
Policing Practices of the Largest University Campuses in the United States: *Use of firearms, canine units, and police oversight mechanisms and implications for the University of Washington*

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Summary

Background Given the concerns about racial profiling and racially insensitive practices by university police departments, the authors attempted to gather information regarding policies and practices at universities throughout the U.S. Our main objectives were to investigate the current landscape of college policing, especially with respect to use of firearms, canine units, and police oversight mechanisms, and identify alternative policing models. Against the national backdrop of police violence and issues around race, effectiveness of policing and concerns over police tactics are more relevant than ever.

Methods From October 2016 through May 2018, we conducted a literature and website review on campus policing in the U.S. We also conducted interviews with campus police, student and faculty leaders, and campus safety staff, and other national-level stakeholders regarding campus police policies and practices. With these sources of information, we attempted to assess the number and proportion of campuses with armed officers, canine units, types of police oversight mechanisms, and perceived experiences with these policies across the 100 largest four-year college campuses in the United States.

Findings Of the 100 largest universities with law enforcement departments, 96 reported having campus police officers with firearms and other weapons, 52 reported having canine units, 87 reported having campus safety advisory committees, and 13 reported having police oversight mechanisms that reviewed and investigated citizen complaints. Five universities were considering or in the process of developing advisory or oversight mechanisms. Stakeholder perspectives revealed diverse attitudes around the costs (financial, legal, community concerns), and benefits (additional safety, accessibility, availability) to arming officers and operationalizing canine units. Support for community policing initiatives and perceptions of accountability also differed substantially.

Interpretation Campus policing policies vary widely among large U.S. universities. Most university police departments have increased their use of firearms and police dogs in the past decade. Progress has been slow in establishing effective external accountability mechanisms composed of campus community members that review or investigate community grievances against university police officers.

Introduction

Amid growing tensions between communities of color and police forces in the United States,¹⁻⁵ the topic of policing has been widely discussed. Concerns regarding racial profiling, excessive use of force, inappropriate use of police dogs, and police accountability mechanisms are frequently raised. Most of these conversations have addressed city and state police forces; little has been published in the press and scientific literature regarding university police policies and actions.⁶⁻¹²

The University of Washington Police Department (UWPD) is one of the campus police departments about which concerns have been voiced. The stated mission of the UWPD includes the creation of a safe and secure campus, reducing crime and the fear of crime, and fostering an environment that supports the well-being of the university community. Moreover, the UWPD aspires to be a world leader in innovative campus public safety practices. At the UW, students, faculty, staff and other community members have expressed concerns over their campus law enforcement department, especially after episodes of alleged racial profiling in 2016 and a highly visible campus shooting incident at the UW Red Square in 2017.

The UWPD has come under scrutiny from multiple accusations of UW Police Department racial profiling in 2016 and concerns regarding mismanagement of anti-racist demonstrations and a near-fatal shooting on Red Square in 2017.¹³ These events have inspired dialogue around police actions that directly and affect, often adversely, community members, including people of color.

Having a safe campus for all seems more important than ever to many in the campus community. Since 2016, students, faculty, and staff have advocated for a “Safe Campus for All” set of policies that promote effective community input in decision-making and accountability, the elimination of firearms and police dogs, and a police reform task force. However, suggestions of disarming police or elimination of canine units was quickly dismissed by UW leadership in 2016 without further exploring aspects of this option. We realized that further assessment of campus police practices and policies would be useful to reimagine the possibilities for UW police reform.

Rationale and Study Aims

To better understand how the policies and practices of the UWPD compare with other comparably sized universities, the authors assessed the policies of other university police departments to understand how they balance security concerns with practices that build trust, respect, and legitimacy. This assessment sought to identify the breadth of policies and best practices at these universities to provide the UW university leadership and community with policy options that could strengthen the relationship between the UWPD and the UW community. Specifically, this aimed to obtain data on the use of firearms, the use of police dogs, and the existence and use of accountability mechanisms in the largest 100 4-year universities with student enrollment similar to that of UW.

Methods

This study was carried out from October 2016-May 2018. A mixed-method design was used, combining data obtained from a literature review, website analyses, email responses, and interviews.

Literature Review: The 2011-12 Bureau of Justice Statistics (BJS) Campus Law Enforcement report among 861 U.S. 4-year public and private universities with 2,500 or more students provided the framework for our study. Published in 2015, the report is considered the most comprehensive study regarding campus police policies and practices¹⁴⁻¹⁵. The BJS report summarized data obtained from a survey sent to university police departments (UPDs) regarding personnel, functions, expenditures and pay, operations, equipment, use of firearms, computers and information systems, community policing

activities, specialized units, and emergency preparedness activities. The report did not include data on the use of canines or types of accountability mechanisms at the universities surveyed. From the BJS report dataset, the largest 100 universities similar to UW in enrollment were selected for further study to assess the distribution of armed and unarmed officers on campuses, the use of canine units in policing, and the types and use of accountability boards.

Other data on the use of firearms were obtained from department annual reports. Information on the use of canine units and accountability mechanisms were obtained from campus police departmental websites and data from survey responses – see below. Departmental websites were also accessed for each campus police department in order to obtain data on crime statistics, civilian police grievance forms, police reports, organizational and institutional records, and other statistical monitoring reports. Relevant articles and opinion editorials were also used to assess perspectives of various stakeholders.¹⁶⁻¹⁹ Studies tracing the evolution and professionalization of campus policing over the last two decades were accessed to contextualize the significant increases of police powers that have been granted to campus officers.²⁰⁻²²

Primary data collection methods: Although a systematic approach was attempted, the ultimate methodology was a more iterative, trial-and-error approach. Information on firearms usage, canine units, and accountability mechanisms were sought from the BJS list of the 100 largest universities mentioned above. Thus, the information from many institutions was not obtained by the same methods or from the same types of respondents. For example, for some universities, student government or staff were available; for others, only police directors were reached. While police officials were typically the first source of information sought, they were often not responsive. Typically, the next step was to reach out to students and staff for information

Regarding use of **firearms**, one of the authors (JJ) phoned several UPDs from the list, all of which were reticent about providing information about firearm policies. Moreover, little information on firearms was reported or shared with the public in easily accessible ways. One UPD respondent cited “the nature of [the] business and the things going on in the country” as a reason for not providing information. Thus, for most universities, reference to firearms was typically either apparent on the home pages of UPD websites or buried in annual reports. The website-published police department annual reports usually posted information related to firearms and were often the best sources of firearms data. The primary data on firearms were cross-checked with the 2012 BJS report to ensure consistency.

Regarding **canine units**, we reviewed websites to confirm whether or not the UPDs of the 100 largest universities had canine units, information regarding dog breeds, and handler information. JJ subsequently phoned dispatchers from all of these 100 UPDs on their non-emergency lines to determine the existence of canine units. Responses requesting updates to existing website information on canine units elicited a higher response rate (over half responded), including contact information of dog handlers, some of whom were contacted via email or phone. For the others, JJ looked up the dog handler on the police website, obtained their contact information and called and/or emailed them with questions regarding information on canine unit dates of establishment, number of teams, dog breed, and the type of training. For those that did not return emails, we reviewed the UPD website to get canine related information.

For the **external accountability mechanisms**, information was obtained by using a combination of UPD websites and by contacting students and staff in campus organizations who appeared to be directly involved in public safety. After obtaining website information, outreach was made to UPD directors for whom contact information was available, and from the broader school community (student government representatives and staff) to ask them about police oversight mechanisms. Emails were sent to police staff and potential student respondents for all 100 universities. 86 email responses to questions were obtained, and over 300 people were contacted, with an average of three per university. Respondents included UPD

leaders, officers, students, faculty, and key university staff. They described the type of police accountability board present in their universities and how they worked.

Results

Use of firearms and other weapons among UPDs

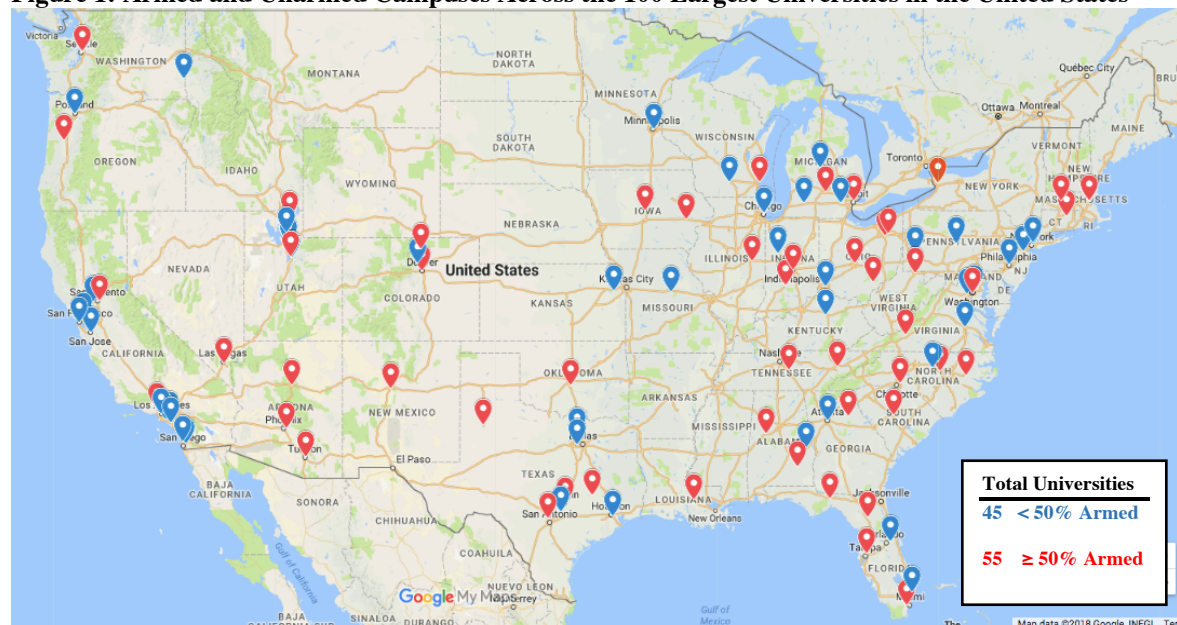
According to the 2012 BJS report, of the 100 largest universities in the U.S. (serving over 25,000 students), 96 UPDs employed “sworn officers,” defined as officers armed with firearms and having full arrest powers granted by the state or local authority. Most (59%) of these UPDs also used non-sworn, non-armed officers as well (see Table 1), including student volunteers. The overall proportion of armed officers had increased from 68% to 75% since the previous BJS report of 2005. Armed officers carried guns, (including assault weapons), pepper spray, batons, and other weapons.¹⁵

Table 1. Use of firearms among police officers of the 100 largest U.S. universities

University Type	100% armed	50-99% armed	1-49% armed	0% armed
Public	0	51	40	0
Private	0	5	2	2
Combined	0%	56%	42%	2%

Two large private universities (see below) had no armed police officers. Three additional private UPDs had no armed police officers, and employed part-time city police officers to complement their activities. Figure 1 (appendix) shows the geographical distribution of UPDs with greater or less than 50% of armed officers. Private universities, mostly located in the northeast, reported fewer than 50% of their UPD staff armed with weapons. UPDs in the West tended have lower proportions of armed officers than UPDs in the south who had higher proportions of armed officers. We also noted that the smaller universities in the group, serving 18,000-30,000 students, were more likely to have at least half of their officers armed with firearms. Among all universities, no outcome data on weapons use (times firearms used, people shot, people killed) were found.

Figure 1: Armed and Unarmed Campuses Across the 100 Largest Universities in the United States



The two universities that did not arm their police officers at all were Columbia University²³ and New York University (NYU), both located in New York City. Both of these universities employed a full university police force – however, they did not have sworn powers of arrest nor firearms. NYU had the largest unarmed force of 300 officers. They had an MOU with the NYPD that provided additional support when criminal offences occurred and investigations were necessary. Auburn University and Portland State University employed part-time armed city officers with arrest powers to support their unarmed departments equipped with pepper spray and handcuffs. Portland State University began arming their police in 2014, despite vocal opposition from the PSU community.

Analysis of online crime statistics for all universities surveyed found the top three most common crimes reported in 2016 on campus and residential facilities were burglary (44%), stalking (24%), and rape (21%). Drug related arrests and alcohol related academic disciplinary referrals were also quite common. There were no differences in crime types and rates between public and private universities, and no differences related to the proportion of armed officers. Designated, often unarmed staff, including student volunteers, commonly provided support for a large proportion of UPD activities, including crime prevention, rape prevention, drug and alcohol education, self-defense training, stalking, victim assistance, bicycle/pedestrian safety, social network abuse, intimate partner violence, identity theft, cybercrime, bias/hate crime, and suicide prevention.

Illustrative firearm policies and practices of UPDs:

Of the three universities (Auburn, DePaul, and Portland State Universities) that employed part-time armed city police officers to support their otherwise unarmed departments, the UPD officers were equipped with only pepper spray and handcuffs. One of these was Auburn University²⁴, a public research university in Auburn, Alabama with 22,000 students. An Auburn public safety official described their rationale for this approach:

[The] university is [a] big part of the city... The police had a big role to play in our overall campus safety... It made a lot of sense to have the same people providing services for the community ... because the population goes across that barrier [and] most of the students live off campus ... [It is a] hybrid of public safety ... We changed [the] name to Campus Safety and Security to make [it] clear cut... these [officers] would be unarmed... and Auburn police ... are armed and can do all typical law enforcement... [I] feel like this model ... demonstrates that there is a strong commitment to provide for campus safety... invested in one department and resources on both sides ... so if there are concerns, there is a separate entity to go to.

Associate Director of Public Safety, **Auburn University**

Portland State University, a public university of more than 15,000 students, had an unarmed police force until 2015.²⁵⁻²⁶ After years of study, debate, and campus input, the university deployed a number of armed police officers. The transition cost the university \$1.5 million²⁵ and was met with student protests.²⁷⁻²⁸ At Auburn, DePaul, Penn State, University of Minnesota, and Berkeley, the numbers of unarmed officers exceeded the number of armed officers by more than twofold. At DePaul University, a public university in Chicago, all 73 UPD Public Safety officers were unarmed. According to a university website, three part-time off-duty Chicago Police officers worked for the Public Safety unit at DePaul University carrying concealed firearms, and wearing the same uniforms as public safety officers.

Across the 24 City University of New York (CUNY) campuses, only 15% of all of CUNY campus police officers were armed. Unarmed officers carried handcuffs, pepper spray, and an expendable baton at a minimum. For the 15% of officers who were armed, they underwent extensive background and criminal history checks and additional trainings – conducted jointly by the university-wide public safety office and the NYPD. The topic of arming emerged in New York State (SUNY) schools such as Cortland

University.²⁹ Equipping University Police with enhanced less lethal weapons such as Taser stun guns, were recommended as a policy option in 2004 for its potential to enhance officer safety beyond its 2018 level. SUNY schools also endorsed implementation of a limited arming policy, either on a trial or phase-in basis, out of the respect for the concerns of persons who spoke in opposition to arming and to avoid the appearance of “winners” and “losers” in the community.²⁹

An interview of a UPD leader at CUNY suggested that they were moving towards increasing their numbers of armed officers, having grown to 30-40 armed officers as of 2017. The stated benefits for arming campus departments included a greater sense of campus security, a “stronger deterrent” effect on crime, and an ability to more effectively respond to incidents³⁰ as reflected in the following:

[In] 1992, then Chancellor upgraded [the] level of public safety and instituted [a] program to dispatch CUNY peace officers ... and after a couple of years they were all on campuses ... It all started out as unarmed and over time started to arm ... [The] trend is that [officers] have been asking for arms ... People watch the news, you see more active shooter situation, and you see more stuff and think better line of defense, if something happens on one of our campuses, even though we work with NYPD, [there's] no dispute we will be first on the scene...

Chief of Operations, Office of Public Safety, **CUNY**

Other universities with armed police officers have considered reducing the proportions or armed officers. At the University of Cincinnati,³¹ where Samuel DuBose was killed off-campus by an armed campus police officer, concerns arose in 2017 regarding armed UPD officers patrolling off-campus communities:

[The] Sam DuBose case ... raised eyebrows and ... [occurred] way off campus ... After the incident... [people realized] that UC has full jurisdiction to patrol... [through an] agreement between Cincinnati police and [the] University... [We] didn't know that this jurisdiction existed beyond campus walls ... The University reacted very quickly ... [and] already had a lot of activist groups around the campus who were organizing around issues of diversity... [and] racial incidents... a lot of citizens actually didn't know [...]

Clinical Research Coordinator, **University of Cincinnati**

Canine Units

Among the 100 largest four year universities, 52 possessed canine units according to Email, Facebook, and phone confirmation as of November 2017. Table 2 summarizes campus canine units (start date, number of teams, type of dog, and training) by university setting. Most started after 2000. There was no significant difference between rural, suburban, and urban universities. Canine units were only housed within large public institutions; no canine units were reported among private universities or public universities with fewer than 25,000 students. Figure 2 shows that many UPDs with canine units were located in urban areas in the South or the Midwest. The UW was reported as one of the few large universities in the western U.S. with canine units. No single department in our study reported outcome data on their use of canines in annual statistical reports. No cost information was available, though reported costs by respondents was considered high.

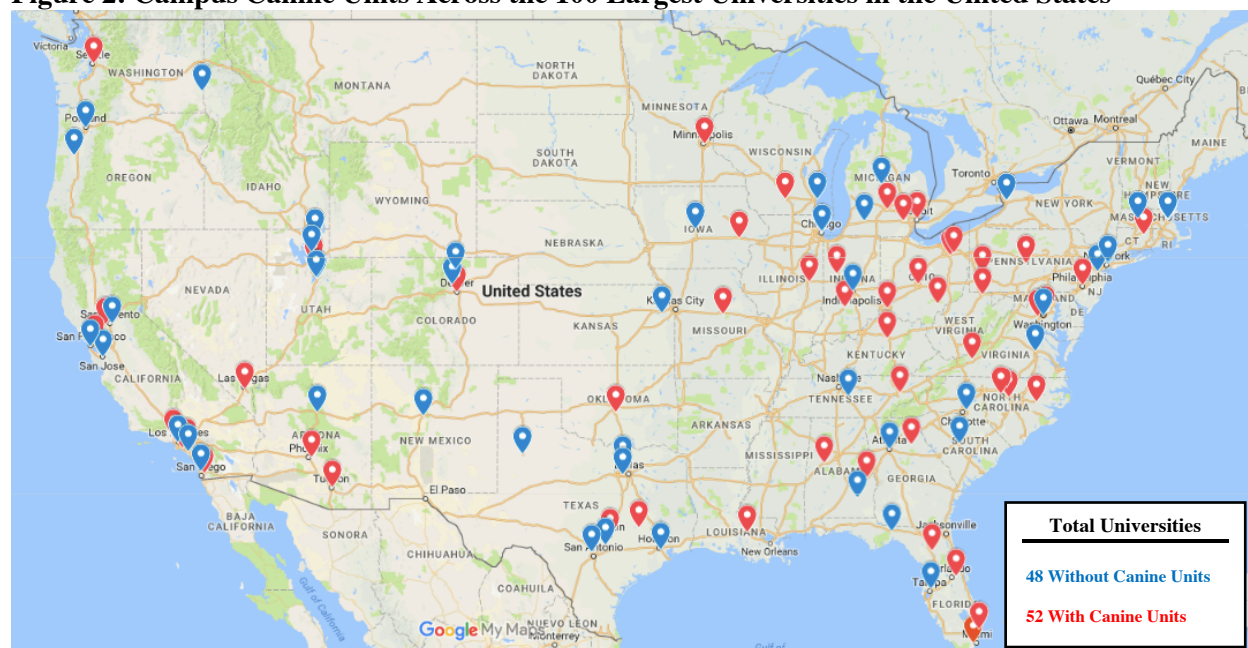
Table 2. Use of canine units among 100 largest U.S. Universities and Start Dates

University Setting	Total	3+ teams*	1-2 teams	None	Started after 2010	Start 2000-09	Start Before 2000	Stopped canine units
Urban	77	11	29	37	16	20	4	1
Suburban	18	5	3	8	4	3	2	1
Rural	5	2	-	3	-	1	1	-
All	100	18%	32%	48%	20%	24%	7%	2

*Number of Teams could not be retrieved from Auburn UPD

**Start date could not be retrieved from Alabama UPD

Figure 2: Campus Canine Units Across the 100 Largest Universities in the United States



Illustrative practices of UPD canine units:

The largest canine unit was located at Michigan State University Police Department (MSUPD), which had a total of 10 dogs and 8 handlers.³² Officers reported canine use in identifying explosives, narcotics, and in general patrols. MSUPD also possessed a Vapor Wake team, a highly skilled dog unit capable of following scents and odors from a person wearing or carrying explosives – a new innovation in detection dog technology.³³

Respondents from UPDs with canine units reported that they were implemented because of safety concerns during football games and other events. Canine units were perceived to add another level of security, according to a representative from the Ohio Department of Public Safety responsible for awarding canines to select universities through Ohio Homeland Security application requests.

[There are] a lot of students...that additional layer and security can have a benefit in the region... If you have that resource [of] short distance and on campus, then timing is of the essence... Think of all the activities that occur on universities and having that resource can be vital... Once we realized that universities had resources and [an] officer to take on the role, there were more that showed interest [...]

Representative, Ohio Department of Public Safety

Respondents from UPDs that suspended canine units reported costs and budget cuts, understaffing, dog deaths, and community considerations as causes. Discussions with CUNY Chief of Operations revealed the following reasons for discontinuing canine units in New York:

[We were] worried about [the] intimidation factor... afraid dog patrols would produce negative feedback... faculty wouldn't want to see dogs... [We] used to have it... In the 3 campuses that had it, [they] only did night tours... Then [the] dogs retired due to age... [There were] no negative incidents... It wasn't productive... it was cool but probably not necessary...

Chief of Operations, City University System of New York

Accountability Mechanisms

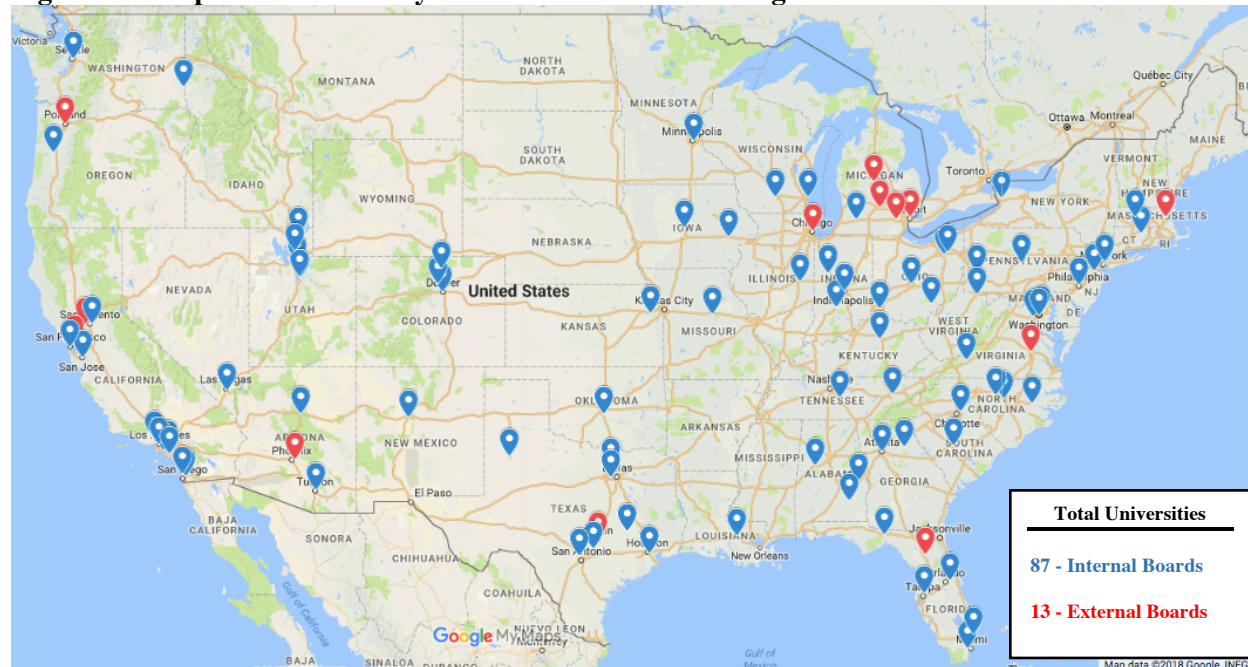
Among the 100 largest four year universities, all had some accountability mechanism. Table 3 shows that 87 had internal UPD advisory committees in place, while 13 had external police oversight mechanisms capable of reviewing and/or investigating community grievances of police misconduct. The types of accountability boards included school-wide advisory committees or similar mechanisms whereby designated community members met with campus safety officials regularly to discuss campus safety. Less common were external committees such as independent boards or offices engaged directly in conducting investigations composed of students, staff, and faculty capable of reviewing police in-house investigations on alleged officer misconduct.

Table 3. Accountability mechanisms and student enrollment

University enrollment	Total	Advisory (Internal)	Independent (External)
>50,000	10	8	3
25-49,000	83	73	9
1,000-24,000	7	6	1
All	100	87%	13%

Of the 13 UPDs with external mechanisms, two boards reviewed investigations and consulted with police about police practices and policies; three boards reviewed investigations, and also independently investigated, conducted their own hearings, and ordered the UPD to reopen cases. Five boards were a hybrid of these. The boards did not extend membership to police officers. Five universities reported considering or in the process of developing a police advisory board or oversight mechanism.

Figure 3: Campus Accountability Boards Across the 100 Largest Universities in the United States



Illustrative practices of UPD accountability mechanisms:

Harvard University³⁴ and University of Cincinnati (UC)³⁵ designated offices to oversee police procedures and/or citizen complaints processes following incidents of alleged racial profiling that called for independent reviews. Email response from UC revealed that the university was in the process of designing a police review board modeled after the city of Cincinnati Citizen Complaints Authority (CCA).

UC Davis similarly instituted an accountability board in the aftermath of a 2011 incident where university police officers pepper sprayed a group of demonstrators on campus.³⁶ A campus representative reported that the board was one of the only university police oversight boards in the country, and described that there was interest at other UC campuses, as well as at the system-wide level, to institute police accountability boards.

The Police Accountability Board was formed as one part of the complex restructuring and healing process ... An oversight board came out of the recommendations ... which was commissioned by the UC President. UC Davis who arrived at our model ... after a yearlong vetting process that included: looking at other models of civilian oversight, mainly from municipalities; a series of campus community forums; and consultation with civilian oversight experts from [the] National Association for Civilian Oversight of Law Enforcement and from the community.

Program Manager, **Office of Campus Community Relations, UC Davis**

Student perspectives found online on accountability and oversight added another layer to the diversity of views:

[...] students must also be more proactive in expressing grievances. A dual-pronged strategy of working within the committee as well as a sustained student-led initiative in which students demand that the University externalize the complaint process would both hold the [UTPD] more liable for its actions and prove fallacious the belief that creating committees is a sufficient administrative response to demands for change.

Student, **University of Texas-Austin**

One email response from a university Chief of Police questioned the need regarding civilian oversight:

I don't think as a citizen that I could fairly judge the actions of a lawyer or doctor and I feel the same is true for police being judge[d] by most citizens. The public has a right to expect a professional police service that is open and available to address their concerns... I am not a supporter of citizen police boards, rather I am a proponent of community policing and being a part of the community we serve. It should be about hiring the proper leaders and them in turn leading by building a community-based culture.

Chief of Police, **West Virginia University**

A former Chief of the Seattle Police Department provided a much different view of community policing and partnerships:

[...] True policing is partnership where citizenry, university community ... is in the driver's seat... [with a] seat at the table in all operations, from policy making, to program development, to crisis management to actually engaging in policing programs in the campus in conjunction with uniformed partners, involved in teaching, in citizen oversight of police misconduct and use of force in investigations... In times of disputes or disagreements, the community is always consulted. There are never unilateral or arbitrary decisions made on behalf of the partnership... [the] best way to test it... [whether it] gets to the heart of the police culture [...]

Former Chief of Police, **Seattle Police Department**

Discussion

Our review revealed that, although all but two of the 100 largest 4-year campuses in the United States surveyed equipped campus law enforcement officers (or partners) with firearms and other weapons, the patterns of arming were quite varied. Reported crime activity data from UPDs suggested little justification for weapons. It was notable that our respondents in unarmed or partially armed UPDs were satisfied with their level of safety. Only half of UPDs utilized canines in policing activities, and although all UPDs had police oversight mechanisms, they varied considerably in their level of independence, authority, and community involvement regarding review of police misconduct, policies, and citizen grievances.

Our study findings raise concerns as to whether large numbers of armed officers and canine units are necessary, appropriate, or proportionate responses to the crimes reported on campus. Crime data beyond what is mandated by law should be reported by UPDs and available to the public to better inform university communities in policy decisions. Broader dissemination of crime statistics (such as outcomes data) could potentially help determine the need for firearms and canines if UPDs do indeed employ them for more violent crimes. Costs of firearm use, canine units, and the overall increase in militarization of campus police activities would also help inform appropriate policy decisions.

Universities with various approaches to arming campus safety officers, including not arming at all, like Columbia University, present options that help reimagine other ways of policing. In 2017, Columbia was named one of the Safest Colleges in America by the National Council for Home Safety and Security, on the basis of types of crimes reported, including violent crimes, crime statistics for the city in which the campus was located, and the number of law enforcement officers employed by the university.³⁷ Limited firearm usage and suspension of canines in New York, and hybrid campus police models in Alabama, Michigan and California, are examples of other models that have been implemented nationwide. Despite being universities in highly urbanized environments, partnerships with reformed city police, and policies designating community policing responsibilities to campus officers and law enforcement activities to city police, created the conditions where only a minority of officers had access to deadly weapons.

Our findings on the wide variation of police dog usage was not surprising. Canine use by police is expensive and has frequently been a cause of litigation regarding issues related to excessive force or protection of handlers.³⁸ Courts have ruled that failing to give a warning before releasing a police dog is unreasonable. Costly legal battles for police K-9 handlers from suspects bitten by canines alleging use of excessive force were discussed by respondents. Other evidence^{39,40} has shown that dog alerts have often been wrong or unreliable, and could be easily influenced by the biases and suspicions of police handlers. Moreover, the use of dogs as weapons harkens back to the history of police dogs to terrorize Black Americans. A study on the Los Angeles County Sheriff's Department's canine use found that 100 percent (17 bites) of people bitten within the first 6 months of 2013 were Black or Latino.⁴¹

The low proportion of independent accountability boards/committees and low transparency among the UPDs was surprising. As communities continue to mobilize around police reform nationwide, transparency may play a pronounced role in the development of community-police relations on college campuses.⁴²⁻⁴⁴ Community demands for accountability demonstrate a concerted push for mechanisms to exist – and if they exist, to function better, to have more bite, and to be more resourced as evidenced by recent changes in police boards across the country.

The UW prides itself as a hub of innovation and idea generation. In this spirit, UW could champion a community policing model that fully integrates community input to revisit its policies relating to firearm usage, police dogs, and accountability procedures in order to ensure that safety decisions are made in collaboration with all partners. In the aftermath of a shooting of an unarmed man on our campus, and

confrontations between people of color and the UWPD, the university should offer better solutions to making a safe campus for all. Lessons and initiatives from other universities can help us move forward to explore alternative practices based on objective evidence.

The issue is not about a few complaint investigations, but about the philosophy of policing, and of actively working towards creating an environment in which safety and security are reinforced through organizational structures and policies that address systemic flaws. By creating effective partnerships with both the academic and neighboring community, and by communicating more essential information, security matters can be collectively decided jointly by university leadership, the UWPD, and the university community, each having an equal stake in the process.

Limitations

While the scope of this assessment is limited to the largest 100 4-year campuses in the United States, these universities have substantial similarities with the UW. Moreover, although a large number of UPDs did not respond to our queries, especially to requests for information on the use of firearms, we obtained a substantial amount of information from reports on department websites.

Despite efforts to obtain diverse viewpoints from participants selected for interviews, we were limited to those who accepted. The sampling method may have biased the results toward the attitudes of those likely to be in favor of police reform or increased accountability. This potential bias was partially mitigated by expanding the questionnaire to a broad scope of stakeholders, including student leaders, faculty, and staff.

Recommendations for the UWPD

Based on our findings, we recommend the following policy changes in promotion of a safer UW community:

1. Implement an arming policy that eliminates firearms or places significant restrictions on the use of firearms by university police officers and only allows a limited number of personnel to be armed. If some officers continue to be armed, the UWPD could designate official time periods where firearms may be employed (during late-night shifts/during particular high-risk tasks, etc.), stationing firearms in patrol cars in case of emergencies, and a transition towards using less lethal weapons. This policy could also work towards limiting the obvious display of firearms and the messages it conveys.
2. Explore a partnership with a reformed Seattle Police Department that delineates community policing activities to UWPD and law enforcement activities to Seattle PD, with active participation from the community throughout the process. This partnership could mirror Auburn's or the CUNY model that created clear distinctions between the roles and responsibilities of campus safety officers and local police. This decision limited the use of arms on campus, and established the role of campus safety officers in providing community services apart from enforcing the law. Such arrangements might also reduce the costs of the UWPD.
3. Discontinue the canine program given its cost, unclear benefits, and to prevent future litigation. The repugnant history of animal use by American police on communities of color is likely to make these communities feel less, rather than more safe on campus. If canine programs are continued, collect and disseminate race/ethnicity statistics on use of dogs, bites, and complaints to provide empirical evidence to the campus community on the usefulness of dogs for meeting community security needs.

4. Establish an independent UWPD oversight board that is not chaired by the UWPD whose charge includes reviewing activities and complaints with the power to review appeals, request that the department reopen cases, conduct its own independent investigations and hearings, audit internal policies and hiring practices, and review/approve new UWPD policies.
5. Redesign the UWPD website to include clear and easily accessible information on the size of the department, canine unit, oversight mechanisms, yearly statistical reports pertaining to use of force/weapon drawn by race/ethnicity, and internal affairs investigations, their outcomes, and corrective actions taken.

These recommendations would help make the entire university community feel safe without increasing risks. Adopting these recommendations would could potentially reduce the avoidable risk of accidental shootings by university police, reduce liability, cost less, and engender a genuine partnership between the UWPD and the UW community to create a community policing model that would foster a safe campus for all.

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