Campus Policing in America

A Twenty-Year Perspective

Kenneth J. Peak
Emmanuel P. Barthe
University of Nevada, Reno
Adam Garcia
University Police
University of Nevada, Reno

This article compares the findings of a 2006 national survey of campus police agencies with one of 1986. Respondents were queried about agency titles; reporting lines; administrators’ experience, education, tenure, and diversity; agency powers, jurisdiction, rank, training, activities/responsibilities, and relations with local police agencies; and involvement in disaster planning and terrorism readiness. It is concluded that considerable evolution has occurred over the past two decades; whereas constituencies, mission, and duties may differ, campus law enforcement agencies are part of and connected to the broader local law enforcement community and represent an essential component of postsecondary educational institutions.

Keywords: campus law enforcement; Clery Act; law enforcement administration; National Incident Management System

Introduction

Legal, social, and international events in the 1960s and early 1970s dramatically changed the need for security and policing on postsecondary campuses in the United States. During the social upheaval of the period, many campuses developed their own police departments, and by the early 1970s officers at state institutions were beginning to possess full arrest powers granted by statute or through local deputization (Brubacher & Willis, 1968; Esposito & Stormer, 1989; Gelber, 1972). Therefore, although young when compared to their state and local police counterparts, most campus law enforcement agencies have now been in existence for nearly a half-century, and some even longer (e.g., the first official campus police force was formed in 1894 at Yale University [Powell, 1981]).

Authors’ Note: The authors acknowledge the dedicated and able assistance of UNR graduate student Sarah DeArman with the online survey. Correspondence concerning this article should be addressed to Prof. Kenneth J. Peak, Department of Criminal Justice, University of Nevada, Reno; e-mail: peak_k@unr.edu.
The aim of this research project is to provide a current picture of law enforcement agencies on postsecondary campuses (note that information concerning campus crime data was not requested, because it was felt to be a separate area of inquiry). Although other researchers (e.g., Paoline & Sloan, 2003; Reaves & Goldberg, 1996; Sloan, 1992; Sloan, Lanier, & Beer, 2000) also have looked at college and university police organizational structure, methods, and issues, this research replicates a survey previously carried out nearly 20 years ago by Peak (1987).

Peak’s research involved a national survey in 1986 of directors of campus law enforcement agencies in the United States and Canada. His questionnaire contained 35 items and 75 variables “pertinent to policing and safety in postsecondary campus settings” (p. 33). Of the 697 questionnaires that Peak mailed out, 564 campus police agencies responded, resulting in a response rate of 82% and providing a very descriptive picture of those agencies across the United States. By closely replicating that survey, the current survey will help to determine how campus law enforcement agencies have evolved or changed to meet their modern public safety needs during the intervening period of two decades.

The past 20 years have witnessed significant changes in public expectations and practical applications of general police work. As examples, community-oriented policing and problem solving have become the primary formulation for police practices and the provision of police services in the United States and represents the future of policing as well (Clarke, 2004; Goldstein, 1990; Oliver, 2004; Peak & Glensor, 2008.). The attacks of September 11, 2001, forever changed the way the police must view domestic security and plan for the horrible specter of terrorism, and greatly heightened drug problems have forced police agencies to develop new methods to increase interdiction efforts (Goldstein, 1990). Also, gangs are nearly blanketing the nation, and it requires different methods and tactics to tackle them. Finally, emphases on police organizational diversity and hiring practices have also changed the face of the modern police organization.

This survey measures the extent to which campus law enforcement agencies have evolved in this very challenging milieu.

**Method**

Although Peak’s original 1986 data relied on mail surveys, this current project sought to collect the data using an online survey instrument. The 1986 instrument was duplicated into an online survey program (Survey Monkey), ensuring that the questions posed mirrored the original. A few additional questions dealing with responses to terrorism and crime reporting protocols were added to the 2006 instrument.

The authors selected the participant pool from the International Association of Campus Law Enforcement Administrators (IACLEA) directory. Initially, 915 campus
law enforcement agencies were identified as potential participants for the 2006 survey. The e-mail addresses for the selected law enforcement agencies were obtained from various directories, through direct phone calls to the agencies themselves and through extensive Internet searches. Once the 915 e-mail addresses were compiled, the electronic survey was e-mailed to all the participants, prefaced by a letter from the authors explaining the reason behind the research. Some surveys were automatically returned because of delivery problems, with a “not deliverable” or “address unknown” message. E-mail filters from several agencies considered some surveys to be “spam” and promptly rejected and returned the surveys. Finally, there were instances where the e-mail recipients were on vacation, had just retired, or had been transferred to a different position. In these cases, efforts were made to locate the appropriate e-mail address of someone capable of answering the survey, and the surveys were resent. Of the 915 agencies, 243 e-mail addresses were considered invalid because multiple attempts to e-mail the agency proved fruitless, resulting in a participant pool of 672 valid e-mail addresses. In this research, a valid e-mail address is one that did not come back as “invalid,” “unknown,” or “undeliverable.” Of the 672 agencies, 192 completed the survey; 39 responded to our e-mail but declined to fill out the survey, resulting in 229 respondents or a 34% response rate.

In addition to the aforementioned reasons for surveys being returned, the authors encountered other potential roadblocks that possibly affected the response rate and warrant mentioning. First, the authors opted for the online survey format in the hopes that it would facilitate communication with the respective agencies and encourage prompter responses. In reality, e-mail users are often overwhelmed with unsolicited e-mails, spam, and other junk e-mails that seem to deluge their in-boxes. Furthermore, perhaps online surveys may not be given the same credibility as those that arrive through regular mail, or they may be quickly forgotten because they move down the e-mail queue as new messages are received. To counteract this problem, respondents were e-mailed on four separate occasions, to remind them of the importance of the survey project and to stress that the e-mailed survey was not to be considered as routine “junk” e-mail. Overall, then, although the online survey did provide some roadblocks, it also proved to be an innovative way to collect data, as completed responses were instantly received and automatically tabulated. Although the methodological pros and cons of carrying out online research were an integral part of this project, these issues should be borne in mind and addressed in future research efforts.

Characteristics of Responding Agencies

Next, we describe some of the characteristics of the responding agencies. First, although there were fewer total respondents in the 2006 survey, it is important to note that there was some congruence concerning where the responding agencies were located (geographically speaking). Figure 1 shows the region of the respondents for the two different survey efforts.
As mentioned above, the participant list was obtained from the IACLEA membership directory. However, the entries in the directories are not broken down by type of institution (4-year university or 2-year community college, etc.), forcing the authors to combine the different types for this analysis. This remains only a minor problem, as the 1986 survey also relied on the IACLEA membership directory and faced the same limitation.

In terms of sizes of responding agencies, the 2006 and 1986 samples were quite similar. In 2006, the average number of students at the responding agencies were 10,300 with 584 faculty and 1,181 staff members. In 1986, those numbers were 10,937, 753, and 1,247, respectively. Overall, the authors were satisfied that the sampled agencies resembled those surveyed in 1986.

The first interesting finding lies with the titles given to campus law enforcement agencies across the country. As Figure 2 shows, from 1986 to 2006 there was a 62% increase in the use of the formal title of “Police Department,” with a marked decrease (–65%) in designations like “Security Office” or “Security Department.”

Note: Northcentral: IA, IL, IN, KS, MI, MN, MO, ND, NE, OH, SD, and WI. Northeast: CN, MA, ME, NH, NJ, NY, PA, RI, and VT. Southern: AL, AR, DC, DE, FL, GA, KY, LA, MD, MS, NC, OK, SC, TN, TX, VA, and WV. Western: AK, AZ, CA, CO, HI, ID, MT, NM, OR, NV, UT, WA, and WY.
The title “Department of Public Safety,” however, has remained popular during these intervening years (28% and 29%, respectively). The use of this title does not imply that these organizations are less professional in nature and function. Some universities—like Arizona State, Marquette, Pepperdine, Princeton, San Diego State, and Stanford—use the term to describe what is perceived as a broader mission that includes law enforcement, security, safety, crime prevention, emergency medical, and other services and functions. However, some departments that are nonsworn, strictly security-based in nature have adopted the “public safety” designation, which the authors feel is erroneous and misleading. This may explain why some campus safety organizations have dropped “public safety” in favor of “police,” to better reflect their role.

The dramatic increase in the adoption of the “Police Department” designation also supports the idea that there has been a movement toward professionalization in campus law enforcement agencies. It seems that during the past 20 years, more and more college campuses have evolved in their view of safety requirements, moving away from the more mundane and basic security tasks (e.g., checking buildings and
securing windows and doors) to undertaking more formal police activities, with uniformed patrols and full arrest and investigative powers. This change in emphasis is also evident in the administrative changes concerning the person to whom or office to which campus law enforcement agencies report. Significantly, as seen in Figure 3, there is a decrease in the number of agencies reporting to the “Director of Buildings and Grounds” (–44%), slight increases in those that report to vice presidents (3%), and directors or other entities (21%).

**Administrative Personnel**

Although the 1986 survey reported 87% of directors as being Caucasian, the 2006 survey found a slightly lower rate of 84% (a 3% decrease). More significantly, there was a 10% decrease in the number of males in this position, going from 97% in 1986 to 87% in 2006. These two findings reflect the current trend in hiring diversity when it comes to police agencies.

In addition to these changes, there are indications that modern campus law enforcement agencies emphasize greater professionalism and competence for people in leadership positions. Figure 4 shows that, prior to their current director’s or chief’s
position, most administrators had previously held some sort of supervisory role in a law enforcement agency. More specifically, in 2006, 23% (compared to 18% in 1986) had been supervisors in another campus law enforcement agency, and 28% (23% in 1986) had been supervisors in their current agency. This indicates an increase in “external hires,” perhaps in an effort to find the most qualified candidates. Figure 4 shows the different backgrounds of campus law enforcement administrators across the two surveys.

In terms of age, there is a definite trend toward older administrators, indicating that such positions are reserved for those with experience and proper supervisory training. Figure 5 shows the change in age distribution across the two surveys and demonstrates drastic decreases in terms of administrators who are less than 40 years of age. For example, there was a 60% decrease in administrators between the ages of 31 and 40 in the last 20 years. Conversely, there was a 75% increase in those institutions with directors aged 51 to 60, indicating a preference for administrators with years of experience. This can perhaps be linked to the previous finding—showing the
trend toward naming campus safety agencies “Police Departments”—by requiring that chiefs or directors be seasoned law enforcement professionals with extensive backgrounds.

With regard to job tenure, in 1986 the average number of years in the position was 7.3. In 2006, it was slightly higher, with a mean of 8.4. Therefore, campus law enforcement administrators appear to be staying longer on the job, perhaps reflecting both their job satisfaction and competence.

Figure 6 shows the changes in educational level of campus law enforcement administrators over the two surveys and provides additional support for the increased professionalism of campus law enforcement agencies. In 1986, 9% reported having a high school diploma, 16% held an associate’s degree, and 47% possessed a bachelor’s degree; 24% stated they had a master’s degree, and only 2% had a doctorate degree. In 2006, only 6% reported having an associate’s degree, and 43% held a master’s degree, or a 78% increase; and 4% held a doctorate.

As shown in Figure 6, in 1986 the bachelor’s degree was the most prevalent educational background; although the bachelor’s degree was still pertinent in 2006,
there is a clear trend toward the master’s degree and even some doctoral work. Graduate studies generally offer more detailed discussions of management issues, thereby creating better supervisors and more accountable leaders. It should also be noted that many entry-level officers working on college campuses would themselves have obtained a bachelor’s degree, if not some college credits. Therefore, it makes sense that those in supervisory and administrative roles are more educated, which in effect may indirectly and informally raise the minimum educational requirements. Finally, with the creation of formal police departments on campuses across the country, personnel must now pursue advanced educational goals to ensure promotions, raises, and overall professional mobility.

**Staff Characteristics and Responsibilities**

The changes in campus law enforcement do not rest solely with administrators. Staff and personnel responsibilities have also evolved in the last 20 years. Although the 1986 survey determined that three fourths of the respondents were in agencies
with full (i.e., arrest and investigatory) police powers, the 2006 survey found that more than 82% of respondents reported that their staff had such authority. It is probably safe to assume that the higher rate of agencies having full police powers is linked to greater use of the formal title of “Police Department,” as previously discussed.

Campus agencies have also experienced an increase in their jurisdictional responsibilities. In 1986, only 10% of agencies had statewide jurisdiction, with that number climbing to 18% in 2006. Although the boundaries of the campus are the first priority of any campus law enforcement agency, it appears that many of these agencies have jurisdiction beyond their immediate campus borders. For example, in 1986, 46% of agencies reported having jurisdiction only on their campuses, compared to 42% in 2006. Similarly, although 13% of the agencies in 1986 reported having jurisdiction only within 10 miles of their campus, that percentage dropped to 7% in 2006. It seems clear that with increased police powers, these agencies also have greater jurisdictional control over the areas surrounding their campuses. This could also be because of the realization that some campus problems can be addressed by solving other problems off-campus. For example, campus police can more likely curb drug use in a dormitory if nearby off-campus drug areas are addressed. This is especially important because other research has shown that alcohol and drugs were implicated in 95% of all campus offenses (Sloan, 1994). Similarly, traffic enforcement on major roadways leading to the campus can reduce student speeding and accidents. Finally, increasing personnel jurisdiction recognizes that campus law enforcement agencies can be most efficient when they are free to investigate and intervene both on and off campus.

Figure 7 shows that campus law enforcement agencies seem to be moving toward full-time sworn personnel, with an average number of 21 officers in 1986 and 29 officers in 2006 (a 38% increase). Part-time sworn officers were less common in 2006, with an average of 3.1 officers, compared to 6 in 1986 (a 48% decrease). Nonsworn personnel in campus agencies also decreased from 12 in 1986 to 5 in 2006 for full-time positions, and from 15 to 5.5 for part-time positions.

This increase in full-time, sworn officers has also led to a decrease in the need for auxiliary or reserve forces. For example, in 1986, 22% of the respondents stated that they relied on auxiliary or reserve forces, compared to 12% in 2006. The mean number of people within those auxiliary forces was 5.5 for 1986, and 6 for 2006.

Although reliance on auxiliary forces has decreased in the last 20 years, using students to aid in crime prevention efforts has significantly increased. The number of such agencies grew from 30% to 65%, or a 117% increase, from 1986 to 2006. In 2006, most students were used in campus “escort” programs (58.5% compared to 29% in 1986), where students were accompanied safely back to their cars or dormitories after late classes or other campus activities. The second most common activity was “building security,” where doors were checked and suspicious conditions reported (34% in 2006, and 28% in 1986). More traditional law enforcement activities such as crowd control at public events had low student participation rates (11% in 1986 and 10% in 2006). Figure 8 shows how campus police agencies use students to supplement their safety efforts.
In terms of compensation, there was a 15% increase in payments to students who worked with police agencies and a drastic reduction (~94%) in the use of unpaid volunteers. Less than 1% of agencies compensated students with academic credits during both sample years. Overall, as partnerships continue to grow between these campus law enforcement agencies and student bodies, we can expect to see more nonenforcement—type activities that may include the distribution of educational flyers or pamphlets or participation in anticrime campaigns on campuses. To increase student participation in police efforts, some student representatives could be invited to attend safety committee meetings that address operational and administrative issues such as binge drinking at sporting events or parties.

The move toward more formalized policing and specialized ranks and assignments on college campuses can also be seen in Table 1. Although the 1986 survey reported that there were supervisory positions in campus law enforcement agencies, the 2006 study shows a definite increase in the usage of all ranks, indicating a greater emphasis on specialized management.
Campus law enforcement agencies have also seen an evolution in the nature of the activities they engage in. In 1986, the most commonly reported activity involved parking issues; in 2006, the top activity involved investigations. Table 2 below lists the various activities going from most to least common for the two survey samples.

Campus law enforcement agencies have a panoply of responsibilities vis-à-vis the university community. These range from administrative tasks such as crime-reporting requirements (discussed below) to specialized activities such as dealing with hazardous materials and accident investigations.

A significant change in the responsibilities of campus law enforcement agencies involves the Jeanne Clery Disclosure of Campus Security Policy and Campus Crime Statistics Act, codified at 20 USC 1092 (f). The law, originally enacted by Congress in 1990 as the Campus Security Act, was amended and renamed the Clery Act, in 1998, for Jeanne Clery—a 19-year-old Lehigh University freshman in Bethlehem, Pennsylvania, who was raped and murdered in her campus residence hall in 1986. This federal law requires colleges and universities to disclose certain timely and

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**Figure 8**

*Student Activities Linked to Campus Safety*

![Figure 8](http://pqx.sagepub.com)
annual information about campus crime and security policies. All public and private postsecondary educational institutions participating in federal student aid programs are subject to this law.

Prior to 1990, statistics were informally kept, and because of the insular nature of many campus law enforcement agencies, parents, students, faculty, and staff were unaware of potential crime problems occurring on campuses. Because of its federal reporting requirement, the Clery Act improved the record-keeping practices of many campus police agencies and directed administrators to address crime problems quickly and efficiently. Some researchers, however, point out that the reporting system has certain flaws. For example, although thefts are the most common campus crimes, they do not have to be reported, and off-campus crimes involving

### Table 1
**Reported Ranks Across Agencies (in percentage)**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Rank</th>
<th>Percentage in 1986</th>
<th>Percentage in 2006</th>
<th>Percentage Change</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Chiefs/Directors</td>
<td>100</td>
<td>100</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Assistant chiefs</td>
<td>38</td>
<td>44</td>
<td>+16</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Captains</td>
<td>23</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>+9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Detectives</td>
<td>34</td>
<td>44</td>
<td>+29</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Corporal</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>29</td>
<td>+71</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lieutenants</td>
<td>46</td>
<td>56</td>
<td>+22</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sergeants</td>
<td>70</td>
<td>72</td>
<td>+3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Patrol officers</td>
<td>83</td>
<td>84</td>
<td>+1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cadets</td>
<td>n/a</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>n/a</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### Table 2
**A Ranking of Campus Law Enforcement Activities**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Activities for 1986</th>
<th>Activities for 2006</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Parking</td>
<td>Investigations</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Crime prevention</td>
<td>Crime prevention</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Investigation</td>
<td>Parking</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Public events coordination</td>
<td>Training</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Planning</td>
<td>Clery Act crime reporting</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SWAT</td>
<td>Public event coordination</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Narcotics</td>
<td>Planning</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Canine</td>
<td>Narcotics</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td><strong>Traffic / accident investigations</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Canine</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>SWAT</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note: Bolded activities for 2006 represent new activities for which campus agencies are responsible.
students are exempt from the reporting requirement (Seng, 1995). Obviously, the 1986 survey provided no data concerning this not-yet-existing reporting requirement, but the 2006 sample demonstrated the impact this legislation had on their agencies. Some agencies relied on sworn personnel for required data collection, whereas others used civilian personnel. Of those relying on sworn staff, approximately 88% of respondents stated that they had at least two sworn staff members assigned to the maintenance of the crime statistics log; conversely, 75% of respondents relied on civilian personnel and stated that they also had at least two employees devoted to that function.

Although the act mandates an annual reporting requirement, it also states that potential students, parents, and members of the community are allowed to request crime-related information at any time. When queried about the number of requests the agencies received on a monthly basis, 75% of the respondents indicated that they had to fulfill between 1 and 3 requests per month, and 10% reported having to fulfill 4 to 6 requests. Fifteen percent reported having to answer more than 7 monthly requests. In terms of their time spent on the Clery Act’s requirements, 20% of the respondents stated that they spent less than 1 hour per month working on the reporting requirements, whereas 56% reported 1 to 5 hours, 11% reported 6 to 10 hours, and 13% reported having to answer more than 10 monthly hours. No agency indicated having ever been fined for noncompliance with Clery.

These increased responsibilities dictate that the staff and personnel be equipped with additional training. Hence, it is not surprising to note that training has become a primary activity for campus law enforcement agencies, once again highlighting a new focus on specialized units and professionalism.

All these changes in campus law enforcement agencies appear to have had a positive effect. For example, when asked about their reputation with local police departments, campus law enforcement agencies reported a 9% increase in satisfaction compared to 1986; there was a 19% increase in positive relations with campus faculty and staff, a 12% increase with the student body, and a 9% increase with the university administration. Figure 9 shows the satisfaction percentages for both years.

**Hiring and Training Procedures**

Respondents were also asked to indicate the types of tests employed for screening and hiring of sworn personnel. Although there was only a 3% increase in the use of oral examinations and an 8% increase in background investigations, many current agencies relied heavily on psychological and polygraph examinations (71% and 69%, respectively). Similarly, although only 19% of agencies used physical agility tests in 1986, in 2006, 42% of agencies required these tests for selection purposes. Figure 10 shows how testing requirements have changed over the years.

In addition to the hiring requirements, many agencies mandate annual in-service training beyond the initial recruit training. The mean number of required annual
hours was 14.5 in 1986, and this number spiked to 47 in 2006, once again reflecting the increased professionalism and extent of new and varied responsibilities imposed on the sworn officers. Of further interest is that, although only 18% of the respondents required such additional in-service training in 1986, 94% of agencies reported such requirements in 2006. Clearly, modern campus law enforcement agencies seek to hire the most qualified personnel, encourage continued training, and pursue accountability and competence.

**Patrol: Nature and Vehicles**

In both 1986 and 2006, campus police agencies reported that marked police cars were the most common vehicles used for routine patrolling (87% and 93%, respectively). There was little change in the use of unmarked police cars, motorcycles, and three-wheel Cushmans during the two survey periods. The biggest change involved the use of bicycle and foot patrols: Although only 24% of agencies used such patrols...
in 1986, these were employed by almost 80% of agencies in 2006. Figure 11 shows the different patrol types used across samples. The increased reliance on bicycle and foot patrols across campuses nationwide may indicate an understanding that these tools are crucial in the promotion of community building and policing, even when these occur on university grounds.

Another subtle but possibly important indication of the growing professionalism and autonomy of campus police departments is the shift concerning the campus entity responsible for purchasing departmental vehicles (which also would certainly have implications for the type of police-package vehicle that is acquired and deployed). In 1986, the majority of purchases were the responsibility of the university purchasing agent (31%) or some other administrative office (42%). The campus police agency was rarely in control of its vehicle purchases (8%). Although in 2006 the university purchasing agents remained the primary purchasers in 37% of the cases, 41% of respondents indicated that the campus police were able to make vehicle-purchasing decisions. Figure 12 shows the changes relative to vehicle-purchasing decisions.
A corollary of vehicle purchase is maintenance (Figure 13). In 2006, most agencies reported that automobile dealers and private service stations accounted for 43% of their maintenance needs. In 1986, dealers and service stations made up only 12% of vehicle maintenance. This is probably linked to police departments having more general control over their fleets, starting with purchases (as seen in Figure 12), better enabling them to dictate to maintenance needs.

**Reporting Systems and Terrorism Readiness**

Because of threats to national security stemming from September 11, 2001, police departments nationwide have had to implement new information sharing systems and to develop protocols for improving responses to terrorist attacks. In 2003, the Department of Homeland Security developed the National Incident Management System (NIMS) (see, e.g., Peak, 2007; Peak, Gaines, & Glensor, 2004), designed to standardize information-sharing protocols and to improve responses to large-scale
domestic incidents. Because the population of many university campuses ranges from 5,000 to more than 40,000 students and staff, campus law enforcement agencies have followed suit, and many have undertaken steps to improve their ability to handle emergencies. According to the survey, 71% of campus police departments had some sort of policy regarding NIMS protocols; 77% reported that they were in fact using NIMS.

In terms of readiness against threats of weapons of mass destruction, 7% of agencies reported having received some federal funding, 4% had purchased emergency response equipment, and 11% had instituted some policies or guidelines concerning response procedures. “Training and education” was the most common response (71%) concerning preparations for dealing with the potential threat of a serious terrorist attack. With regard to making preparations for an on-campus suicide bomber incident, 3% reported having procured some equipment to handle the situation, 6% had some policies and guidelines, and again, the majority (65%) of agencies had instituted some sort of training and education. Eleven percent reported having “other” means to handle the incident.
Technology: Current Challenges

With the advent of computers and technology, campus police administrators have the added responsibility to become “cyber cops.” Although incidents of theft and assault may be the traditional and prevalent crime problems on college campuses, campus police are now faced with the growing problem of computer-related crimes. One article highlights some incidents that occurred on college campuses using computers, showing the new challenges faced by campus law enforcement agencies (Wright, 2000):

- A student sent threatening e-mails to numerous minority students.
- A graduate student extorted money from an online company using school computers and sent threatening e-mails when he was not paid.
- A student was charged with felony communications fraud after he rigged his online election to the student body president.
- Students illegally downloaded music and shared pornographic materials.
- Pedophiles used the university’s library computers to compile information about underage boys in the area.
Other potential problems involving technology include identity theft, mainframe hacking, online stalking, and sexual harassment, to name a few. With their high concentration of computers and scores of skilled users, college campuses have become fertile grounds for computer and other technology-related crimes, creating unique and particular challenges for campus law enforcement officials.

Summary and Conclusion

This article has reported how campus police organizations have evolved over the past two decades, comparing findings of a 1986 survey with one of 2006. Comparing the two surveys, what is most evident is that these contemporary campus organizations have generally experienced a marked increase in the use of the title “Police Department” (with a concomitant decline in the designation of “Security Department”), the nature of reporting lines (they now typically report to the central administration as opposed to a head of campus buildings and grounds), and greater diversity among administrative-level personnel. There also have been slight increases in the administrator’s prior supervisory experience, age, and job tenure, as well as large increases in the number of administrators having graduate degrees. Furthermore, today more campus police agencies have full police powers, statewide jurisdiction, and greater numbers of full-time sworn personnel, agency ranks, and activities/ responsibilities. They also report more positive relations with local area police agencies, a more detailed hiring process, and higher levels of mandatory annual in-service training; and they are generally very much engaged in disaster planning and terrorism readiness.

After reading the above summary of findings, one might find it highly paradoxical that in 1968 a New York joint legislative crime committee’s study of state campuses and campus police found that

- most chiefs and officers had not completed high school and had little or no training or background in law enforcement;
- most departments worked out of the boiler room, reporting to the maintenance department; and
- more than one third of all the officers were more than 60 (Harris, 1989).

In sum, although their constituencies, mission, and overall nature of duties may differ, it is clear that today’s campus law enforcement agencies are fully part of, and connected to, the broader local law enforcement community. Campus police organizations are also an integral part of the fabric of postsecondary educational institutions and have carved a niche since the genesis of many such agencies during the turbulent 1960s and 1970s.
References


Kenneth J. Peak is a full-time professor and former chairman of the Department of Criminal Justice, University of Nevada, Reno. He entered municipal policing in Kansas in 1970 and subsequently held positions as a criminal justice planner in Kansas; director of a four-state Technical Assistance Institute for the Law Enforcement Assistance Administration; director of University Police at Pittsburg State University in Kansas; acting director of public safety at the University of Nevada, Reno; and assistant professor of Criminal Justice at Wichita State University. He has authored and coauthored a total of 20 textbooks on justice administration, community policing and problem solving, police supervision and management, and women in law enforcement. He has also published nearly 60 monographs, journal articles, and invited book chapters. He is past chairman of the Police Section of the Academy of Criminal Justice Sciences and has served as president of the Western and Pacific Association of Criminal Justice Educators.
Emmanuel P. Barthe is an assistant professor in the Department of Criminal Justice at the University of Nevada, Reno. He previously taught at Kean University in New Jersey and worked for the Planning and Research Bureau of the Jersey City Police Department. He has a doctorate and a master’s degree in criminal justice from the School of Criminal Justice at Rutgers, The State University of New Jersey. His research interests include subjects such as adoption of new technologies by the police, situational crime prevention, and the spatial analysis of crime in gaming jurisdictions. His works have been published in Crime Prevention Studies, the Journal of Crime and Justice, and The Police Chief.

Adam Garcia is a director of Police Services for the University of Nevada. Previously, he served as director of Public Safety for the City of Center Line, Michigan and rose to the rank of lieutenant with the Saginaw, Michigan Police Department. He holds two master of arts degrees, in criminal justice and political science, as well as a bachelor of arts degree in criminal justice. He is a graduate of the Federal Bureau of Investigation’s National Academy as well as its Law Enforcement Executive Leadership Institute. He currently chairs the University & College Section of the International Association of Chiefs of Police (IACP), is a board member of the IACP Foundation and Homeland Security Committee, and is a commissioner on the State of Nevada Homeland Security Commission.