Safety Summit

Executive Summary
The safety of the DePaul community is a top priority for our university. To successfully implement the Designing DePaul Safety & Security initiatives, we must address safety concerns previously raised by community members. To design our path forward, DePaul President Rob Manuel asked the community to gather at a Safety Summit to discuss safety on both campuses.

Please read below for a detailed summary of DePaul University’s in-person Safety Summit.

Session Overview
• **Date:** September 14
• **Location:** In-person, Lincoln Park
• **Attendees:** Faculty, Staff, Students, Chicago Police Department, Chicago Transit Authority, Offices of Alderman Timmy Knudsen and Alderman Brian Hopkins.
• **Participants:** 157 community members
• **Activities and Outcomes:**
  o At the session, participants provided feedback based on table discussion questions and other activities, which are outlined in the following pages.
  o From this feedback, we identified themes along with potential initiatives and next steps.

Summit Summary
• After an introduction and invocation, DePaul President Rob Manuel welcomed participants and explained how the topic emerged from the Designing DePaul sessions conducted in spring and summer 2023.
• The president introduced Director of Public Safety Bob Wachowski to highlight the university’s critical partnerships with community officials.
• Chicago Police Commanders Michael Barz and Joe Bird, and Chicago Transit Authority Vice President for Security Kevin Ryan shared current crime trends in the city of Chicago and in the communities where DePaul’s campuses are located.
• Eugene Zdziarski, Vice President for Student Affairs, introduced the table discussion portion of the summit.
• The president closed the summit by extending his appreciation toward the community for gathering to share their thoughts and ideas about campus safety. He invited participants to offer additional anonymous feedback before leaving the event through “Walk the Walls” and “Heat Maps.”

Campus Safety Feedback
DePaul’s Office of Continuous Improvement documented over 450 pieces of feedback from the table discussion questions and Walk-the-Walls activity. From this feedback, we identified themes and 25 potential initiatives / next steps emerged — which will be reviewed by the Office of the President.
Participant Responses – Table Discussions
Each table — comprised of students, faculty and staff members — discussed their thoughts on two questions:

1. Should we maintain an open campus environment?
2. What other safety-related changes or improvements should DePaul consider?

Facilitators from offices across the university guided these conversations and documented the themes of their table’s discussion.

Question 1: Should we maintain an open campus environment?
Most Summit participants want to maintain an open campus. While some expressed concerns about security and the need for more controlled access to campus buildings, the overall sentiment leans toward keeping an open campus environment. Here are the main themes from the discussion:

- **Mission consideration**: An open campus acknowledges our mission, that we do not close our doors to those in need, nor do we turn our back on our community.
- **Community access**: Many participants emphasized the importance of community access to DePaul's facilities, such as libraries, and the desire to avoid creating barriers for visitors and alumni.
- **Security measures**: Some participants acknowledged that security measures need to be improved, but they do not necessarily advocate for a fully closed campus. They prefer a balance between security and accessibility. Examples include:
  - Limiting public access to campus spaces with ID-swipe access to certain locations, like lecture halls, Student Center, certain floors in each building, or during certain time periods; reducing number of open building entrances.
  - Increased security during non-daytime hours; e.g., after 5 p.m. until closing.
  - Stricter Loop building requirements than Lincoln Park buildings to align with other Loop office buildings and acknowledge the isolation of floors in the vertical campus.
- **Financial considerations**: Participants shared concerns about the financial burden of implementing a closed campus, including the cost of additional security measures, like ID scanners and personnel.

Question 2: What other safety-related changes or improvements should DePaul consider?
Below are suggestions from participants for additional safety considerations at DePaul. The majority involve safety education, training opportunities, and increasing the community’s awareness to prevent crime.

- **Safety education, training, and awareness**:
  - Conduct regular safety orientation sessions for new and returning students.
o Provide **safety reminders** at the beginning of each quarter.

o Promote **awareness of personal safety**, such as being cautious when walking alone at night.

o Offer city-**savvy training programs** to help students and faculty navigate urban environments safely.

o Provide **self-defense classes** to empower individuals with practical skills.

o Conduct training on how to respond to **active shooter situations**. Ensure clear visual cues, such as door stop locations, are available in case of emergencies.

o Provide detailed advice for students and faculty on safe practices when using **public transportation**, especially late at night.

o Educate the community about not leaving **valuables in cars** or running vehicles unattended.

o Educate people about the presence and purpose of **security cameras** on and off campus.

o Offer training to safely handle **non-dangerous but challenging and uncertain situations**.

o Promote **bystander intervention** for various types of misconduct.

o Address the **gap between perceived safety and actual safety** through education and communication.

o Incorporate **safety modules** into relevant courses, such as Explore/Discover Chicago classes.

- **Security cameras and technology**: Evaluate the effectiveness of existing security cameras and consider expanding coverage.

- **Public transportation safety**: Collaborate with the CTA to further enhance security on trains and at stations.

- **Visual safety cues**: Install visual safety cues in areas where blue safety buttons are not present, especially in the Loop.

- **Collaborative group travel**: Facilitate group travel options for students to enhance safety when moving around the city.

- **Increased public safety presence**: Increase the presence of public safety officers during specific hours, such as 8 - 10 p.m.; consider expanding public safety patrols for late arrivals and special events.

- **Safety apps and technology**: Partner with existing apps, like Citizen or Noonlight, or operationalize mobile Blue Light Safety button function in the current, underutilized DePaul app.

- **Outdoor lighting**: Address insufficient outdoor lighting, especially in areas like Sheffield and Belden; improve lighting under the El tracks and in dimly lit areas.

- **Security officer enhancement**: Consider the role of plain-clothes safety officers for discreet security; standardize the services security officers provide in lobbies and entrance areas.
• **Defining suspicious activity**: Define and communicate what constitutes suspicious behavior without resorting to profiling; encourage reporting of suspicious activity while ensuring trust in the reporting process.

• **Transportation options**: Expand transportation options, such as Vinnie Van, to cover a larger area or introduce different routes; explore partnerships with rideshare services for discounted rates during specific hours. Add a shuttle to Loop train stations after evening classes.

• **Donor funding for safety**: Explore opportunities for donors to contribute to safety campaigns and earmark funds for safety-related projects.

• **Emergency notifications**: Improve the timing and modality of safety notifications, ensuring real-time alerts for critical incidents.

• **Duress buttons and campus access**: Install duress buttons inside buildings at other strategic locations; deploy badge access technology with multiple mechanisms for controlled campus access; explore virtual duress button.

• **Enhanced public safety engagement**: Enhance engagement with public safety officers and foster trust in their presence; encourage public safety officers to distribute personal safety alarm buttons.

• **Emergency call towers**: Install more emergency call towers across campuses for immediate access to assistance. Consider similar options in Loop.

**Participant Responses – Walk the Walls**
Participants used sticky notes to respond to five questions displayed on large posters along the perimeter of the room:

1. What is your top safety concern?
2. Which existing safety procedures or technology make you feel the safest on campus? What can we do more of?
3. What DePaul services help address current safety concerns?
4. Are there any specific organizations DePaul should connect with to promote safety on campus?
5. What would you like us to advocate for, on your behalf, to our community officials?

The activity offered a chance to anonymously share responses.

**Question 1: What is your top safety concern?**

• **Insufficient security presence**: Not enough security presence in public buildings; slow public safety responses to blue light and emergency calls; limited number of staff on Lincoln Park campus; need to stop using student workers as pseudo-security at front desks/reception areas; there’s a need for additional security cameras and increased patrolling.
• **Transportation safety**: CTA safety (Jackson and Fullerton red line stops, Harold Washington stop in Loop); Uber drivers not wanting to pick people up in our area of the Loop.

• **Campus/building access**: Public access to buildings and campus areas is a top concern; install security barriers that only students, faculty, and staff can enter; maintain safety on the periphery campus.

• **Crime and robbery**: Robbery of personal items, especially after class (8:45 p.m.-9:15 p.m.); theft of property inside open university buildings (personal or university property); assault on the Loop campus; carjacking; active shooting; lack of safety escorts to walk students to CTA stations at night in the Loop campus.

• **Personal safety**: Concern over the large number of students working late in buildings on campus; walking to parking garages on the Loop campus; need personal safety alarms; increase the number of safe spaces for minorities; safety of our students who are transgender at DePaul as they are an "invisible" population who is targeted for hate speech, even on campus.

• **Training and preparedness**: Concern that DePaul does not make lockdown/active shooter training mandatory like compliance training; the campus community does not know the safety protocols.

**Question 2**: Which existing safety procedures or technology make you feel the safest on campus (what can we do more of)?

- DePaul ID card access to building locations
- DePaul safety alerts
- Presence of Public Safety offices
- Escort services, intercampus shuttle, Vinnie Van
- Blue lights
- Desk/office space duress buttons
- Security cameras

**Question 3**: What DePaul services help address current safety concerns?

- Escort, shuttle and transportation services
- Public Safety presence
- DePaul ID card access to building locations
- Emergency alert systems and safety communications — like the DPU Alert
- Security cameras

**Question 4**: Are there any specific organizations DePaul should connect with to promote safety on campus?

- Neighborhood apartment management companies to combine resources and add patrols to neighborhood watch
- Other universities and colleges in Chicago
- Local businesses
- Uber and Lyft
- Chicago Chamber of Commerce
- Wrightwood and Sheffield Neighbors
- Planned Parenthood
- Noonlight
- DePaul’s student organizations and departments: SGA, BSU, the Ray, Affinity groups

**Question 5:** What would you like us to advocate for, on your behalf, to our community officials?

- **Personnel quality and compensation:** More pay for Chicago Police Department and DePaul Public Safety so DePaul can get more quality people; continuous CTA security improvements; security for hire on CTA.

- **Community engagement and relationship building:** Improve communication with campus partners; coordination and collaboration with city services related to mental health and the unhoused; walk the streets at Loop; advocate for relationship cultivation with the community; regular meetings with community members; increase presence in the community, it’s not enough to just show up for PR purposes.

- **Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion (DEI):** Awareness of the diversity of the DePaul community; not targeting people of a specific race/background as potential "trouble"; policing without profiling; DEI training to assist in avoiding profiling and an understanding of trauma triggers for marginalized communities.

- **Visibility and deterrence:** We want CPD presence on campus — it will deter crime.

- **Training and education:** Free self-defense classes at the Ray; mental health, emotional assessment; interaction/engagement training offerings; discrimination training for officers.

- **CTA safety and presence:** CPD presence on the Fullerton CTA platform, especially after night classes (8:45 p.m.- 9:15 p.m.); 24/7 CPD presence at Jackson.

- **Community and society-wide issues:** Need to address the issues in our society which precipitate crime; come together to ensure all communities are safe and protected; cannot arrest our way out of problems our community is facing; non-profiling for students; develop safety app DePaul community members can use to track safety/crime incidents.

**Participant Responses – Heat Maps**

Participants exiting the summit reviewed large Lincoln Park and Loop campus maps to identify the places they felt the safest and the least safe:

1. Put a sticker on the places on campus that feel the safest.
2. Put a sticker on the places on campus that feel the least safe.

**Loop:**
People feel the **safest** at 14 E. Jackson (Daley Building), 1 E. Jackson (DePaul Center), particularly inside classrooms:

**Lincoln Park**
People feel the **safest** at Student Center, Sullivan Athletic Center, Arts & Letters, the Quad:
People feel the **least safe** at CTA stop (Fullerton), Sheffield parking garage, walkway under the “L”, Fullerton/Sheffield intersection:

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**Recommended Next Steps**

In addition to the recommendations listed under the **second table discussion question** *(What other safety-related changes or improvements DePaul should consider?)*, the Office of the President will review the following recommendations to determine which ones to pursue this academic year:
• Send a survey to the entire university community to gather additional feedback in October.
• Explore options for expanding the Safety Escort Service or other safe travel options around the Loop Campus. [NOTE: Following the Safety Summit, the university did expand the Safety Escort Service by securing a larger van with professional drivers to assist with rides around campus between 6 p.m. and 6 a.m.]
• Increase Public Safety staffing levels to support more patrols. [NOTE: Following the Safety Summit, the university committed to increasing Public Safety staffing on both campuses and doubling the number of Public Safety patrol cars on the Lincoln Park Campus from 10 p.m. to 6 a.m.]
• Evaluate the pros and cons of an unsworn Public Safety Department vs. a sworn Campus Police Department.
• Create a channel to measure and evaluate current response time concerns for blue light and emergency phone calls.
• Create a resource for "closing the loop" on certain Public Safety alert emails if there is an appropriate resolution or updated information to share with the community.
• Expand safety training availability. Consider requiring community members to complete training similar to that offered during Premiere DePaul on an annual basis. Develop different training methods and modalities to reach larger populations. Review the training content to ensure it includes active shooter/campus lockdown protocols.