



April 27, 2021

George Gascon, District Attorney
Los Angeles County District Attorney's Office
211 West Temple Street, Suite 1200
Los Angeles, California 90012

Re: Need for a Comprehensive Investigation of the University of Southern California (USC) Police Department

Dear District Attorney Gascon:

You launched your campaign for Los Angeles County District Attorney with the statement that you wanted to make the County “more transparent and more accountable to the public.”¹ More recently, you asked the Los Angeles County Board of Supervisors to allow you to appoint a special prosecutor to supervise investigations into allegations of police misconduct and misuse of force.²

We, **USC Forward**³, are a coalition of students, alumni, religious and community organizations fighting for a better USC. We are requesting a comprehensive investigation of USC's police department – a private entity. Our recent [report](#) exposes USC's police department track-record of hiring former LAPD officers with history of excessive force and racial discrimination allegations, credibility and dishonesty issues, and officer-involved shootings.⁴

Since 2002, USC has spent more than \$550 million⁵ on its police department – making them one of the largest campus police departments in the nation⁶, which employs 306 full-time personnel, 114 of whom were armed officers as of 2016. USC's police department has a memorandum of understanding (MOU)⁷ with the Los Angeles Police Department (LAPD) that defines its jurisdictional boundaries and authority to enforce the law and to investigate crime. The MOU grants USC's armed officers the power to write parking, bike, and pedestrian citations, and make arrests within 2.5 miles radius of the main campus in South Los Angeles. Although USC's police department has the same level of arrest power as LAPD, it does not have the same compliance obligations under a state racial profiling law applicable to LAPD.⁸

We want to bring the following information to your attention: USC's police department employs five (5) officers with controversial histories who occupy leadership positions.⁹

1. Former Los Angeles Police Department (LAPD) Sergeant **Peter “Pete” Foster** cost the city of Los Angeles \$1.2 million in a racial discrimination lawsuit. Then USC hired him.
2. Former Los Angeles Police Department (LAPD) Officer **Frank Trevino** was charged with five (5) counts of misconduct by LAPD, all for resisting an internal investigation after a suspect accused Trevino of taking \$100 from him. Trevino was fired by LAPD. Then USC hired him.

3. Former Los Angeles Police Department (LAPD) and Santa Ana Police Sergeant **Steven Alegre** participated in three officer-involved shootings (OIS). Additionally, he was the subject of an excessive force lawsuit as an officer with the Santa Ana Police Department.
4. Former Los Angeles Police Department (LAPD) Sergeant **Rodney Peacock** was on a list of officers with misconduct-related credibility concerns that had not been disclosed to criminal defense attorneys.
5. Former Los Angeles Police Department (LAPD) Detective **Alma Andrade-Burke** participated in an OIS in 2003. Then in 2014, the LAPD assigned Andrade-Burke to investigate the controversial killing of Ezell Foard. Burke's report found the two officers involved in the shooting acted appropriately, a finding that was later rejected by the Los Angeles Police Commission.

Based on this information, the USC Forward Coalition is requesting an immediate investigation of USC's police department policy statements, reports on incidents in which non-lethal force was used, misconduct complaint files in which serious misconduct was alleged, information on civil suits filed against USC's police department and its officers, information on criminal charges filed against USC's police officers, information relating to police training, pattern or practice of excessive force, unconstitutional use of force by USC's police officers, including improper seizures of persons, including making police stops not based on reasonable suspicion and making arrests without probable cause, seizures of property not based on probable cause, improper searches of persons and property with insufficient cause, and data on ticketing.

This investigation is imperative to hold bad police accountable, understand their impact on the surrounding communities of South Los Angeles and East Los Angeles, and whether USC should continue to operate its police department.

We strongly support abolishing USC's police department – a private entity exercising coercive power with zero accountability from the public and elected officials. Further we demand USC to reinvest its police department budget to expand accessibility and affordability for South Los Angeles and East Los Angeles low-income students through scholarships that cover their housing and all education expenses. We demand the university to redirect funds to affordable housing trust fund that will be administered by community board and that will prioritize the construction of units for low and extremely low-income households within the South Los Angeles and East Los Angeles communities. These funds will also prioritize funding for community land trusts in these two communities.

We request to meet with you as soon as possible to discuss this matter and take immediate action.

With great respect and gratitude,

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- ¹ <https://georgegascon.org/campaign-news/george-gascons-plan-to-ensure-policing-in-los-angeles-county-is-fair-and-just/>
- ² <https://www.latimes.com/california/story/2021-02-12/l-a-d-a-seeking-to-hire-former-rodney-king-prosecutor-to-oversee-police-misconduct-cases>
- ³ <http://uscforward.org/about/>
- ⁴ <http://uscforward.org/wp-content/uploads/2021/02/USC-DPS-Report-Final.pdf>
- ⁵ <https://comptroller.usc.edu/annual-financial-reports/>
- ⁶ https://dps.usc.edu/files/2019/10/ASR_Version_9_30_19_PM_5R2.pdf
- ⁷ <https://ia600902.us.archive.org/11/items/LAPDMemorandumsOfUnderstandingWithUSC/LAPD%20memorandums%20of%20understanding%20with%20USC.pdf>
- ⁸ https://leginfo.legislature.ca.gov/faces/billNavClient.xhtml?bill_id=201520160AB953
- ⁹ <https://capitalandmain.com/why-does-usc-hire-people-fired-by-the-lapd-0211>