



Utah System of Higher Education

Campus Safety Baseline Assessment

November 2020

Study Overview

Background

The Utah Board of Higher Education has been tasked with studying and providing recommendations for public safety services on colleges and university campuses through S.B. 80. To begin this task, USHE collaborated with Cicero Group to conduct a **baseline assessment and cataloging of campus law enforcement policies and procedures**.

Objectives

- 1 Document and contextualize the campus security structure for each of the institutions
- 2 Identify key points of transition and coordination for each campus, including incident response and dispatch procedures
- 3 Identify the benefits of an institution employing campus law enforcement, and examine best practices / current priorities at other institutions

Methodology

Over the past two months, Cicero met with the campus safety team at each of the 16 higher education institutions. While the team looks different at each institution, common roles include:

- Director of Campus Safety/Security
- Campus Chief of Police
- Director of Emergency Management
- Title IX Coordinator
- VP of Student Services

In each interview, we asked the campus safety team to detail their policies and procedures relating to campus safety. Our four key areas of discussion included:

- Operating and Communication Structures
- Law Enforcement and Security Presence
- Incident Reporting and Response
- Hiring, Onboarding, and Training

Key Learnings | Within this baseline report, there are several key insights that need to be kept at the forefront as stakeholders consider future actions

RESOURCES

Campus police at each institution support bolder plans and want to do more, but resources are limited and often overburdened



CONTINGENT DESIRE FOR SYSTEM-WIDE STANDARDS

Many institutions would appreciate standardization across the system but caveated that those standards need to be supported with funding (e.g. standardized police officer pay, officers per 1000 students).



FEELING OVERBURDENED AND UNDERSTAFFED

Most institutions with campus police feel that they are understaffed and overburdened, and have difficulty recruiting officers due to the low pay. Adding more training, reporting requirements, or other requirements will result in less time interacting with and supporting students.

TRAINING

Campus police meet training requirements, but completion does not necessarily equate to effectiveness and discretion lends itself to inconsistencies



ROOM FOR TRAINING COORDINATION / PRIORITIZATION

While campus police officers are mandated to have 40 hours of training, the type of training provided is up to the discretion of the police chief. The quality and frequency of training can vary greatly.



D.E.I. A PRIORITY BUT A STRONGER, MORE UNIFIED VISION IS NEEDED

Most institutions are prioritizing diversity, equity, and inclusion, though each institution is going about it in a different way and campus safety is not always involved.

STUDENTS

Improving campus safety will require stakeholders to look beyond campus policing and understand the unique needs of students



STRONG NETWORKS REQUIRED ACROSS CAMPUS

In addition to campus policing, campus safety incorporates emergency management, mental and emotional health, victim advocacy, and equity and inclusion, which are all often managed in disparate departments.



PUTTING STUDENTS FIRST WITH VICTIM ADVOCACY

Campuses with internal victim advocates are better equipped to meet the unique needs of students – students face a wider array of challenges and more complexity than the general population when incidents occur, lending the need for resources to support victim advocacy.

Key Learnings | External Perspectives | Students and Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion Leaders

Topics		Key Findings	Example Quotes
1	Perceptions of Campus Police	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Campus police is preferred to municipal police; negative feelings towards law enforcement are towards police in general, not necessarily the campus police specifically • There is always a need for more personalized relationships with police officers and increased feelings of trust • Desire for more community integration from the police (as civilians, instead of as officers) 	<p><i>“Students understanding that they might be responded to by municipal police instead of campus police may effect how likely they are to call in.”</i></p> <p><i>“Majority of international students like campus police because they help to explain US law and that is helpful”</i></p> <p><i>“I do have concerns about city police more than campus police. Feel like there is some racial profiling of athletes”</i></p> <p><i>“[Community events] doesn't mean being at an event in uniform with guns...it is having officers do things in normal clothes to build relations”</i></p>
2	Campus Safety Resources	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Student leaders are relatively aware of resources and relevant departments, but the average student likely is not aware of resources on campus, how to contact the police, etc. 	<p><i>“Especially lately with the discussion on race; students don’t know where to go and how to fix it”</i></p> <p><i>“Most people know that [campus resources] exist, but not the details”</i></p>
3	Feelings of Safety	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Certain student groups (BIPOC, women, LGBTQ+) may feel less safe on campus • Feelings of safety seem to differ by institution, with unique challenges being faced on different campuses with different geographical layouts • There are different levels of safety worth considering based on relationships: student vs. institution, student vs. students, student vs. staff, staff vs. leadership, etc. 	<p><i>“We have gathered a bunch of stories from women or students of color...there are concerns about not being taken seriously or things getting done”</i></p> <p><i>“I would say that when students need help and need to go to police...but they are entering into a police office and see a blue lives matter flag...it's difficult to even approach the officer for help”</i></p>
4	Being Heard	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Students struggle to feel heard when desired actions are not taken – leadership may “listen” but doesn’t take action • Barriers exist to students being heard such as communication fall off in middle management, trust issues, experiences of hate or profiling, etc. 	<p><i>“Sometimes there is a disconnect between being heard and having the action that you want”</i></p> <p><i>“Sometimes middle level management is the barrier...stuff gets stuck there and not filtered up.”</i></p>

Key Learnings | External Perspectives | Higher Education Best Practices

1

ELEVATING DEPARTMENT OF PUBLIC SAFETY TO THE CABINET

Many campus safety departments report through business affairs rather than directly to the president; how deep within the organization the department lives can be indicative of its relative importance

2

MOVING CLERY ACT OUT OF THE DEPARTMENT OF PUBLIC SAFETY

As long as the Clery Act lives in the department of public safety, it will be treated like a police issue; in reality, the Clery Act requires involvement from a number of different departments

3

UNIQUE LEADERSHIP REQUIREMENTS FOR HEAD OF PUBLIC SAFETY

Leaders must be able to navigate complex organizations and build relationships with stakeholders across multiple departments; the traditional skillset of a Chief of Police may not be fit for this role

4

STANDARDIZING CAMPUS SAFETY ACROSS THE SYSTEM

Many university systems (e.g., UT System) have system-wide leadership, policies, trainings, reporting procedures, meetings, etc.

Key Learnings | Immediate Next Steps (1 of 2)

1

Improve Collaboration Across USHE Institutions

- **Outcome:** Elevate the ongoing coordination of public safety activities and resources across all sixteen institutions similar to other system affiliate groups. Utilize this group as a primary voice in addressing campus safety policy issues
- **Potential Approach:** Commissioner's Office can leverage resources and expertise systemwide on behalf of the Board under the leadership of the state's flagship institution by formalizing a shared contract with its Chief Safety Office similar to the Chief Information Officer who commits a percentage of time to the Board

2

Conduct System-wide, Comprehensive Evaluation of Student Perceptions

- **Outcome:** Clear understanding of student perceptions of campus safety at each institution, including awareness of campus security resources, accessibility of resources, and perceived effectiveness of resources (including resources for mental/emotional safety), to ensure student voices are incorporated into any future campus security initiatives
- **Potential Approach:** Qualitative and/or quantitative research with students at each institution, emphasizing key student populations such as BIPOC, LGBTQ, DREAMers, and others, and utilizing this report as a foundation and testing what is perceived as happening vs. what is described as happening

Key Learnings | Immediate Next Steps (2 of 2)

3

Develop USHE Unifying Vision and Mission of Campus Security & Safety

- **Outcome:** A substantive vision for all that should be incorporated into “Campus Safety” that will be used as a foundation to improve consistency across each institution, expand the definition of campus safety and security to more appropriately reflect the broader needs of students, and provide a guiding light for future training priorities, resource allocation, and other strategic initiatives
- **Potential Approach:** USHE and its Board of Higher Education leverage internal resources and work with institution leadership to draft, revise, and finalize a vision and mission statement, as well as a set of standardized priorities

4

Incorporate Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion in the System-wide Vision

- **Outcome:** The ability to lead out on key diversity, equity, and inclusion topics that are prevalent across today’s college campuses and be known for strongly prioritizing and allocating resources to issues that deeply matter some of the most vulnerable students at each campus
- **Potential Approach:** Utilize the committee of diversity, equity, and inclusion experts from each institution to not only listen but take action on the needs of vulnerable student populations, and by clearly incorporating the needs of these students into the Campus Security Unifying Vision and Mission