

WE CAN DO  
THE WORK



*\*Trigger warning: Sexual Assault and Police Violence\**

On December 14th, OSU announced the appointment of Shanon Anderson as the new Police Chief and Vice President of Public Safety, following the brief appointment of Edgar Rodriguez. The appointment was announced just two weeks before the school intends to introduce its private, armed force to police the OSU Corvallis campus.

This appointment is yet another act of disregard and dismissal of community-led activism towards racial justice by OSU. [Disarm OSU](#) and the [We Can Do The Work Campaign](#) have been demanding the halt of OSU's private police force formation since its announcement in April, with reallocation of Public Safety funding towards expansion of services that bolster the health and resilience of our community amidst a global pandemic.

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When the OSU community first got to meet Anderson, she sat in front of a Ruth Bader Ginsburg poster and promised better support for women on campus, particularly survivors of sexual assault. These seemingly progressive values contradict her choice of career. Nationally, police have not tested thousands of rape kits and have been found to ingrain feelings of secondary victimization, blame, and doubt in survivors. They have failed survivors time and time again, and the OSU police force will do the same.

By leading OSU's formation of a private police force, Anderson drains money that could be allocated to our Survivor Advocacy Resource Center (SARC). If OSU truly cared for survivors on our campus, we would see a reallocation of resources away from police to SARC, who is already established on campus in preventing sexual violence and supporting survivors. Currently, SARC is only able to employ one director and one fulltime advocate to serve the entirety of the OSU community, including E-campus, Hatfield, Cascades and all satellite sites. Neither employees possess multicultural backgrounds, which would make the program more accessible to Black, Indigenous, and people of color. SARC would like to implement another full-time advocate from an underrepresented background, and a community liaison position to promote a proactive rather than reactive framework for sexual assault that occurs on and off campus.

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Furthermore, Anderson suggested implementing a system of “Personal Safety Escorts” conducted by armed police officers to walk students home from campus, weaponizing student fears and the vulnerability of female and feminine students as an excuse for a new police force. Such a system increases the comfort of already privileged students in exchange for making students who are at risk of violence and harassment from police officers less safe. The proposal is particularly egregious following [the 2016 assault and murder](#) of Central Oregon Community College student Kaylee Sawyer by a police officer escort.

We believe every student deserves to feel safe on campus or commuting around town, so we are advocating for a student government-run Safe Walk program. This program would fall under the jurisdiction of Safe Ride, who already offer unarmed escort services for students at OSU. By building this program out to include on-foot escorts, it will become more accessible by allowing students who feel uncomfortable walking home alone to easily and surreptitiously request help. This extension of services is environmentally friendly, inexpensive, and COVID-conscious. There is no reason that a student that is feeling unsafe should need to choose between their safety and a person with a gun. Nor should students who simply do not want to walk home alone need to fear stigma or perceived hassle of getting into a Safe Ride vehicle or walking with an armed and outfitted officer.

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Anderson is looking to reform the way policing occurs in our community, but policing is at best a retroactive approach to addressing crime and public safety, and at worst an immediate threat to the most marginalized members of our community. We maintain that transparent reallocation of funding away from policing towards mandatory anti-racism coursework for students in all degree programs, hiring Black counselors at Counseling and Psychological Services, Student Health Services and Pharmacy, UHDS Emergency Housing Program, Survivor Advocacy Resource Center, Human Services Resource Center, among others will increase safety and decrease crime at OSU far more than armed law enforcement. These resources address the root causes of safety issues on campus—poverty, violence, and health concerns—through prevention, advocacy, and distribution of resources to those who need them most acutely.

We don't want Anderson to respond to this address. We want her to leave our community to protect and serve ourselves.

While she directs the OSU Police Force patrolling our campus community against our will, we expect her to follow the lead of UOPD, who have chosen to reduce their police force in favor of funding for proactive, unarmed community programs, including unarmed public safety officers, and PSU who have similarly made plans to fully disarm their police force.

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The University says they are investing in community-based alternatives to policing, but the services they point to are underfunded and understaffed. Proactive community-led initiatives need to be fully provisioned if OSU intends to reject the prison industrial pipeline that has murdered and decimated communities. **The safest communities are not policed the most, they have the most community services, education and adequate care for those in need.** In that vein, Anderson's appointment represents OSU's conscious choice to continue to promote violence over student safety. The police chief position, regardless of who fills it, costs \$170,000 a year towards oversight of a \$5 million police force program over the next two years, taking away resources that will help our community combat violence, injustice, and hardship. We will continue to campaign until OSU administration adheres to our demands and allocates our tuition and tax dollars to the wellness and prosperity of our OSU community.