



Emerald Media

DISARM, DISBAND, OR DO NOTHING: WHERE DOES UOPD STAND?



COVER:

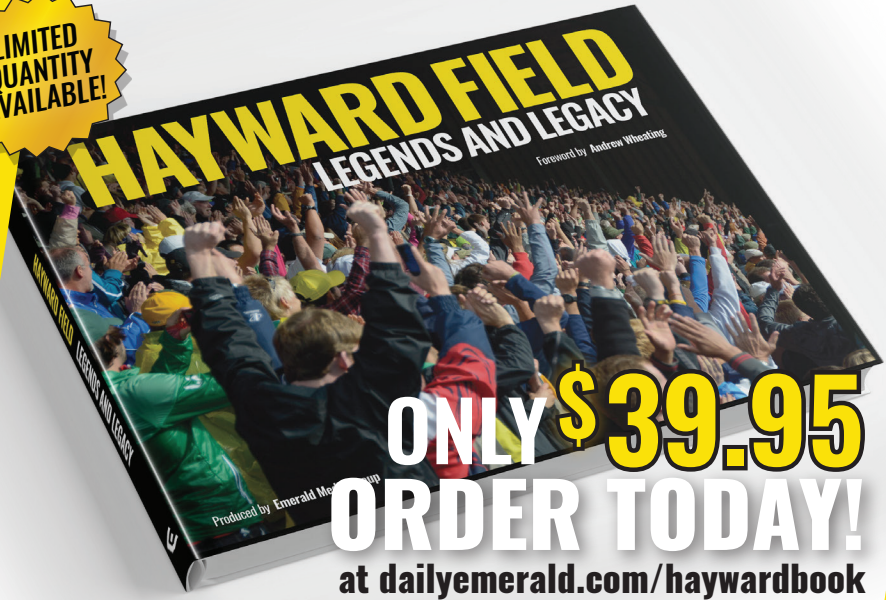
CAMPUS ACTIVISTS PUSH FOR UNIVERSITY TO DISBAND UOPD [P.3](#)



OPINION:

THERE NEEDS TO BE MORE TRANSPARENCY ABOUT ONLINE LEARNING [P.4](#)

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Daily Emerald

VOL. 122, ISSUE NO. 4

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The Daily Emerald is published by Emerald Media Group, Inc., the independent nonprofit media company at the University of Oregon. Formerly the Oregon Daily Emerald, the news organization was founded in 1900.

ON THE COVER

Despite closures due to remote learning, UOPD officers still patrol the campus. A UOPD vehicle is regularly parked at the intersection of 13th and University. Campus-based activist groups across the country call for disarming and defunding their university police departments. Some groups at the University of Oregon have recently made these same demands.

(Summer Surgent-Gough/ Emerald)

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COVER

UNIVERSITIES ARE CUTTING TIES WITH CAMPUS POLICE.

WILL UO DO THE SAME?

BY DUNCAN BAUMGARTEN · TWITTER @DUNCANBAUMGART2

On any given day at the University of Oregon, there's a green and white squad car sitting outside the Erb Memorial Union. If some UO activists succeed in their campaign to dismantle the University of Oregon Police Department, though, that car may not be there much longer.

The university established UOPD in 2012, but some campus groups believe it's time to defund, disarm and dismantle campus police, following nationwide protests against police brutality.

Portland State University announced it would disarm its police department beginning fall 2020 on August 13, OPB reported. Other student bodies, including those at Yale and University of California, Berkeley, are lobbying for their universities to disband campus police.

One petition calls for UO and UO President Michael Schill to defund UOPD, investing in Black lives. The petition currently has more than 1,900 signatures.

DisarmUO, a campus-based activist group, released a list of demands on Instagram on August 11. The demands included disarming UOPD, releasing complaints made against campus police and defunding the department, redirecting funds towards other programs.

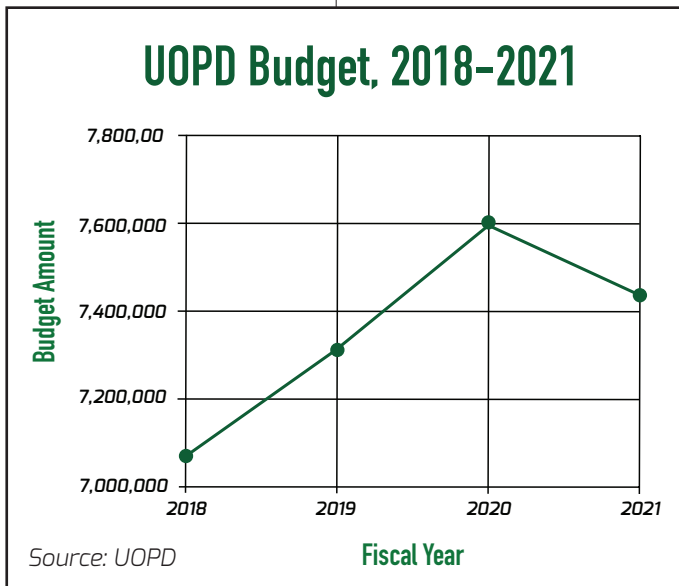
"Our movement of disarming, defunding and dismantling UOPD is ultimately about imagining a better future for students and community members alike," DisarmUO said in a statement, "a future that actually makes us feel safe and welcome on campus and in Eugene."

Both DisarmUO and ReclaimUO, another campus-based activist group, posted "A Critical History of the University of Oregon Police Department" on Instagram. Patrick Schranck, a ReclaimUO member, created the report, after becoming curious about UOPD's history.

Schranck's report covered the road leading up to UOPD's creation, as well as

the department's controversies.

A 2014 lawsuit between UOPD and James Cleavenger, a former UOPD officer and former Lane County district attorney candidate, brought to light a scandal in which officers had compiled a list of individuals on campus whom they believed should "eat a bowl of dicks," according to previous Emerald reporting. UOPD Chief Matthew Carmichael had not yet joined campus police.



Source: UOPD

Schranck called the list UOPD's most egregious incident. "I think a lot of students just, in general, don't pay too close attention to their day-to-day operations," Schranck said concerning UOPD. "Not only because they're more busy with their lives, but also people aren't talking

about it. It's kind of a cyclical issue. It feeds into itself."

Ricardo Fria, chair of the graduate student union's BIPOC Caucus, said he would rather hear an apology from UOPD's employers - the University of Oregon.

"An apology means nothing compared to the immediate disarmament of UOPD and the defunding of UOPD," DisarmUO said in a statement. "It's not about pinning blame on one individual for an issue that is deeply systemic, because one person giving an apology ultimately does not change the system."

Carmichael apologized for any police officer that made other U.S. law enforcement officers' jobs more difficult and dangerous by breaking trust. "Shame on them," he said.

UOPD made 192 arrests and citations last

school year, according to a UO statement, including 38 violent criminal charges. Campus police arrested 56 individuals with active warrants. Twenty-eight had "serious violent behavior" in their criminal histories, UO stated.

"These arrests and this level of security would not be possible with unarmed officers," the university stated.

According to UO's statement, there is a "proven need for the UO to employ a sworn and armed law enforcement agency" and the university is in the process of revising UOPD's policy manual "to make guidance and restrictions unmistakably clear."

Both Schranck and Fria support returning to an unarmed security detail and hope UO will disband UOPD.

Fria stressed the importance of moving money away from campus police. "I think the first step is money because that's a material actual change," Fria said.

Carmichael said UOPD could function if UO reduced its budget, but doing so would amount to a service reduction.

For the fiscal year 2021, UOPD's total expense budget is \$7,440,946, according to budget data provided by the department. In FY20, it was \$7,600,087; in FY19, \$7,313,272; in FY18, \$7,074,505.

Various budget shifts occurred over those four years, according to a UO spokesperson, including Safe Ride entering UOPD's budget in 2018 and the department providing security at UO's Portland campus beginning in 2019.

"I don't think that students should settle for anything less than dismantling, only because if our goal is to make all of us safer, then the first step is dismantling," Fria said, the first step being "to actually get rid of what's not working and what's actively hurting us." Schranck agreed.

While Carmichael disagreed with disarming and disbanding UOPD, he said he still respected the position. "It just reminds me that I've got to work harder," he said, "and I've got to be better."

Regarding Carmichael, Schranck said, "resign."



(Summer Surgent-Gough/ Emerald)

THE NEED FOR TRANSPARENCY ABOUT THE DISADVANTAGES OF ONLINE LEARNING

BY Jael Calloway · TWITTER @JAEL_CALLOWAY

(Unsplash/Tim Gouw)



The COVID-19 pandemic sent students home and forced the University of Oregon to teach spring term exclusively online. And as I started that term staring at the bright, white computer screen, I wondered how this model, especially for institutions of so-called “higher-learning,” was sustainable. There were no discussions, virtually no communication from other students and no disclaimer that came straight from UO. I had to navigate this new feeling of isolation while trying to keep up with my classes.

The use of social skills at school creates a sense of community while building the foundation for self-discovery. Our social relationships equip us with the emotional support we need to adjust to demanding life events. These relationships help us foster trust and understanding between individuals and ourselves. The shock of extreme quarantine quickly affected our mental health. Depression and anxiety levels rose while active tasks, such as processing and retaining information, became more difficult as the days went by.

Our personal communication was replaced by computer-mediated dialogue.

Connections made with professors or in extracurricular activities no longer existed. Overnight, college changed from an engaging academic experience into the isolated study of a concentrated field. People either tried to keep up with the new curriculum or their frustrations kept them from continuing.

Students are about to start this academic year with a predetermined mindset that’s been shaped by the isolation of online learning. The social consequences are magnified due to the steep decline of communication within the online educational community. A poll on Niche.com, conducted in January 2020, looked at how often students chose to learn on campus versus online-only: 85% said on campus, 15% said a mix of online and on campus, while only 1% said they learned solely online. Physically being in class allowed students to connect and network with the community. It also yielded better access to information and allowed for increased attention through subtle communication tools, like body language and tone of voice.

And while jobs continue to search for candidates with experience, passion and fine tuned communication and social skills everything online learning is preventing us from developing. UO keeps pushing their hopeful narrative that returning to in-person school will happen this fall even though all socio-political signs point to the opposite. Of course, it’s not the University’s fault school has been switched to an online platform. There’s a need to follow all social distancing measures. However, the University can and should be honest about the disadvantages that come with online schooling.

Meanwhile, the question of addressing the adverse effects of online learning is left unanswered. Students long for that feeling of community, but until President Michael Schill decides to talk about specific ways to engage students in school and in our community, it’s up to the students themselves to figure out how to connect with their peers and teachers. Message a random student to ask if they want to study, try to Zoom with your professor at least once and increase your FaceTime dates with those who support you. Because without those social interactions, our mental health will continue to suffer and our coveted “college experience” will quickly become that bright, white screen I found myself staring at all spring long.