Thank you to this Committee for asking PSU-AAUP to make some comments at this important meeting today. I am Pam Miller, and I am speaking on behalf of PSU-AAUP as our union’s president. PSU-AAUP represents three groups: tenure related faculty, non-tenure track faculty at .50 or more FTE, and Academic Professionals.

My comments will be brief to allow the many voices here today to have the chance to weigh in on this process and ultimate decision: a sworn and armed police force on our campus.

PSU-AAUP sent out a poll to its members and voting was open for three days. 404 votes were cast out of a possible 971 with a response rate of 42%. I would like to share those results:

Results from two of the questions on the poll were:

1. Do you support a sworn armed police force on PSU campus as proposed by the administration?

Yes = 119 votes or 32%

No = 256 votes or 68%

1. Should this decision be made by a campus wide vote:

Yes = 264 votes or 73%

No = 99 votes or 27%

I will share just a few narratives from our poll:

“I am in support only if there is an independent review board or ombuds function to ensure oversight and accountability”.

“Who is covering the extra cost of armed police and what will be cut for that?”

“Having the faculty senate vote on it is sufficient to capture faculty sentiment. That is why we have faculty governance structures.”

“If we have a severe incident on this campus, we can’t wait for the Portland Police Department to get here. Our CPSO is familiar with our students and I trust them implicitly.”

“An armed police force department could put some students at risk of being unjustly or inequitably profiled or harmed. This does not adhere to the purpose of the University’s Office of Equity and Compliance.”

In conclusion of this poll and as a qualitative researcher, although I did not code this data, there was a theme that emerged in the form of a question: “Could PSU have sworn police officers who did not carry guns and who could use non-lethal force?”

Thanks to PSU-AAUP members who participated in this poll.

I would like to end by saying that this consideration and ultimate decision to have a sworn police force matters to this campus and this is a public institution of higher education. This means at PSU that we have access to decision makers and leaders. That’s how a campus works. Yes, there is a hierarchy here and there are designated people that guide us with policies and procedures but we can generally find these leaders and engage with them directly as to what we care about.

The Board of Trustees is now in place to make this decision before us and they are set to make many other important decisions over time for this campus. We need to be able to engage with the Board through e-mails and letters and by appointments to allow for our divergent opinions, questions, concerns and expertise to be heard and considered. On the website for the Board of Trustees, there are no e-mail addresses for the members. Yes, there are public comment time periods at meetings, like today, yet this feels more like a corporate model of doing business with decision makers far removed from those who live here, work here, and attend classes here.

To return to a motto that still reflects our values on this campus:

I AM NOT PSU.

YOU ARE NOT PSU.

THEY ARE NOT PSU.

WE ARE PSU!