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Briefing Paper

Violent Crime on the College Campus

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College campuses across the United States are facing the perceived growing problem of violent crime on and off their campuses. It involves students, faculty, staff, and administration, whether the individual or individuals are the victim/s or the offender/s. This study looks at the current literature concerning violent crime on the college campus and current trends that can assist all involved in the process of creating the safest campus possible.

The Federal Bureau of Investigation has determined a violent crime to be one of four offenses: 1) murder and non-negligent manslaughter, 2) forcible rape, 3) robbery, and 4) aggravated assault. The purpose of this section is to provide background of the individual crimes and an overview on the prevalence of these crimes on the college campus. Many of these individual crimes are discussed in other sections of this study in further detail.

The following are the formal definitions of the FBI determined violent crimes from their yearly publication, *Crime in the United States*. They are provided to ensure continuity throughout this study.

The FBI defines murder and non-negligent manslaughter as the willful (non-negligent) killing of one human being by another. This does not include deaths caused by negligence, suicide, accident, or justifiable homicide.

Forcible rape is the carnal knowledge of an individual, forcible and against his or her will. Assaults or attempts to commit rape by force or threat of force are also included. However, statutory rape (without force) and other sex offences are not included in this category.

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Robbery is the taking or the attempted taking of anything of value from the care, custody, or control of a person by force, threat of force or violence, or by putting the victim in fear.

Aggravated assault is an unlawful attack by one person upon another for the purpose of inflicting severe or aggravated bodily injury. It usually involves the use of a weapon or by some other method that could likely produce death or great bodily harm. Attempted aggravated assault is included in these reported numbers because it is not necessary that an injury result when a gun, knife, or other weapon is used.

The Office of Postsecondary Education of the U.S. Department of Education compiled violent crime statistics over a three-year period (1998-2000) for American colleges and universities. These figures can be found in the following tables.

Murder (On Campus)

Type of Institution	1998	1999	2000
Public, 4-year or above	13	6	7
Private nonprofit, 4-year or above	3	4	11
Private for-profit, 4-year or above	0	0	0
Public, 2 year	6	1	2
Private nonprofit, 2-year	0	0	0
Private for-profit, 2-year	0	0	0
Public, less than 2-year	0	0	0
Private nonprofit, less than 2-year	0	0	0
Private for-profit, less than 2 year	0	0	0
Total	22	11	20

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Forcible Rape (On Campus)

Type of Institution	1998	1999	2000
Public, 4-year or above	1051	1020	1034
Private nonprofit, 4-year or above	636	705	682
Private for-profit, 4-year or above	1	3	3
Public, 2 year	107	118	114
Private nonprofit, 2-year	9	13	11
Private for-profit, 2-year	3	3	6
Public, less than 2-year	2	5	6
Private nonprofit, less than 2-year	0	1	0
Private for-profit, less than 2 year	0	0	2
Total	1809	1868	1858

Robbery (On Campus)

Type of Institution	1998	1999	2000
Public, 4-year or above	635	623	568
Private nonprofit, 4-year or above	501	544	581
Private for-profit, 4-year or above	3	24	36
Public, 2 year	376	315	370
Private nonprofit, 2-year	154	213	169
Private for-profit, 2-year	65	84	79
Public, less than 2-year	40	38	38
Private nonprofit, less than 2-year	6	7	14
Private for-profit, less than 2 year	65	69	78
Total	1845	1917	1933

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Aggravated Assault (On Campus)

Type of Institution	1998	1999	2000
Public, 4-year or above	1882	1707	1646
Private nonprofit, 4-year or above	918	915	978
Private for-profit, 4-year or above	13	6	20
Public, 2 year	691	652	594
Private nonprofit, 2-year	114	108	92
Private for-profit, 2-year	49	48	148
Public, less than 2-year	142	133	131
Private nonprofit, less than 2-year	0	5	4
Private for-profit, less than 2 year	13	32	31
Total	3822	3606	3644

One factor that must be considered when observing the total violent crime incidents is the population involved. According to projections from the National Center for Education Statistics, there were approximately 14,979,000 students at U.S. colleges and universities in 2000. It is from this population number that the crime rates for on-campus crime can be calculated. The following table describes the crime rates for the violent crimes, based on 100,000 population which is the standard for describing crime rates, for the entire United States as reported in the 2000 issue of *Crime in the U.S.* and college and university campuses.

U.S. vs. College Crime Rates, 2000

Crime	U.S. Crime Rate	College Crime Rate
Murder	5.7	.13
Forcible Rape	32.0	12.4
Robbery	144.9	12.9
Aggravated Assault	323.6	24.3

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Notice that the only crime rates that are remotely similar are the rates of forcible rape. Yet the crime rate is over two times less on college campuses than for the entire United States. For the other violent crimes, the U.S. crime rates are exponentially more than the college crime rates. What this shows is that the college campus is a safe place for students to be living and receiving their education when compared with off campus.

With this in mind, there are warning signs for a possible violent action by an individual, whether on or off the college campus. Flannery and Quinn-Leering of Kent State University collected these warning signs from a variety of sources.

1. A history of violence and/or being victimized
2. Threats of violence
3. An obsessive interest in weapons
4. A tendency to be isolated
5. The inability to get along with others
6. Excessive anger
7. Job loss
8. Breakup of a relationship
9. Alcohol and drug usage
10. Intolerance of differences
11. Gang affiliation
12. Poor attachment to school
13. Exhibiting impulsive behavior
14. Making violent drawings or writings

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What the literature and the crime statistics show is that the college and university campus is a safe place for students to study and live. As seen in this document, the crime rates for all violent crimes are significantly lower than for the entire U.S. Saying this, there is a problem of crime on campus. Each of the statistics previously discussed are people, not just a number. This cannot be forgotten or bypassed as insignificant. Efforts and resources must continue to improve in order to continue the management of a safe learning environment.

The reporting of crimes on the college campus must also continue to advance. This is not to say that on-campus remedies, such as student courts or administrative action, should not be utilized. They can be helpful tools for dealing with campus issues. However, an accurate account of crime is essential for dealing with the problem of crime on campus. Crime statistics help show where additional manpower and resources should be allocated. For the short term, this could affect the perception of the safety of the college campus. But for the long term, it will help to create and manage the safest campus possible for all those involved: students, faculty, staff, and administration.

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