

Interim Vice President Almandrez:

- “I want to know I’m here with you all the time”
- “We know the emotional toll it takes to get [your demands] on paper”
- “We accept those demands. We want to hear what you want... It’s our turn to do our work”
- “You will tell us when we mess up. You will tell us when we’re doing well”
- “I’m going to be here for the rest of the day for whoever wants to talk”
- making the BCSC open for people to gather
- “for all of you who spoke, thank you. We hear you”
- “Let us take care of everything. You’ve done your job”
- DPS officers can come to take statements
 - student asking that they come unarmed
 - VP Almandrez offering to have staff/faculty of color

People are going to convene in the BCSC to debrief

CP having a heated looking discussion with the student rep from Columbia

UPDATE 11:58AM 11/15/2015

The Brown Daily Herald [published an article](#) about the meeting

UPDATE 11:57PM 11/14/2015

This email was sent to the Brown community from the office of the president:

Dear Members of the Brown Community,

There are hardly words to convey the pain I heard expressed today by our students and guests who convened on campus this weekend for the Latinx Ivy League Conference. And, in any case, I know we are at a point as a campus community where there is little patience for more words. So I write to you tonight to talk about action.

For those of you who have not seen Executive Vice President Russell Carey's email from earlier this evening, an incident took place late Friday night between a student delegate attending the conference from another university and event staff security and Department of Public Safety officers. The incident is under active investigation to determine the facts of what took place.

I apologized this afternoon to our students and our guests for the fear and pain this incident has caused. And now I extend this apology to our entire campus community, especially to our students of color — our African American, Latinx, Native American, Asian, Pacific Islander and multiracial students — for the hurt, anger, confusion and frustration that this incident has contributed to our ongoing discussions about racism and inclusion at Brown. Today's events add to the deep feelings I've been hearing about from our students predating this incident.

I have heard the pain in the experiences that have been shared, and we know it's time to act. Here are the actions we are committing to. Right now. Tonight.

- Recognizing that the conference was unable to continue after this incident, Brown is committing to fund a rescheduled conference on whatever timetable the students desire, and we will commit funds so that every student can attend for free.
- I will send a letter of apology tonight to the presidents of the institutions who sent delegates to this weekend's conference, letting them know I am sorry for the pain their students experienced, and of Brown's commitment to fund another conference for their delegates.
- We will ensure we are just in the pursuit of the investigation of today's incident, and that we have all the facts. The investigation will be thorough, and we will share the outcome with the campus community. As Russell noted in his email, the officer involved will perform administrative duties and will not be on patrol while the investigation is being conducted.
- At the meeting today, I heard that students have concerns about racial profiling, independent of this weekend's incident. We will examine the need for additional diversity and sensitivity training for all officers in the Department of Public Safety, who currently undergo annual diversity training. I know that our head of Public Safety, Mark Porter, agrees that Brown should hold itself to the highest standards.
- Russell's communication tonight ensured that our community is aware of the direct and anonymous reporting systems for concerns about Public Safety or event security. But I will reiterate here that students, faculty and staff can submit reports either by directing them to Public Safety at (401) 863-3322, or to Brown's anonymous and confidential [Ethics and Compliance Reporting System](#) at (877) 318-9184.
- We will accelerate the timing of the agenda currently being planned by the BUCC to allow students to engage with Public Safety around issues of race in a forum.

- I will meet with the students on the [Public Safety Oversight Committee](#) to determine whether they feel student voices are adequately represented. The Undergraduate Council of Students and Brown Center for Students of Color recruit students to this standing University committee of students, faculty and staff that reviews the practices, policies and procedures of the Department of Public Safety. We will examine whether students feel an additional oversight group could strengthen the role students should have.
- I will work with the staff in the Brown Center for Students of Color to establish a regular schedule for meetings with students on issues of race, so that a broader number of students have the opportunity to participate.
- We will move forward with completing the University's Diversity Action Plan to include the commitment to a campus climate survey that focuses on both inclusion and systems and structures of exclusion. Provost Richard Locke and I shared the intent to release this plan in an email earlier this week, and we remain on track to share the plan before the end of the month.

These are immediate actions, but not the full extent of our work as a community to confront issues of diversity, inclusion, power, privilege, inequity and injustice. We cannot move forward until it is irrefutable from our actions and our deeds that students of color are valued members of our community. We cannot move forward before acknowledging that, as a community, we do not fully understand the full breadth of the problem that we are trying to solve. We must continue to work together to achieve the diverse, inclusive campus that every member of our community deserves.

I write to you tonight with a commitment to work with all of you to effect real change.

Sincerely,

Christina Paxson
President