January 26, 2016

VIA EMAIL
Councilor Josh Zakim
Councilor Tito Jackson
1 City Hall Square, Suite 550
Boston, MA 02201-2043

Members of the Boston City Council:

In recent weeks, there has been confusion and misinformation spreading around the city regarding Northeastern’s decision to protect its campus from a possible active shooter situation. In academic institutions, we pride ourselves on learning the facts before jumping to conclusions. In this spirit, I am writing to provide you with some helpful factual information:

The Northeastern University Police Department—a highly trained professional force—has the sole responsibility for maintaining safety and security on Northeastern’s 77-acre private campus. The department is led by Chief Michael Davis, a national expert on urban policing, who has more than 20 years of experience as a municipal police officer. Chief Davis is also a police-practicing expert who has consulted with the Department of Justice on a number of urban police matters.

First, it is important to understand that tactical rifles would only be deployed on the university campus, not in surrounding neighborhoods.

It is also critical to appreciate that, unfortunately, active shooter situations are on the rise across the country. A national gun-safety group tracked 31 active shooter situations at college campuses just last year. FBI data suggests that the vast majority of active shooter situations are over in less than 5 minutes, and a quarter are over in less than 2 minutes.

Understandably, the actions taken by first responders within the first few minutes can help reduce fatalities and severe injuries. Proximity to these emergencies is key—Northeastern’s officers are on campus and will always be the first responders. Containing an active shooter incident requires special expertise and capability, which we have embedded in a select group of officers. Because the Boston Police Commissioner has said his officers would be able to respond to an on campus emergency in “5 or 6 minutes,” the Northeastern campus would be relegated to a “standing by” mode, hoping that help arrives in time. This is a vulnerability that is not acceptable to us given the size, complexity and breadth of our campus.
More than 60 colleges and universities nationwide have similar incident containment teams, utilizing the same type of tactical weapons that Northeastern has acquired. Locally, Boston University, MIT and UMass Boston all have the same weapons available to their officers in the unlikely event of a worst-case scenario. We find it puzzling that some members of the city council have singled out Northeastern University.

Northeastern leaders regularly consult with Boston Police Department leadership on strategies and training opportunities. As an example, Northeastern was the first university to establish an MOU to share sexual assault investigative information with the Boston Police Department. Indeed, the decision to begin deploying tactical rifles was pursued with the same type of consultation. As the timeline below shows, NUPD officials made the Boston Police aware of the plan in mid October, long before the issue became public. In fact, in the first conversation with BPD's tactical unit commander, the weapons were discussed and shown with no objections expressed.

Our primary concern is the safety and security of our campus community. On this issue, we rightfully put our trust in the highly trained professionals who lead our university police department.

Sincerely,

Ralph C. Martin II
Senior Vice President and General Counsel

cc: President Michelle Wu (michelle.wu@boston.gov)
   Councilor Michael Flaherty (michael.f.flaherty@boston.gov)
   Councilor Annissa Essaibi George (e.george@boston.gov)
   Councilor Ayanna Pressley (ayanna.pressley@boston.gov)
   Councilor Salvatore LaMattina (salvatore.lamattina@boston.gov)
   Councilor Bill Linehan (bill.linehan@boston.gov)
   Councilor Frank Baker (frank.baker@boston.gov)
   Councilor Andrea Campbell (andrea.campbell@boston.gov)
   Councilor Timothy McCarthy (timothy.mccarthy@boston.gov)
   Councilor Matt O'Malley (matthew.omalley@bosotn.gov)
   Councilor Mark Ciombo (mark.ciommo@boston.gov)
Timeline of BPD Notification:

- **October 15, 11:38 a.m.** - NUPD Deputy Chief Ruben Galindo emails BPD Captain Crossen and schedules a meeting to update BPD on new initiatives at Northeastern.
- **October 21, 10:00 a.m.** - Meeting between Deputy Chief Galindo and Captain Crossen. BPD is briefed on the plans to implement tactical weapons, including the deployment strategy. NUPD and BPD also discuss joint training opportunities, and BPD is given a tour of NUPD’s training facility and shown the proposed tactical rifle.
- **October 21, 10:43 a.m.** - NUPD Chief Michael Davis emails Commissioner Evans to schedule a meeting to discuss new initiatives and opportunities for collaboration. Meeting set for November 4 at 12:00 p.m.
- **October 28, 10:00 a.m.** - Deputy Chief Galindo attends a meeting at a BPD sub-station where Commissioner Evans shared crime statistics and upcoming strategies. Northeastern officials were informed at the end of the meeting that Commissioner Evans had just been made aware of NUPD’s tactical weapons plan and that he appeared to be upset — despite the fact that the BPD was notified in October.
- **November 4, 12:00 p.m.** - Scheduled lunch takes place between Commissioner Evans, Chief Davis and Deputy Chief Galindo. Topics discussed included community policing, tactical weapons and deployment strategies, multi-target attacks and tasers.
- **December 8** – Commissioner Evans appears on WGBH radio and expresses concern about NUPD’s tactical weapons plan, and argues that the plan is unnecessary. The official BPD media release states that BPD was not made aware of NUPD’s tactical weapons initiative until it appeared in the press — again contrary to the fact that the BPD was notified by NUPD in October.