UCSB Police Accountability Board Annual Report 2024-2025

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I. PAB Structure and Responsibilities

In response to the UC Presidential Task Force on University-wide Policing, Chancellor Yang formed UCSB's Police Advisory Board (PAB) in 2019. As it is currently constituted, the PAB consists of a chair and members drawn from faculty, staff and students. The PAB is accountable to Chancellor Yang and the campus community, and includes two ex-officio members: Chief Alex Yao and Vice Chancellor Garry MacPherson (see Appendix 1 for a list of current members). Chancellor Yang charged the PAB to "work collaboratively to enhance communication between the police department and the campus community, and to address issues involving the safety and well-being of our students, staff, faculty, and our community."

Community members wishing to know more about the history of the PAB and the climate and events that led to its development can find more details in the PAB's 2020/2021 report.

In 2021, the Board transitioned from a Police Advisory Board to a Police Accountability Board, which entailed a shift in its primary focus. As a Police Accountability Board, the PAB focuses on responding to civilian complaints and making recommendations to UCSB PD. As part of this responsibility, however, the UCSB PAB retains its focus on the following:

- Assessing and evaluating the needs and concerns related to community safety, quality of life, and equity of experience among students, staff, and faculty at UCSB in order to identify needed changes in community safety resources to ensure equity in community safety.

- Assessing and evaluating the needs and concerns related to policing among students, staff, and faculty at UCSB in order to identify needed changes in police practices and training and to ensure equity in campus safety.

- Establishing campus community expectations for police leadership and command staff and for policing policies and practices that are consistent with the mission and values of the University and ensure a greater sense of community belonging as well as physical and psychological safety among students of color, underrepresented, non-traditional, and marginalized communities on campus (e.g., Black, Latinx, LGBTQIA+, formerly incarcerated, undocumented students, student parents, etc.).

- Promoting accessibility and accountability to the campus community and the general public by providing open meetings, multiple forums, listening sessions, and public meetings to discuss experiences of community safety and community-centered approaches to improving and/or maintaining community safety.

- Improving and strengthening systems of accountability by increasing transparency of policing policies and practices; informing community members of the various ways to submit a formal complaint; providing multiple mechanisms for submitting and responding to civilian complaints, and facilitating the development of easily accessible and transparent reporting mechanisms following interactions between UCSB PD and the campus community.

- Preparing an annual report for submission to the Chancellor and the broader campus community of the board's activities, meetings, and findings. All reports will be published on the PAB's website and disseminated intentionally to impacted groups.

In pursuing these core activities, the PAB met monthly beginning in October 2024 and held three campus-wide Town Halls (in Fall, Winter, and Spring).

II. Summary of Activities

A. Meetings:

The PAB held monthly meetings between October 2024 and June 2025. Meetings were held on the following dates:

- October 31, 2024
- November 20, 2024
- December 5, 2024 [Open Meeting]
- January 29, 2025
- February 19, 2025
- March 5, 2025 [Canceled; rescheduled 4/9]
- April 9, 2025 [Open Meeting]
- May 7, 2025
- June 4, 2025 [Open Meeting]

The PAB devoted most of its meetings to learning about civilian oversight of policing organizations via our membership in NACOLE and to discussing and revising the PAB by-laws to accommodate systemwide policy changes regarding the investigation of complaints. In addition, PAB members attended a systemwide PAB training meeting on October 31, 2024.

As part of its core activities, PAB meetings include one open meeting per quarter. We publish notice of the meeting and how to attend (see Appendix 2 for some examples of PAB advertisements). In these meetings, community members can express concerns or register complaints about UCSB PD conduct, the IVFP, or the PAB. In addition, as part of its core activities, the PAB reviewed reports about one complaint made against the UCSB PD, and provided recommendations responsive to the concerns raised by community members.

B. Community Input:

In accordance with the Chancellor's charge, the PAB has sought input from community members regarding areas of concern for campus safety. The PAB shares the view that, "All members of the UC community should feel valued, welcomed and free from any threat of physical, psychological or emotional harm. Our campus safety system must reflect the needs and values of a diverse campus community, including those vulnerable to harm." [1] As part of its effort to

[1] Presidential Safety Plan Draft for Distribution, June 3, 2021, p. 2

understand areas of concern for the UCSB community, the PAB has invited and continues to invite input from a wide variety of sources at UCSB and across the UC System. The PAB is committed to providing regular opportunities for community members to share their complaints, views, and experiences. In addition to its regular meetings, the PAB held regular campus-wide Town Hall meetings. We have also invited input from the Associated Students Executive Officers, leaders of the Graduate Student Association, and leaders or members of student groups. As part of these activities, the PAB invited community input by hosting or participating in two types of public meetings.

B.1 UCSB PAB Town Hall Meetings

The PAB hosted Chief Yao and Vice Chancellor Garry MacPherson for three campus-wide meetings open to all community members (12/5/2024, 4/9/2025, and 6/4/2025). These meetings invited community members to share questions and concerns about policing and campus safety. The meetings were sparsely attended by members of the campus community. These meetings continue a long-term effort initiated by campus leadership, the Police Advisory Board, and Chief Yao to develop a new relationship between campus safety agencies and the campus communities they serve. The PAB is committed to hearing, understanding, and registering public safety concerns and working with campus leadership to develop a campus-wide response to promote reconciliation and establish a greater sense of physical and psychological safety and community belonging among campus community members.

As part of these efforts, PAB members participated in a story by the Daily Nexus, which resulted in an article published on May 29, 2025.

https://dailynexus.com/2025-05-29/police-accountability-board-aims-to-bridge-gap-between-campus-police-and-student-body/

B.2 Isla Vista Town Hall Meetings

In Fall 2024 and Spring 2025, Associated Students hosted community-wide meetings in Isla Vista and held two campus safety symposia to provide community members an open forum to share community safety concerns and discuss policing policies and practices. Leaders from the Isla Vista Foot Patrol, UCSB Police Department, the PAB, and Student Affairs attended these meetings.

B.3 PAB website

The PAB has maintained a website since 2022. The website describes the PAB's function, rules, and procedures and provides a portal for community members to register a complaint. It also includes a record of the complaints the PAB has reviewed and its responses to them. The website can be found here.

III. Complaints from Community Members

In February 2025, the PAB was notified that a complaint had been filed against the UCSB PD. Receiving the complaint triggered the activities outlined in the PAB's bylaws. Campus Compliance Investigator Darrel Paskett reviewed the complaint and determined it met the criteria to proceed to an investigation. Following the practice established by UCOP in 2023, UC Davis's Office of Compliance investigated the complaint. The PAB reviewed the report and made recommendations to interim Chief Bly (following Chief Yao's retirement in June 2025). The complaint included the following allegations:

> **Allegation (1)** – Officers failed to provide name or departmental affiliation in violation of UCSB Police Policy Manual, Section 500.3.1. **Investigator's finding: Not Sustained; PAB finding: Not Sustained**
>
> **Allegation (2)** – Officer failed to report activities that might result in discipline, in violation of UCSB Police Policy Manual, Section 340.5.9(a). **Investigator's finding: Exonerated; PAB finding: Exonerated**
>
> **Allegation (3)** – Officer engaged in discourteous, disrespectful, or discriminatory treatment of a member of the public, in violation of UCSB Police Policy Manual, Section 300.5.9(f). **Investigator's finding: Not Sustained; PAB finding: Not Sustained**
>
> **Allegation (4)** – Officer engaged in conduct that constituted bias-based policing, in violation of UCSB Police Policy Manual, Section 402.3. **Investigator's finding: Not Sustained; PAB finding: Not Sustained**

In our meeting, PAB members discussed the report details at length and unanimously agreed with the investigator's findings on each allegation. We nevertheless also found that the officers' conduct fell short of the community's standards and expectations for the UCSB Police Department. Therefore, the PAB encourages the Chief to consider how UCSB policies and officer training could be developed to improve relations between community members and the UCSB Police Department. Based on its deliberations on the details of this case, the PAB requests that Chief Bly consider the following interventions:

1. Recommendation 1: The PAB recommends that Interim Chief Bly provide officers with additional training in de-escalatory practices that are sensitive to the varied experiences community members have with policing organizations, *especially those related to the community member's race and gender.* For example, in the traffic stop that prompted the complaint, this could have included taking into account how the arrival of an additional police vehicle and backup officer in the context of a traffic stop may be understood as an escalation by a Black driver, why a Black male driver may wish to record an encounter, or have family or friends virtually co-present via an open phone line, and why such a driver may infer that racial biases contributed to the officer's decision to initiate the stop or take other actions. Instead of motivating the use of de-escalation practices, Respondent seemed frustrated by the beliefs and experiences reflected in the Complainant's conduct and appeared to act based on those frustrations. While the evidence did not support a finding that officers involved in this stop violated UCSB Police Department's policies

regarding racially and gender biased policing, the PAB contends that officers also missed opportunities to de-escalate the encounter that might have been more apparent if they had understood Complainant's perspectives on and experiences with policing organizations related to Complainant's race and gender.

2. Recommendation 2: The PAB recommends that Interim Chief Bly provide officers with additional training in de-escalatory communicative practices. The report finds, by a preponderance of the evidence, that "Respondent failed to verbally provide Respondent's own name or departmental affiliation, but that the omission was a result of Complainant's immediate request for information about the basis of the stop." The PAB notes, however, that opportunities for de-escalation emerge throughout an encounter, including after responding to a question or complaint by a community member. Once a response had been provided to Complainant's query, Respondent had opportunities to restart the encounter, and doing so would have provided opportunities for the use of de-escalatory communicative practices. Following this, on several occasions, the officer treated decisions and actions that appeared to reflect the Complainant's fear and anxiety as if they were hostile, aggressive, or frustrating, and thus as the basis for escalating the encounter. The PAB encourages Chief Bly to consider training that might help officers recognize such moments as primarily opportunities to use de-escalatory communicative practices, rather than as occasions for frustration and escalation. This might be addressed by further developing Section 500.3.1. The PAB views such training as contributing to the broader educational mission that informs the Police Department's approach to policing at UCSB.

3. Recommendation 3: The PAB requests that Interim Chief Bly consider developing policies related to the arrival, presence, and role of backup officers in the context of routine traffic stops in which the officer initiating the stop has not requested backup, or where safety concerns do not mandate the presence of additional officers. For example, the PAB was concerned with Officer A's presence on the scene and the role this officer played in the encounter. In a most basic sense, neither officer seems to have considered how the presence of the second officer may have contributed to Complainant's "anxiety," "sadness," and "anger" (during and after the encounter), that race and gender biases may have played a role in the traffic stop. Further, the transcripts and other details of the encounter included in the report plainly show that the Respondent initially planned to issue a warning to the Complainant and explain the Vehicle Code violation that prompted the vehicle stop. Officer A, however, consistently encouraged escalation and a more punitive approach to the encounter. In these and other ways, the PAB found that Officer A's presence near the encounter and his advice to Respondent contributed to Complainant's perception that racial and gendered biases played a role in the Respondent's decisions and actions. The PAB, therefore, encourages Interim Chief Bly to consider what policies might be developed to guide when traffic stops require the presence of backup officers and what role such officers should play in such encounters.

4. Recommendation 4: While acknowledging the report's conclusion that "the evidence was insufficient to support an inference that the Respondent's actions were based on unconscious bias," the PAB is nevertheless concerned that the Respondent's decision to

issue a citation appears to have been related to the Respondent's frustration with the Complainant's conduct in the encounter. Relevant portions of the report can be found in its analysis of the factual findings, which include that (a) "it was notable that the Respondent abandoned the discussion just as the Complainant appeared poised to let Respondent speak," (b) "the evidence best supported the conclusion that Respondent became frustrated with the conversation and ended it abruptly out of frustration," and (c) "Respondent's professed attitude and decision-making processes did not reflect an investment in de-escalation consistent with the policy's orientation." In the PAB's view, police officers should be careful to avoid any appearance that the issuing of a citation or other escalatory action was taken out of frustration or as a form of in-the-moment retaliation. The PAB, therefore, encourages Interim Chief Bly to consider what forms of guidance, additional training, or mental health support might be useful in supporting officers' emotional management within encounters.

IV. Action Items

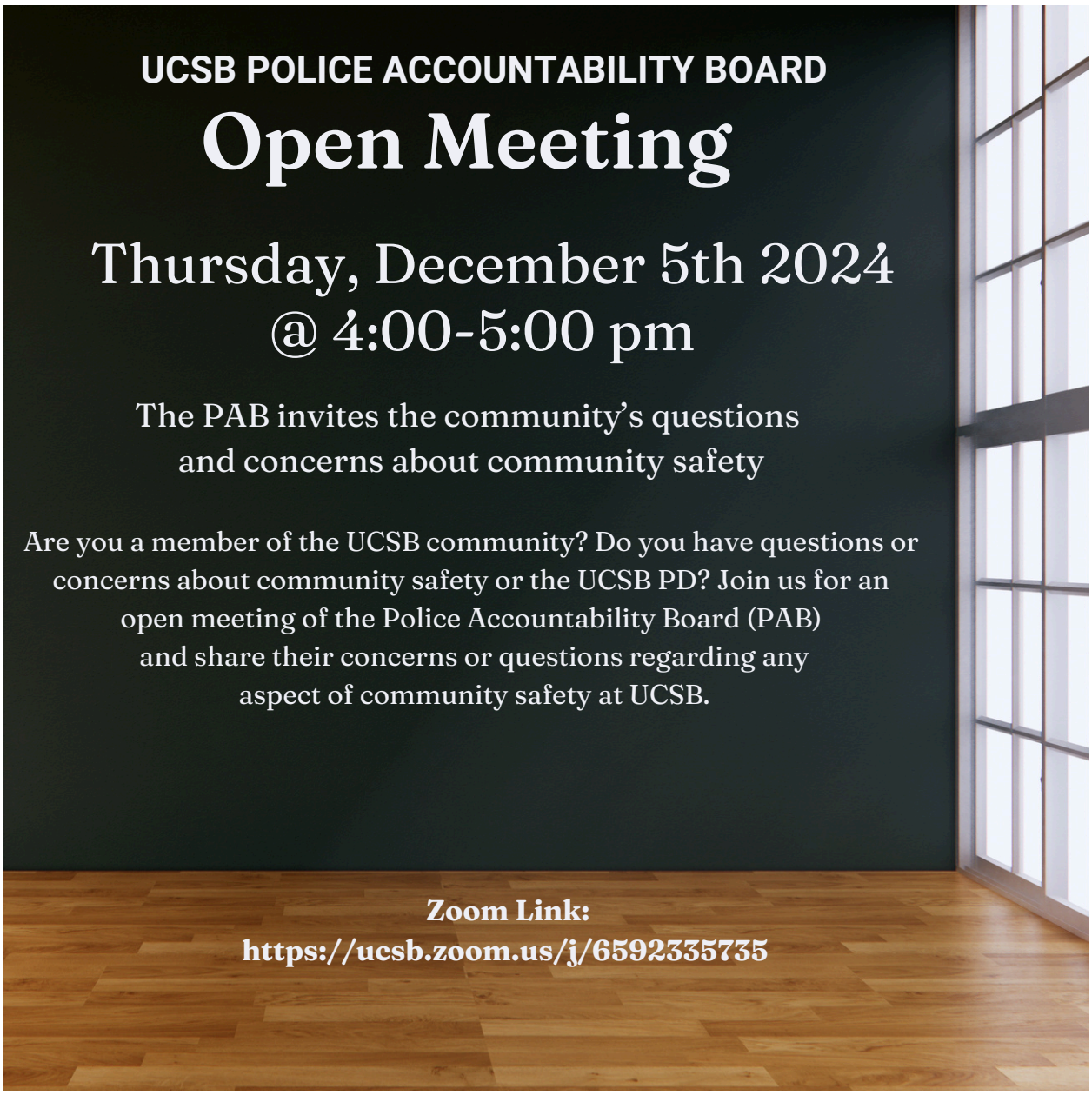
The PAB's activities were primarily focused on two main activities in the 2024-2025 academic year. First, the PAB primarily focuses on responding to complaints and suggesting policy changes to the Chief of the UCSB PD. Second, the PAB has sought to include and involve as many community members as possible. We have worked with various offices on campus to increase outreach to students, staff, and faculty, and encourage their participation in the PAB's activities.

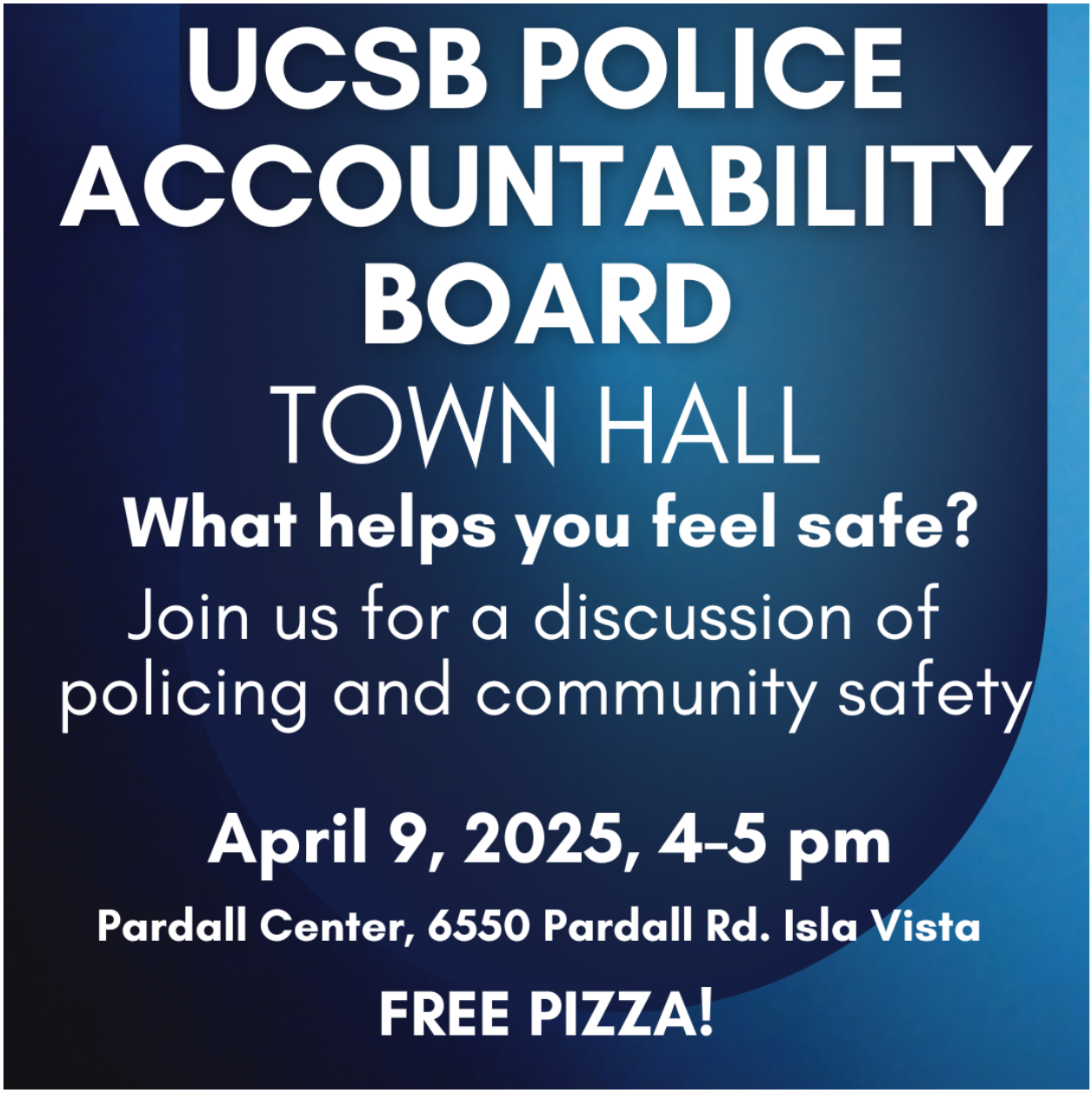
Appendices:

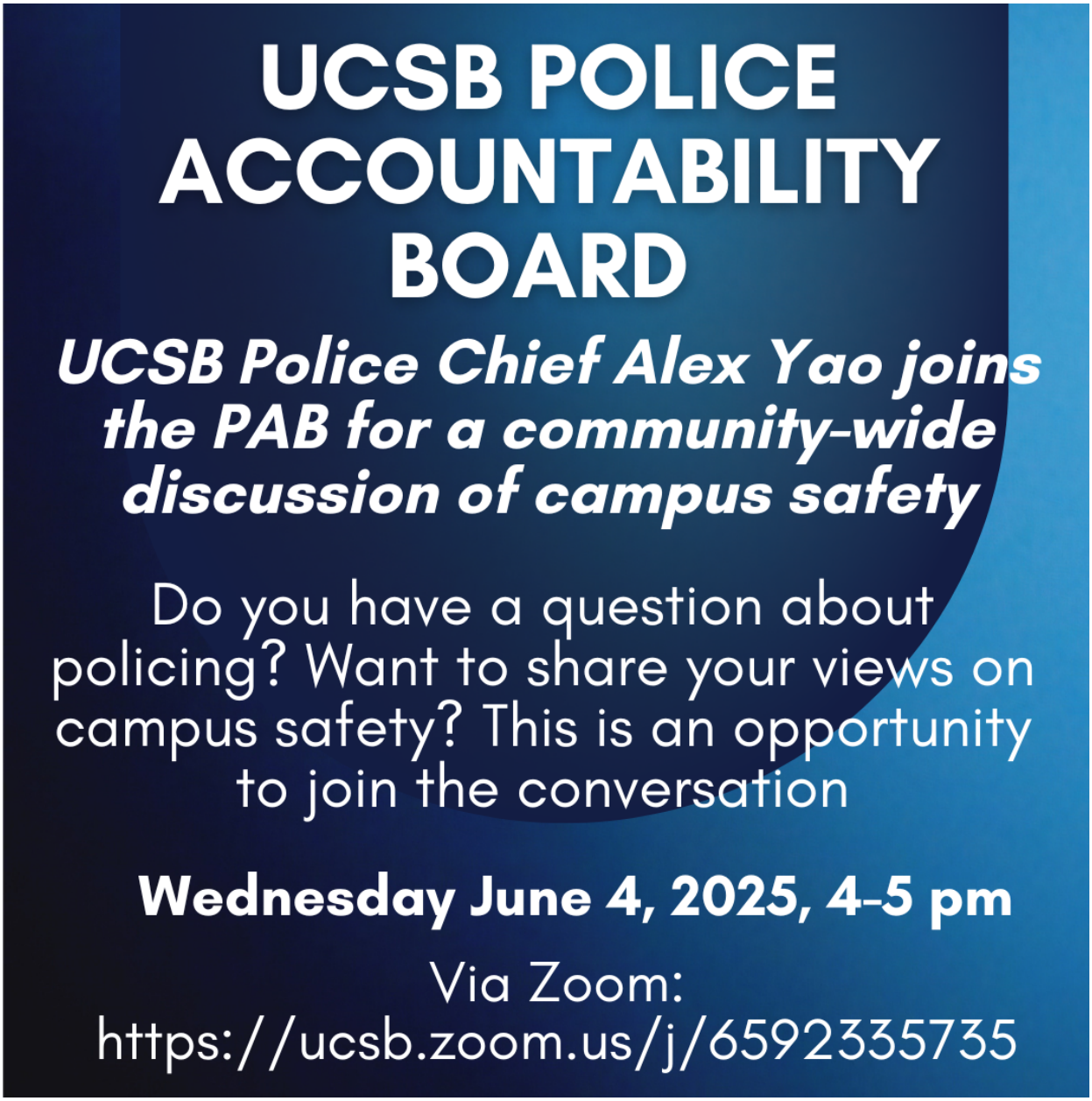
Appendix 1: Board Membership

Geoffrey Raymond, Chair; Professor, Sociology
Katya Armistead, Associate Vice Chancellor, Student Life & Belonging
Rebecca Rios, Professor, Education
Owen Myers, Associated Students EVPLA
Cecelia Aden, Undergraduate Student
Ram Seshadri, Professor, Materials
Sarah Bacon, Graduate Student Association
Melissa Martinez, Staff Representative

Appendix 2: PAB Open Meetings


UCSB POLICE ACCOUNTABILITY BOARD
Open Meeting
Thursday, December 5th 2024
@ 4:00-5:00 pm
The PAB invites the community's questions
and concerns about community safety
Are you a member of the UCSB community? Do you have questions or concerns about community safety or the UCSB PD? Join us for an open meeting of the Police Accountability Board (PAB) and share their concerns or questions regarding any aspect of community safety at UCSB.
Zoom Link:
https://ucsb.zoom.us/j/6592335735


UCSB POLICE ACCOUNTABILITY BOARD
TOWN HALL
What helps you feel safe?
Join us for a discussion of policing and community safety
April 9, 2025, 4-5 pm
Pardall Center, 6550 Pardall Rd. Isla Vista
FREE PIZZA!


UCSB POLICE ACCOUNTABILITY BOARD
UCSB Police Chief Alex Yao joins the PAB for a community-wide discussion of campus safety
Do you have a question about policing? Want to share your views on campus safety? This is an opportunity to join the conversation
Wednesday June 4, 2025, 4-5 pm
Via Zoom:
https://ucsb.zoom.us/j/6592335735