
PRESS RELEASE



The Flynn Hosts a Community Discussion about Policing and Community Safety

BURLINGTON, VT — The Flynn is proud to host ***Collaborating Public Safety***, a timely community event that features an in-depth discussion about urgent public safety issues and the role of policing. This event is held on the Main Stage on **February 23 at 7 pm**. For *Collaborating Public Safety*, **moderator Deborah Spence and panelists Tracey L. Meares and Sean Smoot**, all of whom were members of President Obama's Task Force on 21st Century Policing, illustrate key recommendations and ways in which communities across the country can continue to engage organizations, municipalities, and citizens in the co-production of public safety.

This is a free community event held at the Flynn. Registration is recommended to attend. Find out more and register to attend at flynnvt.org.

"The Flynn consistently prioritizes providing meaningful opportunities for dialogue around the important issues in our culture today," said Jay Wahl, Flynn executive director. "Currently, many Vermonters are asking questions about effective methods and programs that address how best to work with municipalities and police departments to make our communities safe, supportive, and welcoming to all. We are grateful to present this important event and continue this dialog at the Flynn."

"The key to policing in the 21st century is that community safety can no longer be the sole responsibility of law enforcement," said Sean Smoot, a member of the President's Task Force on 21st Century Policing and a panelist for *Collaborating Public Safety*. "Everyone, including civilians and police, has a part to play and deserves to be treated with dignity and respect regardless of what their station in life may be. I would like to thank the Flynn for seeing a role for arts organizations in this discourse and for facilitating these discussions."

In 2014, President Obama created a task force on 21st century policing charged with developing a roadmap for public safety reform. The report and its recommendations have become a blueprint for agencies across the country interested in engaging with the people they serve to build stronger communities. The Flynn has invited two members of the task force along with its project manager to participate in this panel discussion.

Tracey L. Meares is a professor at Yale Law School and a founding director of the school's Justice Collaboratory. Before joining the faculty at Yale, she was a professor at the University of Chicago Law School from 1995 to 2007. She was the first African American woman to be granted tenure at both law schools. Professor Meares is a nationally recognized expert on policing in urban communities. Her research focuses on understanding how members of the

PRESS RELEASE



public think about their relationships with legal authorities such as police, prosecutors, and judges.

Sean Smoot is the managing partner of 21CP Solutions and a subject matter expert on policing and public safety. He is also the director of the Police Benevolent and Protective Association and the Police Benevolent Labor Committee in Illinois. Mr. Smoot serves on teams monitoring federal consent decrees, including the police departments in Baltimore and Cleveland. He consults internationally on issues related to public employment labor law, pension and benefits law, Section 1983 civil rights litigation, body-worn cameras, use of force, supervision, officer safety and wellness, recruiting, retention, and hiring. He has served on the Advisory Committee for the National Law Enforcement Officers' Rights Center in Washington, D.C. since 1996.

Collaborating Public Safety moderator **Deborah Spence** is an assistant director at the Office of Community Oriented Policing Services, a grant-making component of the U.S. Department of Justice. She provides strategic leadership and oversight for public-private partnerships, the production of knowledge resources and engagement forums, and the multimillion dollar portfolio of classroom and online training for law enforcement officers. In her 17 years with the COPS Office she has led efforts to create new grant programs for state and local law enforcement and overseen demonstration projects covering topics including officer safety, drug interdiction, public safety consolidation, and domestic violence.

Collaborating Public Safety is a free community event held at the Flynn. Find out more and register to attend at flynnvt.org.

Media contact:

Oliver O'Sullivan, marketing content manager, oosullivan@flynnvt.org.