

University of Pennsylvania
Public Safety Review and Outreach Initiative
Hearing 2: Thursday, August 20, 2020, 2 pm EDT

Advisors:

Dorothy Roberts	Penn Integrates Knowledge Professor of Africana Studies, Law, and Sociology
Reverend Chaz Howard	Vice President for Social Equity and Community

Panelists:

Margaret Livingston	President, Walnut Hill Community Association
Evan Johnstone	President, Spruce Hill Community Association
Renee McBride Williams	President, Cedar Park Neighbors
Andra Laidacker	President, Garden Court Community Association
Ira Harkavy	Associate Vice President Director, Netter Center for Community Partnerships
Glenn Bryan	Assistant Vice President of Community Relations, Office of Government and Community Affairs
Richard Gordon, IV	Principal, Paul Robeson High School
James Wright	Director, Community, Economic, and Real Estate Development, People's Emergency Center

[00:00:00]

[00:00:05] **Dorothy Roberts**

Welcome, everyone, to the third virtual hearing of the Penn Public Safety Review and Outreach Initiative. I am Dorothy Roberts; a Penn Integrates Knowledge Professor of Africana Studies, Law, and Sociology. And I, along with Reverend Chaz Howard, are leading this initiative as appointed advisors to Penn President Amy Gutmann. Reverend Howard will introduce himself and welcome you in a minute. We are working with the Law School's Quattrone Center for the Fair Administration of Justice, and you will hear from its Executive Director, John Hollway, after Reverend Howard.

The Public Safety Review and Outreach Initiative is conducting a comprehensive review of public safety at Penn. The goal of the review is to assess Penn's success in

creating a physically and emotionally safe environment on Penn's campus and in the surrounding community while treating every person with equal dignity and respect, and in a way that prioritizes and promotes anti-racism, racial equality, and justice.

The outcome of the initiative will be a report and recommendations we will present to President Amy Gutmann, Executive Vice President Craig Carnaroli, and Provost Wendell Pritchett in the fall.

Our report and recommendations will be based on two main efforts. First, we have begun collecting and reviewing hundreds of documents from Penn's Division of Public Safety regarding a wide range of policies, procedures, and outcomes, including use of force, vehicle and pedestrian stops, complaints, budgets, transparency, and relationships with other policing agencies.

The second part is why we are here today. We are holding a series of virtual hearings to receive input from members of the Penn and West Philadelphia communities on their experiences with Penn's Department of Public Safety and on their ideas and suggestions. The hearings will be made publicly available via live stream and recorded for future public access.

Reverend Howard and I both have long records of commitment to racial justice, and we approach our leadership of this initiative very seriously and independently. We have been given complete freedom to listen, to learn, and to make recommendations without any pressure from the university administration. Our aim is to move Penn toward achieving a vision of public safety that treats everyone with equal respect, in which everyone can feel physically and emotionally safe with a sense of equal belonging, and that prioritizes racial justice. I will now turn the floor to my Co-Presidential Advisor, Reverend Chaz Howard.

[00:03:09] **Chaz Howard**

Thank you, Professor Roberts. Good afternoon, everyone. My name is Chaz Howard; I serve as university chaplain and Vice President for Social Equity and Community here at the University of Pennsylvania. And I would just add to the great words of Professor Roberts here, that we are committed to openness in two regards. We are committed to openness in regard to the full range of voices that we are asking to join

us for these hearings, whether that is individuals connected to our Division of Public Safety, our students, our faculty, our staff, members of the surrounding community. We have reached out to alumni as well. We want to make sure we hear from everyone who possibly can connect with us here in the full spectrum of opinions and full spectrum of experiences in regard to policing in America and policing around the world.

But openness is true in another regard as well. We want to, as much as possible, make sure this whole process is transparent. We want to make sure that these conversations aren't happening behind closed doors, in a small committee that will emerge with recommendations. We were making sure that these were all online and accessible to whoever wishes to watch them. They are being recorded and shared afterward, and transcribed as well. And we want to make sure that this notion of transparency, something that has been one of the big critiques of the last several years around public safety in America, we want to model that in this process.

Finally, I want to thank you for tuning in. This means a lot to a whole lot of people. And not only do a lot of us have very strong opinions, but we have very strong feelings about this too. So, thank you for going on this journey with us, and thank you to everyone who is taking time this afternoon. And a final word of gratitude to the team at the Quattrone Center who have some so much of the heavy lift of the busy work behind the scenes in making this happen and making this happen smoothly.

And with that, I will turn it over to our colleague, John Hollway.

[00:05:07] **John Hollway**

Thanks, Reverend Howard, and thank you, Professor Roberts. I am John Hollway; I am the Executive Director of the Quattrone Center for the Fair Administration of Justice at the University of Pennsylvania Carey Law School. And I want to extend, on behalf of my colleagues, our sincere welcome to the members of the West Philadelphia and Penn community who you will be hearing from today, and to all of you who are watching, or will be watching and sending in questions online, as we conduct this, which is the third in our series of public hearings in the public safety review and outreach initiative to solicit input from our community, broadly defined, on these important issues.

A significant thrust of the conversations that we have had over the first two hearings has been the impact that the university's Division of Public Safety and, more specifically, the Penn Police Department has both on the campus, but also more broadly in West Philadelphia.

On Tuesday, we heard from Rick Krajewski, a Penn alum and West Philadelphia resident, who is the Democratic nominee for the Pennsylvania State Representative spot of the 188th District, which includes West and Southwest Philadelphia. We heard from Jessica Gooding, A Penn student who spoke about the existence of police on campus and the impact that that may have on non-Penn community members who access the campus. And we heard from Amelia Carter, the Assistant Director of Penn's South Asia Center, and a resident at 52nd and Chancellor, who described the scene at her home at the recent clash between citizens and police on 52nd Street.

If you haven't heard those remarks, or those of Penn Police officers Nickol Taylor or Michael Belisairo, Penn Executive Director for Staff and Labor Relations, Jeffrey Rowland, or Penn's Director of Security Services, Lou Petrecco, I would commend them to you. We have posted them in a transcript from the Tuesday hearing at www.pennpublicsafetyreview.org. And that is where a transcript of this hearing will go as well once it has been processed.

Today, we are going to expand upon our inquiry into the impact that the Penn Police and the Division of Public Safety have on the community. We are going to start with representatives from four of the community associations that exist within the Penn Police Department's patrol area. We have Margaret Livingston, President of the Walnut Hill Community Association; Evan Johnstone, President of the Spruce Hill Community Association; Renee McBride Williams, President of the Cedar Park Neighbors; and Andra Laidacker, President of the Garden Court Community Association with us today.

Each of these speakers has been invited to share a brief opening statement one at a time. Once all four have spoken, Professor Roberts and Reverend Howard will engage them in a question and answer session.

From there, we are going to turn to two members of the Penn community who have a particular focus on Penn's relationship with West Philadelphia. First, we have Doctor Ira Harkavy, the Associate Vice President and Founding Director of the Barbara

and Edward Netter Center for Community Partnerships at Penn, and Mr. Glenn Bryan, the Assistant Vice President of Community Relations at Penn's Office of Government and Community Affairs.

Once again, we will ask each of them to provide some opening remarks and then turn it over to the Co-Chairs for a question and answer period.

And then, we will conclude today's hearings with a conversation with two individuals who lead important West Philadelphia institutions. First, Doctor Richard Gordon, IV, Principal of the Paul Robes one High School at 41st and Ludlow; and second, James Wright, the Director of Community, Economic, and Real Estate Development at the People's Emergency Center, a community development corporation in West Philadelphia.

The ground rules for this hearing are the same as those for our prior hearings, but I would like to briefly restate them. First, we are recording the webinar, and we will post the recording and transcription on the Public Safety and Review website, which again is www.pennpublicsafetyreview.org. Members of the audience, people who are watching, are encouraged to submit questions at any time through the Q&A feature, which can be found at the ribbon on the bottom of your window. We are monitoring the Q&A actively, but given the number of speakers and the time we have, we cannot promise that we will be able to directly answer every question today in order to make sure that speakers have the full opportunity to speak within the time allotted.

We are, however, keeping a record of the questions, and we will strive to answer them either now or in the immediate future to the extent possible.

Finally, I guess to echo Reverend Howard's remarks, we recognize that the topics that we will discuss are deeply felt through our community and may be emotional. We ask that members of the audience please keep that in mind and keep your questions topical and appropriate as we move forward.

Thank you for your participation in the process. I want to thank all of our speakers for taking time out of their day to assist us in this initiative. And with that, I will turn it back to Professor Roberts, Reverend Howard, and our first speaker, Ms. Livingston.

[00:10:15] **Dorothy Roberts**

So, Ms. Livingston, you can proceed, please.

[00:10:38] **Margaret Livingston**

Hello, everyone. My name is Margaret Livingston; I am the current President of the Walnut Hill Community Association, which borders from 46th Street to 52nd, from Spruce Street to Market Street.

Thank you for the opportunity to support the University of Pennsylvania Public Safety Review and Outreach Initiative. On behalf of myself and the Walnut Hill Community Association, we are more than glad to participate in the University of Penn's Public Safety Review and Outreach. The Walnut Hill Community Association can testify to many ways the University of Penn's Division of Public Safety incorporates respect, priority, and equality within its boundaries in our West Philadelphia communities. Our Walnut Hill community is safer and cleaner, providing residents with pride and dignity for where we live. This is important to our quality of life and sense of purpose.

The University of Penn Division of Public Safety services and other resources fuel our community with motivation and drive to continuously seek opportunities and resources to beautify our blocks.

Our motto is: We are better together. The safety provided by the University of Pennsylvania's Penn Police provides that extra measure of safety that keeps neighbors coming outdoors to enjoy each other and work on ways to stay connected and relevant in our wonderful historic community.

Moreover, we are a privileged community to reap the community services of the University of Penn Police, such as they are attending our community meetings, they listen to our concerns, then applying emphasis on safety improvements for most needed areas and/or intersections that we constantly talk about. The University of Pennsylvania Public Safety services and police are present when we need them and when we don't. We are sending our sincere thanks and gratitude for all that is provided in our communities where we live, play, work, and raise our children.

Some of the examples that they have extended to our community is their annual open house of their facility, their Penn Police office, at 40th and Chestnut Street. So, that

is every year, and we do extend that to our community. They come out to our movie nights that we have at the Henry C. Lea Schoolyard. They participate in our cleanup initiatives along the Farragut Street corridor, and they help us with our Walnut Hill Playground. They listen to our concerns when we have concerns about areas of drug use. We come out and listen when they participate at the Calvary Church monthly, with the 18th District Police, where community members within our area come out and give any concerns or problems or ideas of what is going on in our area.

And that, lastly, they have also supported our ongoing meal initiative that is going on right now at the Max Paul Farm. So, thank you so much, and that is my report from the Walnut Hill Community Association.

[00:14:30] **Dorothy Roberts**

Thank you.

[00:14:39] **John Hollway**

There we go... Thank you, Ms. Livingston; we turn now to Mr. Evan Johnstone of the Spruce Hill Community Association, please.

[00:14:53] **Evan Johnstone**

Hi there! Thank you for this kind invitation and the opportunity to speak on this very important issue. As was mentioned, my name is Evan Johnstone; I am the President of the Spruce Hill Community Association. Before I start, I just want to caveat what I am about to say with a little note that although I am giving you my honest appraisal of this issue, this hasn't completely been vetted with the Spruce Hill Community Association Board, so I would consider my comments more of a personal perspective rather than the perspective of the board as a whole. We take a break during the summer, and, so, we just haven't had an opportunity to vet all for my comments fully.

But with that in mind, I think it goes without saying that these are incredibly complicated times. Emotions are raw; people are hurting, angry, and frustrated. They want to be heard, and they want change. They have lost faith in the institutions that were meant to protect them. Holding public discussions, such as this, is, I believe, an important

first step in addressing those concerns. Even more important is making sure that comments that are gathered today are part of a long-term action plan to address those issues.

I believe most Philadelphians would advocate for a secure, safe neighborhood that allows them to go about their daily lives in relative peace. I realize not everyone in Philadelphia has this luxury. The recent spike in violent crime in the region underscores that fact and, to me, emphasizes the need for a public safety force that can protect residents and offer that sense of security.

For the Spruce Hill Community, Penn Public Safety offers an important supplement to both the existing Philadelphia Police Department and the UCD Ambassadors that keep an eye on our neighborhood. As a resident of the community, and part of the Spruce Hill Community Association, I have partnered with the Penn Police on numerous occasions. We have coordinated with them to support our block's annual Halloween parade. They have attended board meetings to provide periodic updates and to address issues of concern. They have come to our May Fair event at Clark Park, and they have responded to emergencies, and more mundane nuisance calls when we have needed them. I have always found them to be responsive, measured, and thoughtful. I think maintaining that level of involvement in the surrounding community is an important element in a successful public safety program.

I am fully aware that my personal experiences may be far different than those of my neighbors. Empathy is incredibly important these days, so listening to and absorbing the opinions of others is something we all need to take the time to do. I am very heartened to see that Penn is taking the necessary and, sometimes, painful steps to solicit community input and do the work necessary to evolve their team and their approach. Trust and accountability are vital to a strong public safety program.

Long-term, it will be crucial for the team to have the right staff and training mechanisms in place to ensure responders can effectively de-escalate, minimize cultural bias, and properly manage mental health issues.

This community is changing. West Philadelphia is continuing to grow with development pressure pushing further and further west. Every day, it seems a new apartment or office complex rises. And as the community changes, so will the needs of its

residents. I encourage the Penn to continue the work of regularly evaluating its team, soliciting public input, and making sure it has the proper protocols in place to effectively support its mission of enhancing the quality of life, safety, and security of our community. Thank you.

[00:18:36] **John Hollway**

Thank you very much, Mr. Johnstone. We appreciate it. Next, we will turn to Ms. Renee McBride Williams, the President of the Cedar Park Neighbors, please.

[00:19:01] **Renee McBride Williams**

Okay, I am back; I am here, Hello! Thank you for the opportunity to speak to the Penn Public Safety Review and Outreach Initiative. I was introduced earlier as the President for Cedar Park Neighbors; I am Renee McBride Williams.

Our Cedar Park area borders 46th Street north from Kingsessing Avenue to Larchwood Avenue. Larchwood Avenue west, from 46th Street to 52nd Street. I like to say I am a long-time resident of West Philadelphia for more than 55 years. And out of those 55 years, I have been a parent, a mentor, an activist of West Philadelphia, and have taught in the school system for more than 30 years. I have witnessed many social and economic transformations in our neighborhoods, from the blue-collar row homes, abandoned properties, and vacant spaces.

Today, we are dealing with those same industrial—we are dealing with industrial facades, density, and the growing police force in our community. And now, we are integrating the University of Penn Police into our neighborhoods.

I would like to say that I spoke to many of my neighbors. We have curious nods, cautiously want to support them, and we do. We have a lot of outdoor events, which Penn Police has monitored and has helped us. They have attended many of our meetings. I know you have some people who want to protest their existence in our community, and they want to defund the police. And I'd like to say I would like to see them redirect many of those funds into de-escalation training, mentoring techniques, bias training, partnerships with community organizations as they have been doing for quite some time. Also, within the schools, within the West Philadelphia boundaries.

Also, I would like to see community [*unintelligible*] police—policing, to get to know the people in the community. When I was coming up, now I'm going too far back, we had police officers that actually monitored the neighborhood, walked through, got to know the residents, went to the barbershops, spoke to people in the churches, and they had an active involvement and presence within the community.

These are our recommendations, and I would welcome any changes that we could make. And I thank you very much for offering these opportunities to our community at large. 52nd Street of one of our areas of deep concern right now. We had a murder at 52nd and Larchwood recently, at which we had helicopters, which really frightened many of our students that are living on that block. So, we felt as though it was imperative to try to work for some kind of satisfactory outcomes with the police department as well as some of the violence and the drug use that's going on in our neighborhoods. And so, we are willing to work with them and to do all that we can to support them. And I would like to thank all of you for the opportunity to say these things.

So, these are my recommendations, and as I speak as a resident and long-time educator to some of the people who are actually still in the neighborhood. I thank you again.

[00:22:39] **John Hollway**

Thank you, Ms. Williams; we very much appreciate your time. Last, and certainly not least for this section, Ms. Andra Laidacker, President of the Garden Court Community Association. Thank you.

[00:22:54] **Andra Laidacker**

Thank you, John. I hope everyone can hear me okay. Thank you all for inviting me to participate in Penn's community outreach on a very important and timely topic. Also, thank you to Margaret, Evan, and Renee; it is an honor to participate alongside you on this panel.

My name is Andra Laidacker, and I serve as President of the Garden Court Community Association for the 2020-2022 term. Our boundaries are Cedar Avenue to Locust Street, 45th through to 52nd Street. The board of the Garden Court Community

Association mourns the tragic deaths of George Floyd, Breonna Taylor, and too many others. I will add another name from our neighborhood to this list, Phil Holland, a 23-year-old college student who was shot by plainclothes police officers on 50th Street in 2014. Fourteen bullets went into his car, three hit him, one in the face, and he now lives with a lot of pain and seizures.

Mr. Holland was lucky to have survived. As part of his settlement with the city, the city agreed to prepare training for plainclothes police officers based on the circumstances of his shooting. He doesn't make headlines anymore, but I mention him because, to me, he is a constant reminder of how we can do better in Philadelphia. And that many individually, and as a community, and that individually and as a community, we have many levers with which to effectuate change.

The Garden Court Community Association board and its members will address itself to creating a better future. We pledge support to locally owned stores that suffered harm in May. We also advocate for the creation of a fair justice system, one that is free from systemic racism and prejudice. And we will uphold the mission of the Black Lives Matter movement, which is to bring justice and healing to black people. The Garden Court Community Association's board values the lives of all who live, work, study, and play here. We are committed to promoting inclusion, understanding, and tolerance across our entire neighborhood. We will continue to be an organization that promotes Garden Court as a place where all may feel welcome and secure.

Since being invited to speak at this meeting last week, unfortunately, I have not had the opportunity to poll our members for feedback on this initiative. I have informally asked current and former GCCA officers for feedback, however. I have prepared a few of the ideas that, if implemented in large part by Penn, would go some ways towards accomplishing more equitable results in policing our Penn adjacent neighborhood.

Penn can set an example to Philadelphia police by reinforcing positive aspects of neighborhood policing, and being very aware of the negative aspects and minimizing those to the greatest extent possible.

One of the first things that became obvious from the conversations is that transparency in policing, transparency in how officers are hired is paramount to our members. So, some of the questions that came up were, who are the Penn Police officers?

What are their qualifications? They are, I know, members of municipal police, but they are also members of the largest private police in Philadelphia.

The other question was, when they are hired, what were their police records? And also, we have seen Penn Police members in our neighborhoods, even though the mission statement of the Penn Police is that it is policing from 30th to 43rd Streets. Members of the Penn Police venture further than that, so it would be nice to understand what the mission is in terms of entering areas beyond 43rd Street.

The other issue is clear lines of communication with the neighborhoods. On the one hand, it would be very helpful for community associations, our especially, to receive regular, perhaps once a month, electronic summaries of Penn and city police activities in Penn adjacent areas. At the moment, Mr. Bryan organized the First Thursday events, where my understanding is that there have been representatives of both the 18th District and the Penn Police to provide updates. Unfortunately, those verbal updates are fairly hard to transmit immediately and timely to our membership. So, having something written down that is regular, and we could forward, would also be very helpful.

On the other hand, it would also be helpful for Penn Police to provide an anonymous tip line for neighbors to report misconduct by Penn Police. This issue was actually informed by work I participated in when I was a law student in New Orleans. And as a law student, I used to go into the public schools in New Orleans and make presentations to the high school students on what their rights are when stopped by police. Those events, you would be shocked by the amount of incidents that the students themselves, examples of being harassed by the police, examples of—these are children, of interactions that, while perhaps not violent, were nevertheless morally wrong. And I think that providing an outlet for individual community members to provide anonymous tips on potential police misconduct would very useful.

Number three, it would be very helpful to solicit community input into selecting Penn Police leadership.

Fourth, internally, and I second everything that Renee had mentioned in terms of the police being more available to community members, not only in police encounters that involve crime but also in creating a sense of community between the police and residents. Police officers who work here; work here just like every other person who

works here, so they are part of our community. And I believe it would be really helpful to see the softer side of policing in building trust in community in our neighborhoods.

The other issue that came up is, it would be nice to know how thorough and what the emphasis in vetting incoming police officers is for the Penn Police. And whether the incoming Penn Police officers have ties to the community already, perhaps providing preference to such officers. And also providing preference for the hiring of minority officers.

Vetting, we also thought, is very important in terms of including a mental health assessment. Needless to say, policing is an emotionally exhausting job. And for this reason, also, Penn should set an example for city police in providing mandatory and regular mental health services for their police officers. This goes along with the other ideas that Renee mentioned in terms of redirecting some funds, some of the police funds, towards other initiatives within the police department.

Finally, it should also be recognized that while the focus of this hearing today is policing in the community, this is one aspect of a very complicated problem in ensuring equity in our Penn adjacent neighborhood. Penn is already affecting all of our lives. This neighborhood, through its housing policies, with students living off-campus, who affect access for residents to affordable, safe housing, through school support policies, supporting local schools individually, like Penn Alexander and Lea, rather than a broader buy-in to school districts through pilots, and even through its COVID-related policies—inviting students back to campus in an area, when an area, where there are multiple vulnerable populations, while at the same time, perhaps not enforcing as forcefully CDC guidelines and Pennsylvania State laws regarding masks, for instance.

All this is to say that we have a very complicated task ahead of us and a heavy load. I hope that we can carry it together. This is all for me, and thank you very much.

[00:32:10] **John Hollway**

Thank you, Ms. Laidacker. Before we turn to the Q&A, Professor Roberts, if you don't mind, I just wanted to say to each of the community association leaders, we, to a certain extent, have been moving very quickly through our review in order to be responsive to the concerns that have been voiced in the community in the wake of some

of the violence that you all have mentioned. And because of that, I want to apologize to you for maybe not giving you as much advance time to be able to circle back and gather the additional voices of those on your board.

I wanted to re-emphasize that the website that we have created does have an area where any individual can enter any experience that they have had with the Penn Police, or opinions, or other thoughts for reforms. And so, for those members of your boards who perhaps you haven't had the chance to connect directly with, if they go to the website, they are welcome and able to enter anything that they would like to share with this group, and we are gathering and reviewing that. It can be entered anonymously if the person wishes, or they can leave information for a follow-up contact.

So, I just wanted to make sure that that was known to you and to your colleagues and constituents so that they have the opportunity to participate, despite the fact that we have been moving with some pace in order to be responsive to this moment in time.

Professor Roberts and Reverend Howard, please take it away.

[00:33:35] **Dorothy Roberts**

Thank you, and thanks to all the speakers for your very helpful remarks. One aspect of them that struck me that I want to comment on is, in a way, how varied they were. And so, beginning with you, Ms. Livingston, you, I thought, gave the most positive statement about the relationship between Penn and your community. And I wondered if you could say some more about who your community association represents, how you would describe your community, whether you believe you are reflecting the views. John Hollway just said, unfortunately, we didn't give you all time to poll your community members. But I just wondered if you would say some more about the relationship between Penn and your community. And if you have any idea of what Penn is doing so well, and if there is any room for improvement.

[00:34:57] **Lorna Peterson** *for Margaret Livingston*

Okay. Okay, can you hear me? [Yes.] All right, start video. Okay.

Good afternoon everyone. Thank you for inviting Walnut Hill, our president, Margaret Livingston, and I am glad to speak on her behalf. I do work side-by-side with her—

[00:35:22] **Dorothy Roberts**

I see; mm-hmm. So, maybe, I now recall that Ms. Livingston has to leave, and so maybe my question was unfair because I, of course, was asking her about her own statement. Maybe you could introduce yourself and let us know what your relationship is to the Walnut Hill Community Association.

[00:35:44] **Lorna Peterson**

I am trying to get my video on; I am sure you don't see me, right?

[00:35:46] **Dorothy Roberts**

No, but you could tell us a little bit about yourself.

[00:35:50] **Lorna Peterson**

I certainly will. My name is Lorna Peterson. I am on staff at the Enterprise Center. My main role is to facilitate and to manage Walnut Hill's community projects. So, working closely with Walnut Hill, their partners, and their residents, I feel pretty comfortable in representing right now.

[00:36:19] **Dorothy Roberts**

Okay ... I was just going to say; my question had to do with Ms. Livingston's very positive portrayal of the relationship between Walnut Hill and the University of Pennsylvania. And so, I was asking how representative that view was and why she felt that it was so positive. To me, it struck me as the most positive of the remarks that we heard on the panel, which I am not sure if you had a chance to hear them. But maybe you could just say a little bit more about the Walnut Hill community.

[00:37:12] **Lorna Peterson**

Well, the University of Pennsylvania and the many services that they offer in the West Philadelphia community, we wholeheartedly have built a very strong relationship with the different leaders of the different programs. And so, we share a lot. Penn offers a lot. Their resources are open to the community, and so is their ear. So, I believe this is one of the reasons why Ms. Livingston has such a strong and positive report concerning the Penn Police, concerning Penn, and specifically the Public Safety Division.

So, we have a lot of outside events. Penn continues to support us in the best way, even offer us education in the best way that we can handle situations. And they support us in the smallest and even the largest events. So, that is why Ms. Livingston has such a strong regard for the University of Penn Public Safety Division.

[00:38:29] **Dorothy Roberts**

Reverend Howard, did you want to follow up with a question for Ms. Peterson?

[00:38:35] **Chaz Howard**

I just had one two-part question. Thank you so much for joining us, Ms. Peterson, and taking out of your time to be with us today. We really do appreciate your and Ms. Livingston's feedback and your perspective on this.

The first part of the question is, do you see a difference between Penn's police department and the 18th District in how they engage with folks in Walnut Hill, and how the services they provide, how they carry themselves. Do you see a difference there? And then, part two of that is one of the things we have heard the last couple weeks have been this notion of over-policing. Do you think, are there too many police in West Philadelphia? Are there not enough police? Are we over-policed? Are we under-policed? Is it just right?

So, it's again, is there a difference between Penn Police and the 18th District city cops? And are there too many police? Or are there not enough? Or are we doing okay?

[00:39:36] **Lorna Peterson**

Okay. Let me first say, I don't think any of us would want to live anywhere without police. I don't think we have too many. And, you know, if the Philadelphia

Department and University of Penn's police would, I guess, use information openly, work together more, that would be a help. Also, there is a difference between the Penn Police and the Philadelphia Police. But I can only speak on it partly because Walnut Hill doesn't have a relationship with Penn Police when they are actually out there, and there is a crime being committed and the way that they handle it. We actually have more interactions with the Penn Police on a community basis. Conversation. Support. Advice. That kind of thing. And so, and the difference I'll see with Penn Police and the Philadelphia Police Department, we don't have that kind of interaction. Although we attempt to have open communication with them and to invite them out and also support them in their meetings when it pertains to the community.

But there seems to be a better community reaction with the Penn Police than the Philadelphia Police Department. We interact with Penn Police much more than we do with the 18th District. As a matter of fact, with the 18th District, the only interaction is when there is a crime being committed.

[00:41:29] **Chaz Howard**

That is very helpful; thank you.

[00:41:31] **Dorothy Roberts**

Thank you. And thanks for coming in and subbing for Ms. Livingston, Ms. Peterson. We really appreciate it.

[00:41:42] **Lorna Peterson**

Thank you. And I apologize, I don't know why I can't get my video to start. But in any case, thank you for this time. [Thank you!] And thank you for the support that we receive from the University of Penn.

[00:41:58] **Dorothy Roberts**

Sure, thanks.

[00:42:01] **Chaz Howard**

Thank you...

[00:42:01] **Dorothy Roberts**

I will move on to Mr. Johnstone, is that okay, Reverend Howard. [Yes.] Okay.

Mr. Johnstone, thank you for your remarks. Unlike the other communities, Spruce Hill actually does overlap with the Penn patrol zone. And so, while Ms. Peterson was just describing how their relationship with the Penn Police is really more advisory and supportive, I wonder if you could tell us what are the implications of the Penn Police patrolling part of your community? How active do you feel Penn Public Safety personnel are in Spruce Hill? Is it regular? Is it rare? How do your community members view the Penn Police? And is there a sense of over-policing because there are these overlapping police agencies present in the neighborhood? Or under-policed? Both? Could you just give us a sense of the relationship between Spruce Hill and the Penn Police?

[00:43:24] **Evan Johnstone**

Absolutely, thank you. Just going back to what you were talking with Lorna about, just to step back. I don't want to give anybody the impression that our perspective, or my perspective of the Penn Public Safety team, is negative because it is not. I think we have a very good relationship with them. We are sort of in the heart of that community, right? Spruce Hill borders 38th to 46th, Woodland to Market. You know, and the Penn Police Department basically stops at 43rd, I think they do do additional coverage past that point. But we are really; Spruce Hill is really sort of in the heart of where they patrol.

From a community perspective, they have always been very supportive of our events. They make it a point to come to our meetings and provide representation at our meetings, raise issues of concern, and we give them our honest assessment and feedback of what is happening. And I feel they have always been responsive if there are issues that do arise and come up. They have been responsive to emergency calls. In our area, they are the first responders. Generally, they will be first to arrive at the scene of an incident before the 18th District will. So, there have been car accidents, there have been other issues on and around our block, where I have had interactions with them. And again, they are always thoughtful and gracious when they do get here. I feel that they do the work

necessary to gather the feedback from our community. So, in that sense, I think Spruce Hill, in general, does have a good relationship with them.

Moving on to over-policing. I don't get the sense that in our community, people feel it is over-policed. You know, again, I think because we are in the heart of that sort of Penn community, most of the police that we do see, are Penn Public Safety Police Department rather than the 18th District of the Philadelphia Police Department. So, we are used to seeing them. We do have the added benefit of having UCD Bike Patrol patrol our area as well. So, they are fairly visible, and I think they also work pretty closely with the Penn Police Department to address areas of concern or hotspots or if issues begin to arise.

So, that was a rambling answer to your question. I don't know if I addressed everything that you asked there, but please feel free to follow up if I didn't address anything.

[00:46:14] **Dorothy Roberts**

I will let Reverend Howard follow up on that. Thank you.

[00:46:19] **Chaz Howard**

And, again, thank you for joining us. Just a two-parter myself, also. How do you think we could improve? How do you think Public Safety or Penn Police could improve the services we provide? [*It will be for the community*], and then, I will have one follow up after that.

[00:46:34] **Evan Johnstone**

Okay. Sorry, I didn't mean to interrupt you there. I mean, I do think that there is a lot of value in what I will call sort of generically community policing, being out and about. You know, walking the streets, being seen, and interacting with individuals. I don't see a ton of that in our neighborhood. I see a lot of cars, right? So, Public Safety personnel, a Penn Police individual maybe in a car, sitting in a car. There is a lot of sort of face-to-face interactions.

Obviously, in today's climate, that becomes difficult, right? Because, you know, the COVID and the pandemic. But I think if there are opportunities and ways to get them

out of the car and interacting with more people in the community, I think that is always beneficial. So, I would definitely advocate for that. I mean, I said it in my comments. I think making sure that they have access to the right training so that they understand how to respond to potential mental health concerns, you know, that they are minimizing any sort of cultural bias and that people feel comfortable interacting with them and speaking with them, I think would be incredibly valuable.

[00:48:04] **Chaz Howard**

And just one quick follow up. One of the things that has come up in the last couple of weeks also has been around oversight. And so, our police department has had a strong advisory board for the last several years, but that advisory board is mostly comprised of people who work or study at the university. And I think some of the exceptions would be representation from UC District. Do you think, since we police, Spruce Hill, Walnut—like areas off-campus? What do you think there should be some community oversight, or at least community accountability, or community representation in different ways, and what do you think that should look like?

[00:48:50] **Evan Johnstone**

I certainly would be supportive of some sort of advisory committee, whether it be some sort of ad hoc committee or something a little bit more formal so that you can gather input and feedback from the community on a rolling and ongoing basis. I mean, the Penn footprint is changing; it is growing. There are more hospitals coming up, its footprint has expanded in West Philadelphia, even in the last decade. And so, you know, that has an impact on the residents of the community.

And so, I do think having some sort of regular effective feedback mechanism that is comprised of residents in the areas that they patrol, and in the areas that are adjacent to areas that they directly patrol, I think, would be incredibly beneficial and useful.

[00:49:45] **Chaz Howard**

Thank you so much.

[00:49:46] **Evan Johnstone**

My pleasure.

[00:49:47] **Dorothy Roberts**

Thank you. I will move on then to our next speaker. I'm skipping ahead, Ms. McBride Williams. And maybe pick up on something that Mr. Livingstone just said about the way in which Penn is ever more present in communities.

What is the relationship, do you think more broadly, between Penn and Cedar Park? And do you think that Cedar Park community members for that—because of that relationship, should be more involved in decisions that Penn makes regarding a broad range of policies, but in particular, public safety? And you should um-mute yourself; I think that might be an issue.

[00:51:05] **Renee McBride Williams**

Here I am. [Okay.] I'd like to say, I haven't had the opportunity to reach out to all of our members because usually in August, we don't meet. But however, on a positive note, Penn's police have supported many of our outdoor events, which has continuously grown, and to Cedar Park with our music fest. Also, our Baltimore Avenue corridor Dollar Stroll, and coming to our meetings. However, I don't think the borders, right, had extended all the way to 52nd Street from Baltimore Avenue. I live on a small street between Catherine and Baltimore Avenue. So, in that area, we haven't seen a lot of the Penn Police Department. And the most that I heard about Penn's presence was during some of the protests on 52nd Street, so forth and so on.

So, I think as Penn students began to move into our area, which we have welcomed them, and they have come, and I have new neighbors that I am asking how they feel about the community and things that they would like to see. One of the things that we had mentioned was like having, before Penn's police office begins to integrate with the 18th District, we see more of them than we do Penn Police, that they begin by maybe making themselves more visible, and offer some advice for mentoring and de-escalation, which, like I said, the comment about Penn's police came when they had protests on 52nd Street. So, [*they thought*] it was amazing that they were there, for one.

Two, is like offer why were they there, and what would they do? And what were some of the solutions [*that wanted*] for them to integrate fully into our community as we move forward, you know, into housing and so forth and so on?

So, some of the neighbors offered some advice that they thought that de-escalation techniques might work, community advisors, also just a little bit more walking around and saying hello and waving, you know, because which we would like to see the 18th Police District do the same. So, many cases of we don't see them until something actually happens, tragically, or something that is, that a phone call, you know, it's something that's going on in someone's house. But we would like to see where they are saying, how are you today? Check on the elderly because usually, we have some people in the community, the organizations, and groups that do ring their doorbells to see how they are doing. Or just walking and saying hello.

So, that's one of the objectives that I have now is just to see people actually speak to one another and share their ideas and opinions. So, I would like to see that with the Penn Police as well.

[00:54:11] **Dorothy Roberts**

Just to follow up, was the incident on 52nd Street, that is within your community?

[00:54:18] **Renee McBride Williams**

It was outside our borders ... however, many of the neighbors were in the neighborhood, and they were also protesting with [*Black Lives Matter*]. So, I got to hear a lot of the third opinions because I wasn't there, to tell me what they—that went on and how it happened and their point of view. So, I wanted to mediate their opinions along with mine with not knowing, you know, I felt as though it would be a good idea that people could sit down to the table and talk about ways in which they could integrate a public policy for police and injustice in our community without it [*going any*] further, you know, with any aggression or any animosities. So, the support has been great, you know. I just would like to see everybody; the majority see it too.

[00:55:13] **Dorothy Roberts**

Well, that is very helpful, and I hope that that process that you are going through, you can share more of it with our initiative because it seems like a very relevant and very helpful process of bringing community members together to discuss what happened across a range of views.

And before I turn it over to Reverend Howard, I just want to apologize to Mr. Johnstone that I merged your name with Ms. Livingston's, and I apologize for fumbling your name. But I will turn it over to... [Not a problem.] my colleague.

[00:55:59] **Chaz Howard**

Thank you so much, Ms. McBride Williams, for your time and for your presence and sharing of your wisdom. And so, I had a follow-up question about your comment about redirecting some funds. Could you say a little bit more about that, and—

[00:56:13] **Renee McBride Williams**

Well, yeah, I am glad to. And I want to say; first, a lot of this is my opinions, you know, and some of the people that I have spoken to. I hear a lot about defund; because I am a senior, you know, for this occasion—the word defund the police is frightening. Because as I heard earlier, nobody wants to live in a place where they don't feel safe or secure or feel as though they have some support from law enforcement, or to say justice.

For the most part, I like to say that the partnerships that—I want to make sure I am answering your question without rambling, could you kind of give me an idea where I am going after that.

[00:57:01] **Chaz Howard**

You're doing fine. I think—I am imagining if you could steer some of the funding toward a specific space in the community—

[00:57:10] **Renee McBride Williams**

I think that the—like, for example, if they steer the funding into mental health services, for one. Because in our area, we obviously have some homeless people, and we have some complaints about them walking around the neighborhood and soliciting for

dollars, and so forth and so on. But I imagine, and if a person doesn't really know a police officer, let's say, the witness doesn't know who that person is, and they have lived in the community all their lives, especially since they have been sitting in the park, they may wind up escalating that into something that it may not have gone so far had they known who that person was, or known their background, or find resources for some people who are not in shelters or who are living out in the street or in the parks. Because we are right there, Cedar Park, we have a lot of people who do spend the night there. And people who have been residents of the community for better than all their lives, you know. And if you don't know who they are, you don't know who the characters are, their families, it's many cases, it may be some things that might not have happened had they been known.

And also, to redirect money into just de-escalating techniques for the police to help them. You know, the same thing with mentoring. The same thing with bias training. Because in this area, specifically, we just recently began to see an uptick in buildings and neighbors changing, and age differences and race differences, and ethnic backgrounds have been different. Even based on the fact of what we eat, the restaurants have changed. So, some of your long-time neighbors and residents have a hard time trying to understand that and some confusion as to where they are going; they feel like they are going to be displaced, and there is still some anger and some, I guess, some fear for how and what was happening next. So, we step out, and we offer them things to help them reconnect into the community.

So, I would like to see that same thing for the police officers. Because in all fairness, they are human. So, they would need to feel as though they are needed, and they were appreciated as well. So, I would like to see some of that money not defunded, but redirected and programs that will help both the community and both law enforcement and public policy.

[00:59:52] **Chaz Howard**

That's very, very helpful. Thank you so much.

[00:59:54] **Renee McBride Williams**

Oh, you're welcome. Thank you.

[00:59:56] **Dorothy Roberts**

Thank you so much. I will turn now to Ms. Laidacker, from Garden Court. And I really appreciated your very concrete list of suggestions to us about transparency, accountability, the anonymous tip line, and a holistic approach that takes into account the entire relationship that Penn has to the community, including public safety, but other aspects as well.

And I wondered if you would speak more about two aspects of it. One is the need for a forum that is more accountable to the community; that listens to concerns that may not otherwise be heard. And the other is about the approach that sees a connection between Penn's footprint in the community and public safety. Similar to Reverend Howard's question to Ms. McBride Williams, do you see a place for Penn investing more in certain aspects of your community? What would those be? And, the second is a kind of tension I am hearing in some of the recommendations, which are a tension between wanting the police to be more visibly present in terms of engaging more with community members but also, some, I think you stated this more than others, suggestions for defunding and re-investment, perhaps reducing the size of the force, which might, for some people, seem in conflict with wanting a greater visible presence.

I wondered if you would just speak about that as well.

[01:02:31] **Andra Laidacker**

Thank you. In terms of the footprint. So, just listening to my fellow panelists, I am realizing that, in fact, Garden Court has very little interaction with Penn Police compared to some of the other areas. I can only speak for myself; I live on 46th Street, and I have a number of neighbors who are Penn professors. There are a number of students. So, I most often, personally, see Penn Police walking people back home after an evening.

That being said, we do have a large presence of the Penn community in our neighborhood and on our streets. So, in that sense, perhaps it does make sense to have more direct lines of communication between Penn Police and now, our neighborhood association. So far, we have had interactions with the 18th District more often. We have a

gentleman who is our long-term liaison. He also has very strong ties to Malcolm X Park, so he is our go-to person; for instance—I will give you an example.

Recently, there was a mugging on Larchwood, between 46th and 47th, that triggered some responses that said that it was part of a pattern. The couple who was actually almost mugged did not want to come forward to go to the police. And the idea is, we don't over-police, so why should we report this crime. And they didn't want to come forward.

One of our neighbors suggested, oh, let's get GCCA to contact the 18th District and see what's going on. So, we went about it that way in terms of providing a service because we do have a person with a very strong tie, and the police in the 18th District are very responsive to Greg. But it shouldn't be like that. It shouldn't be that I have a relationship with the police; therefore, they come—they are responsive to me. So, part of my experience is really mostly with the 18th District, not necessarily direct interactions with Penn Police.

Unlike some of the other organizations, we do not host events specifically with Penn Police. I mean, we are part of the Baltimore Stroll, but that is not [what] we're doing necessarily reaching out to the Penn Police. I do see a, to the degree that the Penn Police is expanding its footprint, and perhaps it is, I mean it's—my experience with them is just so limited in terms of seeing them that I can't really speak about how other people would feel about seeing a private police force on our streets when there is already a lot of, like there is a lot of pushback against seeing regular police on it. So, adding more—I am not sure. It is not really a decision that we can make.

But, I certainly would want to have some community input into whether that is appropriate. I fully support some regular community input into the oversight committee; even it is not on a voting basis. At the very least, so we can be your ears on the ground. So, we can be providing you with information about what is happening. And I think that sort of information filtering to Penn Police, and to overseers, is very important.

I can provide you with many examples of how difficult it is to get from the street level to supervisory authorities to get even like blatant violations. I was just giving this example the other day. I happened to clerk for the Pennsylvania Supreme Court when Kids for Cash was happening. And no one knew what was happening, and it had been

happening for years, right? So, it's so hard sometimes in institutions to be able to get the information from the ground to authorities. People cover for each other. And that is a particularly pernicious problem within the police, right? I mean, police officers not willing to report what is a systemic problem because of the strong ties the police officers have with each other. And I understand that. But in order to be effective, I think you have to have different sources of information. And I think we, as community associations, can provide that.

Second, you mentioned a tension—

[01:07:20] **Dorothy Roberts**

Well, I said apparent tension. Because some of our discussions, not just today, but in other hearings, have been about a sense that some people have that certain communities may be over-policed because of the overlap of so many policing agencies. And so, some have suggested reducing that presence. But you and others have mentioned having, Ms. McBride Williams just mentioned it, I think Mr. Johnstone did as well, having police, Penn Police more visible and engaging with community members. That may not be a tension, but it could possibly seem to be. So, I just was wondering if you could address that.

[01:08:21] **Andra Laidacker**

So, I am going to put my lawyer hat on—

[01:08:24] **Dorothy Roberts**

I am one as well.

[01:08:25] **Andra Laidacker**

-- cases, I am just kidding, but—

[01:08:28] **Dorothy Roberts**

Maybe that's why I asked the question because I am a law professor. I tend to see these things that maybe don't even exist. But go on.

[01:08:37] **Andra Laidacker**

So, I would say that perhaps the tension is apparent only because I think what we are talking about is visibility in positive interactions versus visibility in negative interactions. At the moment, I mean, and I don't know if it because we have an overstretched police force where people can only show up when there is crime. I don't know if we have simply like this is how we are doing it; this is how, as a habit, we are doing it and, therefore, we are not going to venture into something else, sort of, you know, like a pattern here.

But I think what we were talking about is if the only times you see someone from the police is when something went wrong, that colors your perspective. And I mean, I don't have to tell you about witness intimidation. I don't have to tell you about these things, right? So, how many people in our neighborhood are okay to come up as witnesses, and how many who are not because they distrust the police? So, all of those things, like even when you are witness and a victim of violence, it can be a negative interaction with police.

So, what we were talking about really is having positive interactions in terms of showing the face of the police where they are members of our community and the human face of the police. And that can take many forms. That can take walking down the street, like Ms. Livingston was talking about. That can take going to events like Mr. Johnstone was talking about—sorry, I butchered it too.

So, you know, all of these things. And I understand that; I mean, there is how do you pay police officers for that? Like is that of their job? But the soft approach should be part of the job because they are working in a community. And it is okay to be human. Like that does not take away from someone's authority. Perhaps even, I was mentioning that in New Orleans, the students were doing seminars for high school students regarding police interactions and how to react. We would have skits and then explain what you should or shouldn't do in an interaction to be safe.

What if police officers were doing that? And you know, it's funny, I had a conversation in a bar one time with a police officer who said, oh, you're doing that? You're making my job harder. Right? Yet, these are people's constitutional rights. Like

that shouldn't be, you know—and the other thing that I would mention that I was mentioning to someone today is, I interviewed for the Bronx DA's office when I graduated law school. And one of the questions they asked me is, how do you see the job of a DA? And the thing that I answered is, I said it's about finding the truth; it's not about getting a conviction, right? So, I think you can apply that to the police. It's not about solving a case. It's not about finding a perpetrator. It's about finding the truth. And if you change the mentality in that sense, I think you can make a lot of headway.

So, I am going to stop there because I am going rambling around here too, so I hope I have sort of responded to your question.

[01:12:11] **Dorothy Roberts**

Yes, you did. You did. Thank you very much, and thanks again for the concrete suggestions that you gave us in your statement.

[01:12:19] **Andra Laidacker**

Thank you.

[01:12:21] **Chaz Howard**

I just have one quick question, and then I think we will head it toward Doctor Harkavy and Associate Vice President Bryan.

One of the questions actually came in from someone watching, Professor Austin. Do you think there is a problem with Penn students moving in the community? You said something that, in a sense, is kind of peripheral to policing, but it certainly has its touchpoints here. Do you think there is a Penn with students in the community around neighborliness, noise, bias, and the whole kind of broader conversation around gentrification? And do you think that there is a connection between that and our Penn Police and public safety?

[01:12:58] **Andra Laidacker**

So, that, I mean I don't want—it's hard to make generalized statements about individuals and who they are acting, right? I don't want to sit in judgement over my

neighbors. But, I will say that as a, you know, that I do see some systemic problems. I want to Princeton, and we had a very different town-gown relationship. We had most of the students living on campus. And very few instances of like truly people venturing out into the community.

Here, Philadelphia has a different circumstance, right? We have a city, and there are a lot of undergrads and also graduate students living in the community. I think that that's fine, personally. I mean, you know, some of my best friends are Penn grads. But I do think that because Penn students can often afford to pay higher rents, it's skewing the rental market. I think it is making it more unaffordable for people to live in this neighborhood if you are not a particular income. And that often, in Philadelphia, overlaps with race. So, there is that problem.

The second problem is that a lot of the rental properties are poorly maintained. Because if you have, I mean, look, if you have a bunch of students living in a house and tearing it up with parties every weekend, if you are a property owner, why would you put money into it? So, I see that as a problem too.

It's probably less of an issue—I don't really know of a lot of homes that have that sort of like party profile in GCCA, although closer to Penn, there are. The personal injury lawyer in me cringes every time there is a house when people are partying on top of the porch roof. And so, there is that. There is also, I think, you know, Penn has been great in terms of partnering with Penn Alexander and partnering with the Lea School. I am a beneficiary of that. But also because of that, and because of the partnerships and the positive impact on the schools themselves, I think it has had—created a cycle where you have more well-off people moving into the neighborhood and pushing out—and again, I mean it's the usual pattern of like white parents watch out for their own, right? And I think that that is not necessarily—it's bad. I mean, I am saying not necessarily. That's bad, right?

So, in the sense of more equity, I personally would support Penn putting money, like PILOTS, into the general fund of the school district. It's such a complicated question. I see all these in my neighborhood. And I moved here because I want to have a diverse neighborhood, and I want to have my children see different perspectives on the world.

And I feel like it's slipping away. So, those are my comments. I hope I answered your question.

[01:16:33] **Chaz Howard**

Thank you very much.

[01:16:35] **Dorothy Roberts**

Thank you. So, thanks to the panelists on our first panel, and I think now we will move to the second panel.

[01:16:46] **John Hollway**

Thanks to all who spoke. Doctor Harkavy, from Netter Center, we will turn it over to you, please.

[01:16:53] **Ira Harkavy**

Thanks very much. I appreciate it and being here, and I want to thank the Presidential Advisers of the Penn Public Safety Review and Outreach Initiative, Dorothy Roberts and Chaz Howard, for inviting me to testify at this hearing.

For 28 years, the Netter Center has worked with community members of all ages to help develop and implement democratic, mutually transformative, place-based partnerships that advance research, teaching, learning, practice, and service, and design to improve the quality of life on campus and in the community. Community voice is necessary for developing these partnerships and for co-creating effective solutions to locally manifested problems—locally manifested universal problems, such as problems with policing.

Among our closest partners is Penn's African-American Resource Center, or AARC, and I believe that AARC, as well as the Netter Center staff, 45% of whom are black, and the Netter Center's Community Advisory Board, comprised of West Philadelphia public school administrators, including Richard Gordon, the extraordinary principle of Robeson High School, who will hear from shortly, communities of faith and non-profit leaders, and community organizers that they all could serve as valuable

resources in helping to orient and advise Penn Public Safety on how to better interact and work with the black community.

In addition to this idea, I would like to suggest an approach, an approach in which Penn Public Safety is part of a larger university and community effort. It is imperative that fundamental change occurs in how police treat black and brown people. While improving police departments, including campus police, is essential, it will not in and of itself solve the problem at hand. The savage inequalities and persistent, pernicious prevalence of systemic institutional racism embedded in 400 years of history, laid bare now by COVID-19 and the brutal murders of George Floyd and so many others, are the problems that need to be solved. To do so will, among other things, require marshaling the full range of university resources—human – students, faculty, staff, and alumni; institutional – employment, procurement, real estate, etc.; co-curricular, curricular, and extra-curricular.

A main priority of higher education institutions, in my judgment, should be working to eradicate injustice and racism on campus and in the community through democratic, mutually transformative partnerships with their neighbors.

So, put another way, focusing on improving policing is a necessary but insufficient response to the problem of policing. The causes, not the symptoms, need to be attacked. Doing so would mean deepening institutional partnerships, including, but certainly not limited to, public safety with the community, as well as significantly increasing the number of Penn faculty working democratically with our neighbors, particularly through their research and teaching, to help solve community-identified problems.

Among other things, every school, department, and program should seriously consider what it could do to make advancing social justice and equity in West Philadelphia/Philadelphia an important focus of its research, teaching, learning, and service.

It must be said that Penn has changed considerably for the better since the late 1960s when I was an activist college student protesting against the War in Vietnam and racism, particularly racism manifested in the university's treatment of the West Philadelphia community. Indeed, Penn has made notable strides in recent years as it has

deepened and expanded its partnerships with the schools and communities of West Philadelphia.

A particularly positive development is the President's and Provost's selection of the Year of Civic Engagement as Penn's Academic Theme for 2020-2021. The theme year draws on Penn's historic and ongoing tradition of civic engagement while recognizing a commitment to help solve the complex problems so visible at this time and providing opportunities to engage with communities outside of campus, beginning with West Philadelphia. The focus of the Penn Reading Project on pieces by James Baldwin, Benjamin Franklin, Martin Luther King, Jr., Toni Morrison, and a short documentary on Parkland, will help introduce all incoming first-year students to this crucial theme. As an alum and Penn lifer, I am enormously proud of what students, colleagues, and community members have done and are doing.

Conditions in Philadelphia, however, indicate that much more significant change is needed; we have miles and miles and miles to go before we sleep. As is well known, Philadelphia's poverty rate, over 25%, is the highest among the country's ten largest cities. During the COVID-19 crisis, we have seen African Americans in Philadelphia account for 54% of the corona virus-related deaths while being 40% of the total population; and, according to a Penn study, Black and Hispanic pregnant women in Philadelphia tested positive for antibodies to the coronavirus five times as often as their white counterparts.

As this brief snapshot of data indicates, there simply cannot be a 'return to normal' after COVID-19, because normal was immoral, cruel, and degrading.

In 1899, W.E.B. Du Bois, in his classic study, "The Philadelphia Negro," written while an instructor at the University of Pennsylvania's Wharton School, succinctly captured the purpose of university research. He so described it as "the scientific basis of further study, and of practical reform."

In line with Du Bois, John Dewey argued that major advances in knowledge tend to occur when human beings consciously work to solve the central, highly complex problems confronting their society. There is no more central problem facing American society, indeed societies all over the world, than how to contribute to the substantial

reduction and eventual eradication of inequality and injustice, particularly racial injustice, and help build the Beloved Community called for by Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr.

If the university, indeed all of us at Penn, were to make creating the beloved community with our West Philadelphia neighbors a top individual, academic, and institutional priority, it would, in my judgment, significantly improve the quality of life and learning on campus and in the community, fundamentally change policing and public safety for the better, lead to increased advances to knowledge, and make a powerful contribution to creating a just, equitable, inclusive democratic society where Black Lives finally Matter.

Thank you very much.

[01:25:18] **John Hollway**

Thank you, Doctor Harkavy. I'd like to turn now to Mr. Glenn Bryan, the Assistant Vice President for Community Relations in the Office of Government and Community Affairs. Mr. Bryan...

[01:25:41] **Glenn Bryan**

Okay, now. Good afternoon and thank you for having me here. I will take the cool shades off there. Can you take my video, put my video on, or is that something I can do? Although I like the other picture better, but this will suffice, hopefully.

Thank you for allowing me to be a part of this hearing. I just want to take the opportunity to—seeing all our neighborhood partners for this hearing should be a little bit of a glimpse to everyone here about our ongoing engagement with our neighbors, and something that I worked on for 27 years.

I am a West Philadelphia resident, 52nd and Locust Streets, right in the heart of what everyone is talking about, and came here to Penn as an undergrad and grad, and went to public school, and came, as I said, to the University of Pennsylvania, and came back to work—still living in the community. It's a pleasure living in West Philadelphia. Yes, there have been many changes, and a lot of changes for the better. And it is University of Pennsylvania has really developed a lot of relationships with many aspects of the community. And I say community; I say neighborhoods more so than the community.

The community is just like the university; there are many parts of it. So, I want to be clear on that.

As an Advisory Committee member, and one that really called for the formation of an advisory committee years ago, it's been a pleasure to work with Vice President Rush representing OGCA. I knew what it was like before. Historically, two decades ago, when the Penn Police were under a tremendous amount of scrutiny, and rightful scrutiny by the surrounding communities regarding racial profiling, and that word was hot not long ago, but it's the same racial injustice, and it's really with excessive vehicle—vehicular and pedestrian stops of community members of color; African Americans—people that look just like me.

Twenty-seven years ago, I would say that's what it was. It was pretty bad on this campus and around this campus. But I like to say that the VP and her staff, and others, had really addressed this by working closely with our office and community partners throughout West Philadelphia. And I think that made a major difference in how the Penn Police were viewed. So, we saw a major decrease of these sorts of complaints, and really increased engagement by the police with the community. You heard about some of them today—partnerships and dialogue, you might think that they are small and little, but to a lot of the community, they are very important. And we heard a little bit about more visibility, and I think that that really contributes to that in a very big way.

But these were, Penn historically has had police that have had issues. But I am emphasizing the fact that a lot has been done to really ameliorate a lot of that, not to say that things can't happen; they do happen. Nothing is perfect. But I think through the more transparency that has come along with the Penn Police, things have gotten a lot better.

I think it is very important to sustain these efforts, and we have the Advisory Committee, which I had mentioned, and I heard a few community folks talking about Advisory Committee participation. And that is something that I always think is a good thing, but we really work hard to be transparent. We have meetings, First Thursday, the Penn Police are there each and every meeting, and we go out to various meetings, and association meetings with block captains, with whomever, and the Penn Police are there. So, and that is something that never really happened before.

Talking about coverage in West Philadelphia and the 18th District. We have many more Penn or Penn affiliated folks that have moved into the neighborhoods, even west of 52nd Street. And our office has really gotten calls about why can't the Penn Police come out all the way to 53rd Street, 54th Street, 55th Street? And there is a reason for that. They are feeling a lot better about the safety and the procedures of the Penn Police and feeling much more comfortable than the regular Philadelphia police. And, of course, it is about safety as well.

So, what I have seen is, and I know people on almost every block in West Philadelphia, I have been there long enough. I know young mothers and fathers that went to send their children down to the Penn Campus because of its safety that they are not receiving there. We are in the midst of racial injustice; we are talking about a COVID pandemic that we had never seen. We are having shootings all across this city, and in West Philadelphia, it could be 13 in a week, on a weekend, or in a day. And people are very, very, very concerned, and even beyond and just fearful and scared.

And so, I think that my take on this is, yes, the Penn Police and yeah, we can strengthen and keep strengthening; that's what we are about, I think that's why, as a community, a Penn community, we have to always listen to the community and involve the community in what we are doing. We have to be in this whole thing together— together. This is a different time, a different time and space if you would, and I think it is important that that happens, and the dialogue continues. We only can get better through dialogue.

So, that is what I wanted to offer to you today, as how my perspective, and it is a long-standing perspective, and it a current perspective of what is going on with the Penn Police and public safety and on campus and the surrounding neighborhoods. So, thank you.

[01:34:05] **Chaz Howard**

Thank you both very much.

[01:34:07] **Dorothy Roberts**

Thank you. Well, I will start with Doctor Harkavy, and I'd really like to explore your very powerful point about how focusing on public safety and policing is only a partial response to any question about Penn's relationship with West Philadelphia and that what Penn needs to do more of is address broader issues of social inequality in Philadelphia, and make West Philadelphia part of its beloved community, in the words of Doctor Martin Luther King, Jr. And I wondered what you thought concretely that means for policing. So, in other words, you said it is only partial, but that doesn't mean Penn shouldn't address how its policing policies relate to this idea of beloved community [Totally.]. Certainly, it is a broader issue, but for now, we were going to focus on the implications for public safety and policing. Given that broader perspective, what would you say needs to be done?

[01:35:36] **Ira Harkavy**

Well, thanks, Professor Roberts. And I think that there are two aspects to that. The first one, I would argue is, what you have heard; the idea of listening and hearing community voice as much as possible. Langston used his great line, the idea of listening eloquently. Making that core to the very process of what policing is about. Taking in, listening to, learning from, and that is why the issue of a broader inclusion of community voice, beyond the Penn Campus, will be, ideas I proposed, is just one among many. But certainly, the idea of including, for instance, in these processes, groups like AARC on Penn's Campus, I do believe that staff and individuals, particularly those who are black who work with the community on Penn, such as Netter staff, significantly would make a difference. I certainly believe our community board, which has distinguished leaders from across West Philadelphia, would be a very useful and important voice. As would the leadership of the various community organizations from who you are hearing today. So, one aspect is voice and continuation.

The other aspect is for policing to be part of that overall solution. So, the idea of the policing and University Public Safety increasing its partnerships, increasing its partnerships is part of a larger framework of Penn taking seriously across all aspects of the institution. It's not only responsibility and not only the intellectual benefits, but the necessity for its linking up more effectively with the community in seriously sustained

partnerships designed to make a profound difference in the quality of life. Penn policing should see its job not just as policing, but as part of creating a safe beloved community, working with other components at Penn and community organizations—so, we have heard very good things about its outreach efforts concerning various functions. There are deeper engagements that, as Penn becomes involved, the Penn policing could become involved in, including issues of how do you improve safety? How do you improve welfare and the delivery of services? What are the appropriate processes where resources could be more effectively provided elsewhere while being assured that policing is sustained and powerful that creates a safe community for everyone else?

These types of decisions, I think, are larger Penn questions, but they are also questions that Penn policing needs to be centrally and fundamentally involved with.

[01:38:16] **Dorothy Roberts**

Okay, thank you. Reverend Howard, do you want to follow up?

[01:38:21] **Chaz Howard**

I just have one question too. I think that—I am not sure there is anyone besides the two of you who understands Penn's growth over the last two administrations here. And I think that is my primary question for you, Doctor Harkavy, is around do you think our growth has been broadly helpful, or has been a hindrance in the creation of this beloved community? And I mean that in so many different levels because I think that you understand the expansion of our health system, the expansion of our footprint, literally, buildings. In there, is the expansion of our police department as well too, that when our friend Maureen—when VP Rush came, it was a very, very small department. Now, it is a very large department, and its patrol area has expanded too.

Do you think that our kind of spreading of Penn's wings from Sheldon Hackney to Doctor Gutmann now has been a net positive? Or, ultimately, has, in a complicated way, kind of been a hindrance toward this community building?

[01:39:31] **Ira Harkavy**

Well, I think that you have captured, I think, that it is both. So, let me see if I can describe how I think about those things.

First of all, there is an issue of expansion in which there is the active engagement of the institution to move people out. And that happened, certainly, during a period of Penn's history. It's the history, it's still alive in the perception of many West Philadelphia residents, and it is the history that existed with the expansion into; obviously, the Black Bottom and, in fact, the treatment of communities as to creating distance and good fences make good neighbors, creating an imaginable line and not having any community voice. That's one thing that clearly has no positive impacts whatsoever.

And the question of expansion of the institution comes with, I think, two sides of it. One aspect of it is, is it can help, as we have heard, communities and, certainly, help the university. But it also could have indirect and, often, unintended consequences. And sometimes, they could be intended, but largely unintended, of creating neighborhoods in which the residents who were there aren't the ones who were benefitting. That it moves them out, in effect, by not moving them out physically, not by creating situations of eminent domain but, in fact, creating situations in which the people in those communities are not viewed as partners. And what you are doing is improve the site and the area, but you are not thinking of how it affects people in that specific locality. You're worried and looking at your own needs and, perhaps, a future perspective without doing the first and most fundamental thing, which is to be partners and work together. I am not saying Penn hasn't done that, because it has done more of that, which is why I say it is more balanced now than it has been. But in all of these decisions, the first case, it seems to me, needs to be asking the question, how do we do this democratically in mutually beneficial ways that help both the institution and the community? And ultimately, if you act in ways in which you are thinking only of yourself and not behaving democratically, it will come back and have negative impacts.

So, my long-winded statement is, it has been both, and Penn, at times, has been a leader and seen worldwide, not just nationally as a leader, as a democratically engaged institution. But it can do and has to do much more. It has to take into account, it seems to me, given particular recent events, the question of how do we really work together in deep, profound, sustained, significant, and serious ways to make a difference in the

quality of life for the residents in that community, and the quality of life and learning in those communities, and the quality of life and learning on campus? And to create genuine partnerships that look to see how we can really create something like that beloved community and take that on because that is the appropriate role of a university. A university's appropriate role is to solve the problems of human life and improve the conditions—human condition is what Benjamin Franklin stood for. It's that famous line of Francis Bacon that the purpose of knowledge is power for the relief of man's estate—to improve the world. And there is nothing more important and significant than working collaboratively with our neighbors to improve the environment of West Philadelphia and the University of Pennsylvania, and that requires everyone, including faculty, staff, students, alumni, and the community to do that together. And then, we won't have mixed results; we will have results that are positive for all participants.

[01:43:31] **Chaz Howard**

Thank you.

[01:43:32] **Dorothy Roberts**

Oh, I am sorry, did you want to?

[01:43:33] **Chaz Howard**

Just saying thank you. Yeah.

[01:43:36] **Dorothy Howard**

Okay. I just want to follow up a little bit... [Sure.] because you mentioned collaboratively, democratically, and that would suggest that the community, the West Philadelphia communities, or neighborhoods, to use Mr. Bryant's advice that we shouldn't just be talking about communities broadly, we're talking about... [Neighborhoods.] specific neighborhoods... [Specific places, yes.] have a real voice. I mean there is one way of looking at this that Penn has this obligation and Penn will, withing itself, democratically figure this out... [That happens.] So, I wondered if you would just say a

little bit more about what Penn needs to do... [Right.] to democratic, in a true sense, of involving the neighborhoods that are being affected by its policies.

[01:44:33] **Ira Harkavy**

It's a wonderful question. And let me, in fact, start with the statement of Penn doing it within itself. A) it can't happen for two reasons. The first reason is it will not know enough. That there is a limit to university knowledge. The necessity of co-creation of knowledge, all the knowledge does not exist within the, quote, university. The lived experience of people is an absolute essential. And one could argue, some of the most fundamental problems that exist in this society is because of a model of knowledge production that is insufficient and problematic. So, the notion of that if we are going to do this, we have to have a community of experts. It is a community of experts that have the experts of the community working with us in a relationship. And that requires, just again, I don't want to go on too much, but this is what I have done my whole life, but I will try to make this as quickly as I can—an emphasis on democracy in every stage. A democratic purpose and one issue, and I will be more specific in a moment, the idea that the reason for the work is to create a democratic society and a democratic community.

Second, it is believing and advancing the idea of a democratic process, which means transparency, it means listening to others, and treating community members, not as a means to an end, but as ends in themselves. That neighborly involvement, then they are our neighbors. That is our primary responsibility.

And third, democratic product, which means we have to change. This is not changing of the community. This is a mutual change that Penn needs as significantly and as seriously as does the community of West Philadelphia. We all have strengths, and we want to do this together.

Now, to turn this much more concretely, what that means is, I believe, to at least some extent, the Netter Center, and some other entities on Penn's campus, and the general ethos that has been developed on Penn's campus, has attempted to emphasize democratic partnerships. What that means is forming long-term relationships and having place-based projects that continue and develop over time. It means having, as we do, a community advisory board, and Richard Gordon can speak to that, that has a voice in what we do. It

means listening, and also, not just listening, but responding and having an ongoing long-term dialogue, and it means not just various projects, although the projects could be wonderful. It means that if Penn is going to go to the next level, it means working in specified places with entities such as the Netter Center that can aggregate and integrate programs and have long-term relationships with the community now, and are designed to be building them in the future. So, it can't be just random; it can't be just more; it has to be more, more integrated, with at its center, the notion of partnership and relationship, and taking that as the primary criteria of whether you are doing a good job. Whether you are doing a good job.

I will say just one thing quickly. There's been, there is that line about partnerships, and I always think of this song by the Shirelles, "Will You Love Me Tomorrow?" And universities are often asked that question, and the response is, as long as I have a grant. As long as I have a program. That's insufficient. The answer is, yes; we have a combined fate; we love you tomorrow, you love us tomorrow, and we will work together to improve each other's work.

[01:48:01] **Dorothy Roberts**

Thank you. Thank you so much.

[01:48:03] **Ira Harkavy**

Thank you very much.

[01:48:06] **Dorothy Roberts**

I know that Mr. Bryan would like to answer that question as well, and feel free to jump in and let us know about what you have to say. I know your emphasis has been on community engagement, so if you would like to respond to the same question.

[01:48:32] **Glenn Bryan**

I would just like to bring up a song a little bit more—it's not current, but it's a little bit more current than what Ira just mentioned. "What Have You Done for Me Lately?" by Janet Jackson. Some of you might have heard that song, right? I think, right?

It only happened a few years ago. But that's what I hear. As long as we have been doing what we have been doing at Penn, that's really what I hear. And if you're talking about racial injustice, you're talking about racial disparities as well. And one of the things that—the idea of Penn partnering with its neighbors and engaging its neighbors with effective, I call it effective engagement, is based on the things that the needs of the community. The needs of the community are economics. The needs of the community are health-related, as we can see how it's been very much exposed with this pandemic. And, of course, the educational component, which I, personally, came through West Philadelphia High Schools and came to Penn. I know what it is like. And folks are crying out for those kinds of improvements to exist in West Philadelphia with the indigenous people, not folks moving in. But folks that live there. And I think—and Penn, this has been our agenda for now quite some time. Yes, we need to strengthen it, and we are doing that. And I think our partners that were on this call are helping us do that, not just, I'm saying older and younger, we are getting brand new ideas, and there is a fresh feeling that we could look at things a little bit differently and really improve our relations. And not just improving our relations, but strengthening our engagement with the community to make it effective and mutually beneficial for both the community and Penn.

So, that's all I wanted to say. Those three areas are very key. And you can go down into any section of West Philadelphia, of Southwest Philadelphia, and you will find that to be the answer.

[01:51:08] **Dorothy Roberts**

Thank you. Reverend Howard, did you want to follow up?

[01:51:14] **Chaz Howard**

Sure. This is for Vice President Bryan. I just have one quick question. [Sure,] So much of your work has been around engaging local community leaders as well as elected officials. And historically, our schools had a mostly positive relationship with a lot of our elected officials. What role do you think policy could play in solving some of the challenges we have had around policing here in the city? I don't want to put you on the spot. I know there are some challenges on things we can't say. But if you could be in the

ear of the Mayor or City Council, or the Governor, what recommendations around policy, specifically around policing, do you think could be made?

[01:51:59] **Glenn Bryan**

Well, I think that, and I am not an expert on police policies. I review, as you do, and other advisory committee members review what goes on with the Penn Police. But if you look at the 18th District and all of the City of Philadelphia Police, there are some major problems that exist between the community and the police.

I think that Penn Police, and I think we heard about it a little bit earlier, have some interesting dynamics in terms of community policing that many people in the neighborhood know the Penn Police, and they invite them in. I think transparency is really the key. And the more we do that, I think, I think we can be an example for the rest of the City of Philadelphia and other places. I think that's very important. But it's got to be inclusive; it's got to be transparency. Those are areas that—and we can think about how we can do things better because we always want to do things better. We just can't say, okay, we do everything wonderfully. We have to think about better ways and to have better outcomes.

It may not have answered your question, but I think that that's the methodology to get to those answers, the correct answers, by getting everyone involved in being transparent.

[01:53:40] **Chaz Howard**

Thank you, sir.

[01:53:43] **Dorothy Roberts**

Thank you. Thanks to both of you for your insights based on many decades of experience at Penn.

[01:53:55] **Glenn Bryan**

Easy, easy.

[01:53:56] **Dorothy Roberts**

Several. I think we will move on now to our third panel. John, if you want to introduce our panelists.

[01:54:10] **John Hollway**

Sure, I got to do my MC thing. Yes, so next is Doctor Richard Gordon, IV; the Principal of the Paul Robeson High School. Doctor Gordon...

[01:54:23] **Richard Gordon**

Good afternoon, and thank you for the opportunity to be a part of this very esteemed list of panelists, speaking about a very significant issue with regards to our University City community.

I cannot emphasize any more than what Mr. Bryan and Doctor Harkavy spoke of. The genuineness of partnerships and collaborations and outreach in our communities in order to make sure that those improvements are not only happening but also that they are equitably happening in various segments of our communities.

One of the things I am reminded by, just this conversation, was my initial assignment to Robeson High School in 2013. For those of us who are not fully aware of Paul Robeson High School, it is currently located at 42nd and Ludlow. It was one of the 25 schools that were slated for permanent closure back in 2013. And when I first arrived, I realized that as close as we were to Penn's campus, Penn did not have much of a presence in our school community. And I thought that that was a shame.

So, I wanted to make sure that one of the initial things I worked on in my first few years over at Robeson was to make sure that we had, and I reached and a conversation with Penn to talk about those genuine partnerships. And so, those genuine partnerships started out, obviously, with the Netter Center, but also relevant to today's topic, also connected to public safety as well because we wanted to make sure that our students were not only being safe but also they were being responsible citizens in the community that we share.

So, this issue today about policing is something that is very significant because I am going to have the opportunity to be able to speak to just our personal experiences and

relationships with Public Safety officials, with the University of Pennsylvania. As we continue to realize all these issues, it is important to continue to have these conversations because it's been clear that policing, as a continued issue to be debated throughout this country, it doesn't matter whether or not, you can be a resident of West Philly, or you can be an NBA Executive that is a millionaire, and still find yourself mistreated from policing policies that are taking place. And so, these things have to be exposed, but also part of a larger conversation to ensure that everyone has a sense of fairness of what is happening.

And so, although I feel as though that my experience with Public Safety is somewhat limited, I have nothing but positive things to say thus far about my relationship with Public Safety so far. So, my relationship goes, really, to two fashions.

One, with working with the Penn Police, and particularly looking at Officer Nickie Taylor, Officer David Dagger, and also Captain Belisairo, who have not only partnered with us to ensure that we are monitoring safety around the building, but also have taken the time to actually come to our building and visit us, just to stop in to say hello, even to partner with us on a number of initiatives. And even when there might be something happening in the community, there is open communication happening that is going—that's two way.

Secondly, having the great opportunity to even have our Penn Security officers, one of their security depots is right across the street from the school. And, several of the officers would come by, and we would talk, and we formed a partnership where they would monitor our morning entries and our afternoon dismissals to ensure, again, the safe flow of students in and out of our buildings, when they are getting off at 40th Street, which is a transportation hub, as all of you are aware of.

And so, through that, we are able to look at that as almost like a safe corridors program where we have that monitoring happening, both by Penn Security and Penn Police. And at the same time, our students were able to put faces to the uniform and become familiar with the individuals that were monitoring them on a daily basis. And so as a result of this partnership, we have noticed a significant reduction in incidents involving our students in the community. We have gotten feedback from local residents who talk about that there is such an orderly flow to how our students enter and exit the buildings, and when it's time for them to come and leave school.

And so, we also understand that it is a great opportunity for Public Safety to be able to interact with our staff members and to know that they are also going to be—know that they are supporting us, but also they know that we are supporting them in the relationships and dealing with our students.

And so, school, community, police, they all matter. I think it is important that we are always in the process of building trust through those partnerships and relationships. I think that it is very important that we have an opportunity to make sure that not only are we correctly responding to incidents in the community, but we are also utilizing the correct resources with regards to those responses. So, if there is an opportunity where we are going to make a decision between the principal dealing with the student versus an arrest, that opportunity to be able to mitigate that situation from going any further is a wonderful opportunity that we have taken full advantage of as partners in the community.

So, and again, our safe corridors program has, again, has really reassured our families to know because there were times where suspicious behaviors were happening, if I were to call Penn Security and Penn Police, and we were looking for support, we would go together with my [*unintelligible*] staff, and we would walk, drive, or be stationed out in the community together, shoulder to shoulder, so letting everyone know that we stand in solidarity for the safety of not just our students, but also visitors and local residents in the University City area. And our students took that very seriously, which is why they find themselves to be so responsible in the community. And so, I am very proud of them about that.

As a result of that partnership and why it is so important because, again, you are talking about a school that was taken over as it was facing permanent closure, and we were able to begin building those partnerships with the university on those two fronts, again, through the Netter Center and through Public Safety, as an opportunity to continue to improve our school. We were named the 2017 Most Improved High School. And then, various other awards were coming after that.

And then, as of right now, I was just named the 2020 State Principal of the Year, as a result of this story because this safe corridors program and partnership that I am explaining to everyone today was exactly the information that I was able to share with the official at the Pennsylvania Principals Association, and also with the National

Association, at the national office, the National Association of Secondary School Principals, because I am currently also one of only three national finalists for the National Principal of the Year.

So, this is not about those awards; this is about the impact of genuine partnerships that happen in these communities, as Doctor Harkavy and Mr. Glenn Bryant really talked about and how the importance of it, because everyone in the community feels engaged towards a collective mission. And that is very, very important.

And so, now, our students are seeing that we are accomplishing things that had never been done by a Philadelphia school or a Philadelphia administrator, getting this type of attention, not just locally around the state, but also around the country. And I feel great not only for our students and our parents; I also feel great for the University City and the University of Pennsylvania community at large for this opportunity.

But the biggest compliment is not the awards. The biggest compliment that I am able to really enjoy and rejoice in is the fact that when you have these partnerships, and you are focused on safety, and there is a genuine dialogue between these entities, there is an opportunity there to be able to offer a special environment for our families. And so, to have Officer Nickie Taylor, who is a University of Pennsylvania Police Officer, who sees a lot during the course of the day, feel confident in our school to transfer her daughter to our school and have her graduate from our program, that means a lot. Because that is an indication of the safety that has been developed through these partnerships, to be able to have three other officers—Nicole McCoy, another officer, I'd be remised if I didn't talk about her as well. Nicole McCoy, who is also a parent whose son graduated from our school last school year, in 2019. So, and how she has been a great partner of ours as well. Because they are in the community, with our students, but they are also in our schools as well, and doing the work and putting in outreach.

And I am hoping that these examples will be examples for not only Philadelphia Police, but also be examples also for policing, really, around the country. And so, these are just great results. And so, I just want to thank everyone, at the Netter Center, but also in Public Safety for, at the very least, being open and willing to be able to have these conversations, these dialogues, and these genuine partnerships for the benefit of the students that I serve every single day.

[02:05:22] **Dorothy Roberts**

Thank you.

[02:05:23] **John Hollway**

Thank you, Doctor Gordon, and while I appreciate your humility in pointing out the number of people that have to come together for awards like you have received and are up for, I also want to congratulate you on them. That is a wonderful thing to hear!

We will turn now to Mr. James Wright, the Director of Community, Economic, and Real Estate Development, at the People's Emergency Center. Mr. Wright. Thank you.

[02:05:48] **James Wright**

Good afternoon, everyone. Again, my name is James Wright; I am the Director of the Community Development Corporation at PEC. PEC is a comprehensive social services agency. We operate between Market and Girard, the River and 50th Street. We have been working in this area for over 45 years. We have a shelter for women and children and a youth component being added to that. And we do community development work that involves creating affordable housing, neighborhood planning, creative placemaking projects, economic development work along Lancaster Avenue, and civic association relations and capacity building in that neighborhood.

I am also a Southwest Philly native and a West Philly resident. I have lived in this neighborhood my entire life. I went to college and then came back. I got married and then bought a house. So, I am here; I am invested, and I really don't want to be anywhere else. I love West Philly. And as a kid, I grew up walking and riding my bike through all of West Philly, including Penn's campus. I just loved it. I love the whole neighborhood. And I just thought, as a kid growing up, that Penn was the good side of my neighborhood, that it was inspiring. So, it was one of the reasons why I thought so much about why I needed to go to college and what college could possibly look like and feel like for me. And, yeah, I was just inspired by growing up in the presence of the University of Pennsylvania.

Now, as a college graduate, when I returned back, it was a little bit difficult in that I felt there was this encroachment of the university on my neighborhood. And I saw many incidences of trauma; Glenn Bryant talked about some of those different kinds of ways that the Penn [*expansion*] could be traumatic to some indigenous West Philly residents. And I can't say that I personally experienced them, but I have definitely seen them and observed them, and was very cautious not to experience them. So, I lived a guarded life in that way. And so, it was just interesting.

So, as a college graduate, I observed the double standard right in front of me where you could see Penn students comfortably walling the neighborhood at any point, at any time, however they want. And I just often wondered, as a neighborhood resident, as a young person, young man in the area, could I and my friends walk the neighborhood in the same way? It didn't seem possible.

So, and then becoming a homeowner and a father, being a professional in the neighborhood, I just believed, and I still do, that I will be able to overcome that trauma and I will help my children to overcome or be able to dodge or push back on that encroachment. But the challenge is, what about my neighbors? You know. Do they have the same capacity that I do, you know? And how can I work with them and support them to have that same kind of capacity to push back on that encroachment to deal with the trauma, to address the double standard in a meaningful way? And that's where the community development hat comes on.

And I think, especially in light of the uprising, I did have the chance to observe some of the other speakers on Tuesday, and Amelia, her words, her opening statements just kind of resonated deeply with me. I was out there on 52nd Street the next day. I didn't actually participate in the protests, but with the cleanup, and it was just startling and watching the incidents on Twitter was just shocking. And you want to be diplomatic. You want to really talk about the great benefit of having such a renowned university in your backyard—you want to talk about that, but you can't really overlook what happened, and you can't overlook the history and how it just kind of shapes this collective trauma that indigenous residents, as Glenn pointed out, experience and deal with on a regular basis. You know, with the basic thought being, oh, my god, you know, one day Penn is going to own, literally own up to 63rd Street. And reasonably, you think, nah, I don't know if that

is possible but then, oh, wow! They are certainly out making strides. So, it's a real challenge.

And so, I wanted to really just point out the corporate social responsibility. And I know that Penn is a leader, and has been the leader for a long time. Ira talked about that. Not just leading in the Philadelphia community, but leading around the world. People have looked to Penn and employed the Penn model on their campuses, and have affected their neighborhoods in much of the same way that Penn has. So, Penn is a leader.

And so, we have this opportunity; we have this moment that we are in. People keep talking about this moment, and we really are in this moment where we are all looking to figure out how we can do something that is really impactful, really sustainable, in light of the uprisings, in light of some of the injustices that have occurred over the last decade or more. And I will just say, as a leader, Penn has that ability to really shine and to really set a great example. So, Ira really laid out a strong platform for social justice rooted in the idea that Penn has done their research, they have really collaborated with community members, and now it's kind of the opportunity is to invest more deeply in that work.

And so, in this moment, it's kind of like is Penn going to work to make this moment more real and not just a thing that is out there? Are they going to like not straight back, but lean into some of those investments that they have already made? And how would they make those investments deeper and looking at some of the programs of the Netter Center? And how [unintelligible] look at that greater opportunity, Ira has talked about the beloved community but, you know, creating this equitable neighborhood where there is this joint pursuit of shared value. So, the most successful corporate social responsibility strategies are built upon this joint pursuit of shared values, and one that really takes in the interest of the corporation or the institution, but also takes in the interests of all of its beneficiaries. And as a West Philadelphia resident, I am a beneficiary. I didn't go to Penn, I don't work at Penn, I don't use any of Penn's resources, but by nature of the fact that we both exist in West Philadelphia, and I am not leaving, and you're not leaving; Penn isn't leaving, we are collaborators in building this neighborhood.

And so, I think Ira just laid it out really well, and Glenn cited the history of his work in his role as vice president, it's just a matter of what do you do now? And how hard will you lean into it? And do you take—does Penn take this opportunity as a leader to really just change the dynamics of how universities relate to community. And it gets confusing when you think about defund the police, disband the police, but the opportunity—we can't get lost in those conversations, we have to really focus on really looking at those investments and how we can get deeper into it.

Thank you for the opportunity to share.

[02:14:03] **Dorothy Roberts**

Thank you so much. Well, I am going to turn to Principal Gordon to maybe pick up on some of what you just said, Mr. Wright. So, first of all, I would like to echo congratulations to you and to Paul Robeson High School for all the recognitions that you have received, are in line to receiving more. That's great news... [Thank you.]

And you began by telling us about this really remarkable achievement that the high school was slated to be closed and you, in partnership with others, were able to bring it back, not only to survive but to thrive. And so, it seems that you may be to giving us a concrete example of what other panelists are calling for, a kind of partnership that invests in West Philadelphia neighborhoods between Penn and important aspects of those neighborhoods. And so, I wondered if you could share with us some of the insights that we could draw from your experience into what, as James Wright was saying, how Penn could dig in ever deeper, invest even more. What would be some of your recommendations?

[02:15:45] **Richard Gordon**

Well, we're definitely traveling outside of Public Safety here, so—

[02:15:50] **Dorothy Roberts**

Well, I don't know—

[02:15:51] **Richard Gordon**

No, it's fine. I absolutely love going in this direction because I think that, so—and again, if my history is correct, and somebody can correct me, so if my history is correct was that the idea of setting up a school like say, a Penn Alexander, for example, was the idea of setting up a school in a neighborhood that would allow for the neighborhood to thrive. But you know, what you are finding, as many of the panelists have talked about, about a lot of the indigenous West Philadelphia residents being priced out because of all the construction, all the re-gentrification, all the huge interest in all the universities, not just Penn, but all the universities that are local, and all of the construction going up, there is—I know of an urban design plan that is online that talks about the renovation of Market Street and all of those things. The idea that what those things are pricing our residents. And so, what you find is that Penn Alexander, it has become a magnet program that is really exasperating the caste system that we currently already have in the School District of Philadelphia in terms of the kinds of kids that are being serviced.

And so, some zip codes have better schools than others. So, that's a challenge, and I think that it is important to ensure that if an institution like Penn and other institutions are not only helping us to be able to hold these conversations with the School District of Philadelphia and the City of Philadelphia about the inequities that are happening at these school levels but, also, to continue to invest in school programming that leads to a more balanced service of minority students in the West Philadelphia communities. And that is a concern.

So, I know that Penn Alexander each year is always the top middle school award winner. So, but you are also getting the best of the best kids that are available in the city. So, whereas somebody like a Robeson High School, so I know that 90% of our students are coming in below basic in science and the math. And so, we have a larger hurdle to climb. So, the question really comes down is how can we take advantage of university research, university resources? How can the Netter Center, that is currently already in our building, continue to be bolstered by our supports and resources to continue to help us build our program so that we can start to fill in these gaps that many of our students are experiencing academically when they are in other schools. And then, when they get to high school, we are being asked to do something that is statistically impossible, which is we are to take eleven years of education, and our job is to squeeze them into three years

because that is how we are evaluated by the state in a matter of a three-year window, with that particular cohort of students. So, you know, so I basically have three years of high school along with the eight, nine years of elementary school education, you are asking me to fill those gaps to bring them back on level in about eleven, twelve years. And that is statistically impossible. And yet, our staff is doing a great job in trying to close the gap as much as possible, but it takes a yeoman's effort, and I think that that conversation really needs to be had about how it is happening in so many communities of color. And, unfortunately, it is not something that even in West Philadelphia, maybe, is not affecting Penn Alexander as much.

And so, I would love to be able to see Penn be able to not only drive that conversation, but also continue to connect with Doctor Harkavy, with local principals, and then we start coming together as a consortium to talk about these issues and figuring out what plans of action can we actually take to be able to address these issues, particularly at the elementary and middle school level where we are losing a lot of kids because, again, statistics show when the kids are coming in with such gaps, and then they get into ninth grade, there is a high likelihood in the first year and a half of high school, they are going to drop out. But yet, because of the help of the Netter Center, we were able to maintain a 95% graduate rate. That's important, but it takes so much effort to do that where in other locations, it is a little more effortless, to be honest with you.

[02:20:34] **Chaz Howard**

I just have one question for you, Doctor Gordon, and then one follow up question for Doctor Wright. If you were to ask your students, broadly, their thoughts on the police, what do you think they would say?

[02:20:48] **Richard Gordon**

It's funny; I would say that their perception of the police at school versus in their community are two different perspectives. And it is a matter of safety and respect. And so, like I said before, I have a number of parents who are police officers who come into the building and the kids are interacting with them, they are interacting with our school police officers. You know, I said, Officer Taylor, Officer McCoy, they are part of our

community as well, they are a part of it, so... And at that same time, there is a reasonable safety in knowing that they are cared for in our building. So, there is not a nervousness, and there is positive interaction that happens in our building, I like to believe, which expands into the community when our kids are able to travel back and forth. And I would ask Officer Taylor, hey, how is it going? How are our kids? Any problems? And it's like, nope, everything is great. The kids are fine. No problems, you know. So, now, as opposed to in the community is a whole 'nother issue, so, because our kids will tell you stories upon stories about feeling disrespected, about not having a connection. And honestly, not being familiar with the officers that are policing there, particularly if they do not look like them or come from neighborhoods in which they were raised in. And so, that is a particular issue.

So, I think that right now, Robeson High School is benefitting from the connections and the relationships and also knowing that our school, myself, our school, and our staff members have their best interest at heart. And so, there is a comfort level that gets developed in our little bubble. But unfortunately, they are not being able to take advantage of outside of that bubble.

[02:22:38] **Chaz Howard**

I appreciate that, thank you. And then, just, finally, Mr. Wright, first of all, let me pause. I am thankful for both of you. You both are doing tremendous work for our community and for young people and so many. And I don't mean this in a patronizing way; I am proud of you. I think, as a black man, seeing the two of you all, I am proud of you and thankful for the work that both you all are doing. And I am glad we can kind of land and end our day hearing from the two of you all.

I think my final question, and I don't mean this to be a leading question at all, though, as a black man, walking around West Philadelphia, if the police pull up on you, outside of your professional role, how do you feel? And talk us through the thoughts of whether you are being pulled over or whether the lights come on or whether you are being brought up while you are walking. What are you thinking?

[02:23:42] **James Wright**

It is traumatizing, right away. Right away. Simply because you are just very aware that regardless of innocence or guilt, if you don't follow the proper procedures, that are not the procedures that you may or may not be aware of, it could end up bad. Or it could end up humiliating, you know. Let's not even go to the worst-case scenario. The most likely scenario could—not most likely, but it could end up where you could be in cuffs on the curb or in the back of a car or even in the police station. And so, it's not even the lights. You don't have to hit the lights; you have to see the white car turn the corner behind you or following you too closely. Whether they are following you or not—or driving in the lane behind you; it's just traumatic.

And so—so, to be honest, the procedure I go through internally is I begin to check my stuff. I locate where my wallet is in my pocket. I figure out how I am going to get that. I know my stickers, and everything is in the glove compartment; I got to figure out how I am going to get that safely. And then, I am going to check 10 and 2; everything is tight. I wear a seat belt all the time, but I am doublechecking. And then, I am definitely, definitely, going the speed limit. And regardless of what I am listening to, NPR, rap, or whatever, I'm turning it off, and I am completely alert because my mind goes to I need to be very aware of how I am being approached so that I can act accordingly.

And so, and you practice that, and you think it through, and you teach it to your kids. And that's what's real. I mean, I am joking, I am laughing when I am saying this, but it is very serious. That is the procedure I go through before the lights even turn on.

I haven't been stopped on the street personally, like rolled up on. But I have encountered police on my block when I call them to actually investigate a situation. And I am also very guarded. I am making sure that I am speaking clearly; I am speaking simple facts. I am not embellishing or adding to because, in previous interactions, I have become a suspect. And so, I do everything to make sure that they don't consider me a suspect and that they actually look toward where I need them to look. And so, everything is guarded, and I am very, again, that awareness of my interactions with the police is just right in front of me.

And so, I actually, I think someone said it earlier; if I can avoid calling the cops, I actually do. But when I need to, I do. And I don't know.

[02:26:55] **Richard Gordon**

Could I jump in on that, if that's okay? Is that...? [Please.] Because I agree, in a sense, that there is a nervousness that is there. But at the same time, I want to believe in good policing. You know, so, but I think, but it's hard. It's hard because the challenge of not just the country, but also even locally here in Philadelphia, and it is important for, really, our white counterparts to really understand that anybody who is non-white feels, in a lot of senses, and I am talking mostly black and brown, feeling as if that you are in a box and you are trying to figure out which way to go.

So, in other words, if the messages of diversity is not important and you can't advance, you know. Imagine a three-legged stool, and that is one leg. There is a third leg of well, you don't—you know, well there is a resentment there if I just back and don't work or make an effort and I just get things for free on the government's dime, you know, there is a resentment there. And then a third stool is that there is a segment of violence and retribution that often happens, a lot of times, unsolicited, that happens against people of color and when we try to say, hey, look, this is what happened, believe me. And then, there is a lack of belief when that occurs, and it takes a camera to justify our point when, in fact, it doesn't happen for other people.

And I mentioned earlier, Masai Ujiri, who is the NBA executive for the Toronto Raptors. He is a millionaire, you know, so... So, the team that he constructed that wins the championship, he gets pushed by the police because of the fact that he is there, standing as a black man, and he has a pass in his hand, you know, unwarranted by the police, but yet a white reporter from ESPN, who doesn't have a pass at all, is allowed to pass by and go on to the court.

And so, I bring that up to say that, that nervousness that I am talking about is understanding that these situations that I am referring to, policing is just a byproduct of that condition in America and that lack of white America acknowledging our presence here, as black and brown people, and being a part of the fabric of not just the city, but also this country. And that's where that nervousness comes from. I want to stop being nervous, but it is very hard because we have been shown time and time again that lack of acknowledgement and not being able to really sit down because of that three-legged

stool—sit down comfortably because of that three-legged stool. Hopefully, that makes sense.

[02:29:54] **Chaz Howard**

You're very helpful; thank you both so much.

[02:29:57] **Dorothy Roberts**

Yes, thank you. I wonder if I might ask one more question. I know we have gone on, but I really want to take advantage, James Wright, of your position as Community, Economic, and Real Estate Development Director at People's Emergency Center, and the way in which you spoke both just now very powerfully about the trauma of police encounters, but also a collective trauma of encroachment in West Philadelphia communities. And I wonder if you could make the connection between public safety and corporate social responsibility that you referred to. And maybe just concretely, what can we advise the university to do to address public safety in a way that respects everyone's human dignity, as it is also living up to its corporate social responsibility? Can you put those two together? I know it's a big question, but... [Yeah.] you have mentioned both, and I would love to hear a little bit more about how they relate to our initiative.

[02:31:27] **James Wright**

So, corporate social responsibility can cover every facet of the corporation, right, or institution, in this case. And in terms of public safety, there are various programs, I think, Ira talked about community policing, he talked about that a lot. So, you saw it earlier. You saw how Ms. Livingston has such a positive outlook; the way that she related to Penn Police. And you could have more of that. It would take effort, and it would take some time, but those kinds of relationships could be created and developed in other parts of the community with various stakeholders, not just the civic associations.

So, I think when it comes to social responsibility, what are the ways in which the police department, or this public safety component, can make those connections to other stakeholders, beyond the civic associations? How are they working with the civics to make a greater connection to the actual members of the civic association? And I know

that the opportunity is there, and there is a chance for residents that live within the Penn zones to receive some police or UCD escorts, you know. But the idea, it may not have caught on enough, so that young ladies, or women, traveling alone at nighttime know that they can receive help from a UCD escort, might be a way to kind of change that—the outlook that people have with public safety,

Maybe it could involve, you might have to look at how to create programming to, you know, I mean, could you start a young cadets program for our young people in the neighborhood that do want to become police officers. Could you start a ride-along effort? I know the 18th District, at one point, they worked with elementary school students from St. Francis de Sales to create a small film about a ride-along and how young people engage with police officers in doing a ride-along. I know it sounds problematic in this moment of de-fund or disband the police in this antagonistic environment, but the way that you overcome the difficulty of the conflict is by having more conscious communication.

And so, I think the way that Public Safety can look after their social responsibility a little bit more is in how are they developing relationships with residents beyond just policing? There is the [*unintelligible...police...unintelligible*], there is the crime prevention through environmental design. Are they creating cohesion, cohesive relationships with residents? Are they looking after how can they manage territories, blocks, and streets with residents as opposed to doing it on their own? And with the events, what does their participation in the event look like to make them appear more a part of the community as opposed to just securing the community?

I think, off the top of my head, that's what I lean to. But there is the opportunity to improve relationships and look at, like in the schools. I mean, Doctor Gordon gave a great example of how they have improved relationships with students at the school, you know. How deeper can you get with Paul Robeson and with the elementary schools in the neighborhood with how the police interact with those students? Are they—is there a sports competition, is there a basketball league they have sponsored? Are they participating at the soccer club at Clark Park, or?

But I think, yeah, you just kind of got to get beyond policing into improving those interactions. So, by way of example, what we have done in our neighborhood with

the 16th Police District, we have engaged in art marking, creative placemaking. So, we actually work with the 16th Police District, which is north of Market to City Line Avenue, and helping them to understand how to engage youth. We had a cohort of young people that connected to some of the officers in the district, and they actually did artmaking for the space of four months, and they turned the District's lobby area into an art gallery for about a month—they had two showings. And that was great! And now, those officers, the ones that participated, there is a camaraderie that exists between my staff and them and the young people that work with me that wasn't there before. And I think the opportunity to do things like that is there; it's just a matter of—I guess, if you want to split hairs, you could say that safety and policing could be different; in safety, you could be more relational. That's [*all I have*].

[02:36:54]

Thank you. Thank you. Well, I think that closes us out for the day. So, thank you to all of our speakers... [Thank you.] and panelists. It was a very rich conversation, and we are so grateful to all of you.

[02:37:18] **John Hollway**

Thank you, Professor Roberts, and yeah, I would just like to echo that to all of the participants. Thanks for staying with us for the entire run of the hearings, and thanks for all of the wonderful thoughts and depth on these important topics.

We look forward to continuing this process one week from today, Thursday, the 27th of August, at 2 o'clock Eastern. The focus of that hearing will be conversations about experiences with the Division of Public Safety from Penn Faculty and University Staff. And we will get this transcript up and posted on www.pennpulbicsafetyreview.org as quickly as we can. And thanks to all of the attendees and participants and the questions that they sent, and we look forward to continuing this conversation and continuing to learn more as we go forward.

Thanks again to everybody, and be well.

[02:38:19] **End Hearing 3**

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