The Complexity of Maintaining a Safe Campus in Higher Education: An Administrative Dilemma

Creating and Maintaining Safe Campuses

NASPA 2008
Boston, MA
Introduction

• **Violence** and **crime** on college and university campuses are **major concerns** for many **campus-based officials**.
  - topics range from **theft** to **bio-terrorism** and **substance abuse** to **hate crimes**

• These occurrences beg the question:
  - “what are campus leaders doing to **protect and ensure community safety**, not just with the threat of terrorism, but the violence and crime on their campus?”

• Accordingly, **administrative practices** that are **most effective** and productive need to be documented and published more broadly for the higher education community.
Introduction

- Disseminating this information is of critical importance because the complicated law requiring campus crime reports makes it difficult to increase awareness of campus crime.

- Violence, hate crimes, theft, drug possession, sexual harassment, concealed weapons, underage drinking, rape, and many other major and minor offenses are infractions that college and university administrators must be able to handle.
Introduction

• Accordingly, this session and our book addresses the aforementioned set of problems college and university administrators encounter relative to creating and maintaining safe campuses.

• Serves as an informative forum and sourcebook to enhance and evaluate safety programs, generate new studies in this area, and facilitate the creation safe campuses.
The National Context for Crimes on College and University Campuses

- Increasing concerns in postsecondary education regarding the rise in criminal occurrences has policymakers overwhelmed to ascertain the best modus operandi to handle the impinging danger.

- Colleges and universities have had mixed results with improving the overall safety on campus during the past seven years.
On-Campus Criminal Offense in Higher Education

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Offense</th>
<th>1997</th>
<th>2003</th>
<th>% Change</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Murder</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>−44</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Forcible Sex</td>
<td>1,668</td>
<td>2,581</td>
<td>55</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nonforcible Sex</td>
<td>472</td>
<td>55</td>
<td>−88</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Robbery</td>
<td>1,810</td>
<td>2,086</td>
<td>15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Aggravated Assault</td>
<td>3,754</td>
<td>3,050</td>
<td>−19</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Burglary</td>
<td>26,757</td>
<td>29,125</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Motor Vehicle Theft</td>
<td>6,732</td>
<td>6,594</td>
<td>−2</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note: Calculations based on data from the U. S. Department of Education, Office of Postsecondary Education.

1 Sex Offenses—Forcible refers to any sexual act directed against another person, forcibly and/or against that person’s will, or not forcibly or against the person’s will, where the victim is incapable of giving consent. For example, forcible rape, forcible sodomy, sexual assault with an object, and forcible fondling.

2 Sex Offenses—Nonforcible refers to unlawful, nonforcible sexual intercourse, for example, incest and statutory rape.
## Campuses Reporting the Most Alcohol, Drug, and Weapons Arrests

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Offense/Institution</th>
<th>Number of arrests</th>
<th>Enrollment</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Alcohol</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>University of Wisconsin</td>
<td>792</td>
<td>39,699</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Michigan State University</td>
<td>655</td>
<td>42,603</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>University of Minnesota</td>
<td>606</td>
<td>45,410</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Western Michigan University</td>
<td>405</td>
<td>26,132</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>University of California-Berkeley</td>
<td>382</td>
<td>30,290</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Drug</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>University of California-Berkeley</td>
<td>280</td>
<td>30,290</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rutgers University</td>
<td>138</td>
<td>34,420</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>U. of North Carolina-Greensboro</td>
<td>132</td>
<td>12,535</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>University of Arizona</td>
<td>123</td>
<td>33,737</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Virginia Commonwealth</td>
<td>122</td>
<td>22,702</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Weapons</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Michigan State University</td>
<td>49</td>
<td>42,603</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>University of California-Berkeley</td>
<td>34</td>
<td>30,290</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>U. of North Carolina-Charlotte</td>
<td>26</td>
<td>16,511</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>U. of North Carolina-Greensboro</td>
<td>23</td>
<td>12,535</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>San Jose State University</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>26,897</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Note: Arrests are for calendar year 1998, and enrollments are for academic year 1997–98.*

Conclusion

- **Interventions** in the form of administrative policies and practices are crucial elements in the possible preventative mechanism to alleviate violence before discord occurs.

- Having such **protocols in place, prior to violent occurrences**, can prevent or resolve negative situations before they have the opportunity to implant themselves on college and university campuses.

- **Institutional type, location, campus composition** are factors that individually and collectively affect and cultivate the unique campus environment.
Conclusion

- **These factors, in turn, influence** the types and kind of administrative practices and policies that are **appropriate for a specific institution**.

- Understanding how to develop **appropriate institutional responses** in light on these institutional characteristics, **will likely be the primary challenges for college and university administrators for the next century**.
Aftermath: NIU & Virginia Tech

- Tragic event brought campus safety to the forefront.
- “Are campus police equipped and trained to handle serious crimes?”
- Many schools are vastly under-prepared for emergency situations.
- Re-evaluating emergency procedures
Aftermath: NIU & Virginia Tech

- Tougher mental health guidelines
- Improved working relationships with local and state police departments.
- Additional police officers and security guards.
Communication

- Loudspeakers or bullhorns (building to building announcements)
- Media- television and radio announcements
- Web sites
- Outreach to staff
- Mass messages to students' cell phones, landlines and multiple e-mail addresses.
Counseling

• Mental health counseling services for individuals and groups.

• Available for issues such as depression, stress, anxiety, and interpersonal problems; or grief counseling in the wake of the tragedy at Virginia Tech.
Crisis Management

A comprehensive campus crisis management plan should:

- Establish the scope of the plan
- Identify key response modes
- Determine the communication methods
- Establish an emergency operations center
- Address redundancy of critical staff and facilities
- Determine media relationship responsibilities
Crisis Management

- Identify the role of campus security
- Acknowledge the role of outside agencies
- Address the business resumption process
- Identify who is responsible for the plan
- Address the maintenance of the plan
- Describe how the plan should be distributed.
Crisis Management

In managing crises, several key elements stand out.

1. Collaboration between universities and external agencies is critical.

2. The internal preparedness of the institution is vital.

3. The more effective a campus is at addressing needs of stakeholders, the more quickly it can emerge from a crisis.
Moving Forward

- What happened at Virginia Tech could happen anywhere.

- Campuses are like small cities

- We are open, engaged, and active communities.

- We can learn from the experience of others and be better prepared in the event of a tragedy.
What We Must Do

• Take bold steps to increase cultural understanding among all members of the university community.

• Work collaboratively with parents and with local and campus law enforcement authorities.

• Create a campus environment that has zero tolerance for behaviors that marginalize any member of the community.
What We Must Do

- We must find ways to create an environment that is both physically and psychologically safe.

- This is just the first step in a collaborative partnership between college student educators and others to create and maintain safe college campuses.

- It is our responsibility to move this agenda to the next level.