

Texas A&M University Police Department

Student and Citizen Survey

Spring 2022

Purpose of Assessment

The Texas A&M University Police Department (UPD) is required to survey “citizens” as a part of national accreditation requirements with the International Association of Campus Law Enforcement Administrators (IACLEA). UPD surveys the campus community regularly to gather input from the community, identify and improve practices, and address attitudes that might contribute to tension and grievances. The process for gathering that information can be determined by the department. The broad description of the assessment content includes:

- Overall departmental performance
- Overall competence of department employees
- Officers’ attitudes and behavior toward citizens
- Concern over safety and security within the department’s service area as a whole
- Recommendations and suggestions for improvement

Student Life Studies initially worked with UPD in 2010 to address specifically the accreditation requirements and topics using a campus-wide survey of students, faculty, and staff. UPD has collaborated with Student Life Studies to conduct this assessment in 2010, 2013, 2016, 2018, 2020, and 2022.

Key Findings with Recommendations

Student Life Studies identified several key findings and developed actionable recommendations the department may take based on the results. However, UPD staff and administrators may identify other findings using their knowledge and understanding of the campus community. UPD is strongly encouraged to read all the results and qualitative comments to gain a fuller understanding of community members’ experiences.

- Overall, students, faculty, and staff had positive views of the Texas A&M University Police Department. All three populations generally felt safe on campus; students, faculty, and staff all reported feeling slightly less safe compared to 2020. Additionally, students, faculty, and staff felt safer during the day compared to at night. Females and Black students reported feeling the least safe on campus both during the day and at night.
- Both students and faculty/staff reported concerns over areas of campus that are not well lit, and they expressed a desire to see more officers on campus, especially at night. Pedestrian, cyclist, and vehicle traffic safety were also identified as concerns.
 - UPD is encouraged to explore possible short- and long-term solutions based on the recommendations from community members. This could include working with other campus entities to conduct campus walks at night to prioritize areas needing additional lighting. UPD might consider options to increase a presence on campus, especially at night by looking at the staffing and having officers walk or bike on campus in addition to drive. UPD could work with other areas on campus to promote pedestrians’ and drivers’ safety through a marketing campaign as well as information shared at Fish Camp or during Howdy Week.
- Faculty/staff were slightly more positive than students in terms of UPD staff being competent, UPD’s performance and attitudes, and UPD’s overall performance. Overall the campus community rated UPD staff between excellent and good; however, this decreased slightly compared to 2020. While community members provided positive feedback in their comments, some survey respondents expressed negative experiences and perceptions in their interactions with UPD.

- The department is encouraged to share results from this survey with various stakeholders as well as highlight any changes that are made as a result of the findings from this assessment.

Method and Sample

The 16-question survey was developed using Qualtrics®, a survey design software that creates web-based forms and databases. The electronic survey consisted of 13 quantitative and three qualitative questions. Due to branching technology, not all respondents saw all the questions. The data was analyzed using SPSS®, a statistical software package, and Microsoft Excel®.

The survey link was sent to a random sample of 3,500 students on February 25, 2022. Initially, data collection was ending before spring break; however, due to a low response rate, the deadline was extended until after spring break. Non-respondents received up to six reminder emails: three before spring break, one during the break, and two after spring break. The survey closed on April 12, 2022. Four student email addresses were invalid, and those students did not receive the email invitation. Of the 3,496 students who received the survey, 369 responded to some part of the survey, yielding an 11% response rate (the same as 2020).

Additionally, the survey link was sent to a random sample of 1,350 faculty members and 950 staff members on February 25, 2022. Up to six reminders were sent to non-respondents before closing the survey on April 12, 2022. Seven email addresses for faculty members and nine staff members' email addresses were not valid and did not receive the survey links. Of the 1,343 faculty members who received the survey, 305 responded to at least some part of the survey, a 23% response rate (a 3% decrease from 2020). Of the 941 staff members receiving the survey, 255 responded to some part of it, creating a 27% response rate (a 12% decrease from 2020).

Results

Results are reported as means, standard deviations (sd), and frequency percentages for the number of people (n) who responded to the question. For ease of reading, frequency percentages have been rounded to the nearest whole percent, so totals may not add up to exactly 100%. Tables are in descending mean or frequency order for 2022 overall results unless otherwise specified. Summary themes for the qualitative questions are included in this report; the entire list can be found in a separate document. Comparisons to previous results are made where applicable. Additionally, demographic information was collected from the university information system when the samples were gathered and reported.

Respondents were asked three questions about the safety and security on campus, using a scale of 5=Strongly Agree, 4=Agree, 3=Neutral, 2=Disagree, and 1=Strongly Disagree. Table 1, on the following page, illustrates that the campus community generally feels safe, but also that respondents feel safer during the day than at night. This pattern was similar for students, faculty, and staff. Overall, 93% agreed or strongly agreed with the statement about feeling safe during the day compared to 68% at night. This has remained consistent for the last few years. Note that for the question asking if respondents are concerned with safety on campus, a higher mean indicates respondents' agreement with the statement and thus were more concerned about safety and security on campus. Just over one-quarter (27%) agreed or strongly agreed to being concerned about safety and security on campus. Students were less concerned about safety on campus compared to faculty and staff.

Statement	2018 Overall Mean (sd) [n]	2020 Overall Mean (sd) [n]	2022 Overall Mean (sd) [n]	2022 Student Mean (sd) [n]	2022 Faculty Mean (sd) [n]	2022 Staff Mean (sd) [n]
I feel safe and secure on campus during the day.	4.61 (.60) [731]	4.62 (.66) [547]	4.54 (.72) [799]	4.57 (.66) [291]	4.54 (.78) [283]	4.48 (.71) [225]
I feel safe and secure on campus at night.	3.86 (.87) [723]	3.92 (.94) [546]	3.81 (.98) [789]	3.78 (1.00) [289]	3.89 (1.00) [279]	3.75 (.91) [221]
I am concerned about safety and security on campus.	†	2.77 (1.19) [544]	2.73 (1.15) [793]	2.55 (1.12) [290]	2.77 (1.20) [279]	2.90 (1.10) [224]

Table 1—Campus Safety
(† Question not asked)

There are differences in feelings of safety and security on campus when specifically looking at the gender and ethnicity of students, as shown in Table 2 below and Table 3 on the following page. Females reported feeling less safe on campus compared to males both during the day and during the night. However, it is a notable difference in females feeling less safe and secure on campus at night compared to males. Black students felt the least safe during both the day and night, as well as had the highest concern about safety and security on campus. Asian students indicated feeling the safest during both the day and night on campus. Additionally, multi-racial students were the least concerned about safety and security on campus.

Statement	2022 Female Mean (sd) [n]	2022 Male Mean (sd) [n]	2022 Overall Mean (sd) [n]
I feel safe and secure on campus during the day.	4.50 (.70) [157]	4.66 (.60) [134]	4.57 (.66) [291]
I feel safe and secure on campus at night.	3.37 (.96) [156]	4.26 (.82) [133]	3.78 (1.00) [289]
I am concerned about safety and security on campus.	2.61 (.99) [157]	2.47 (1.27) [133]	2.55 (1.12) [290]

Table 2—Campus Safety by Gender of Students

Statement	2022 Asian Mean (sd) [n=20]	2022 Black Mean (sd) [n=12]	2022 Hispanic Mean (sd) [n=51]	2022 International Mean (sd) [n=41]	2022 Multi- Racial Mean (sd) [n=9]	2022 White Mean (sd) [n=155]	2022 Overall Mean (sd) [n=291]
I feel safe and secure on campus during the day.	4.70 (.47)	4.17 (.58)	4.61 (.53)	4.59 (.63)	4.67 (.71)	4.58 (.73) [n=155]	4.57 (.66) [291]
I feel safe and secure on campus at night.	4.05 (.76)	3.42 (1.17)	3.78 (.97)	4.00 (.95)	3.89 (1.17)	3.72 (1.02) [n=153]	3.78 (1.00) [289]
I am concerned about safety and security on campus.	2.45 (1.19)	2.75 (1.14)	2.49 (1.08)	2.56 (1.23)	2.33 (.71)	2.55 (1.12) [n=154]	2.55 (1.12) [290]

Table 3—Campus Safety by Ethnicity of Students
(Unknown/Not Reported not Included in Table)

Survey respondents were provided the opportunity to share any concerns they had regarding safety and security on campus and 367 individuals wrote a response. The lack of lighting in some areas of campus, unsafe driving, and pedestrian safety were the most common concerns for students, faculty, and staff. Additionally, respondents expressed concern about UPD not taking enough action against offenders. Some also commented on the open layout of the campus which allows anyone to enter the campus at any time, and people not affiliated with the university committing illegal activities on campus.

When asked for recommendations or suggestions to improve safety and security on campus, 339 respondents shared a variety of ideas. Increasing lighting or having brighter lights on campus and having more officers with a presence on campus were the most common suggestions by students, faculty, and staff. Additionally, there were several recommendations for more cameras, and stricter punishments/fines.

When asked if they have had an encounter with UPD while at Texas A&M University, 32% of all respondents said yes (25% of students, 39% of staff, and 35% of faculty). The overall response is 4% higher compared to 2020. Those who indicated that they had an encounter with UPD (n=253) were asked to describe the type of encounter. Using a check all that apply format, Table 4 reveals, similar to the previous years, that enforcement was the most common type of encounter overall. Those selecting the “other” response option were provided the opportunity to write a response and 78 shared a comment. Faculty and staff mentioned UPD responding to car accidents, making traffic stops, helping with something, and responding to a situation or alarms in a building. Students reported encounters with UPD through receiving a ticket and interacting with officers at events. These results are similar to the past years.

Which describes the type of encounter you had with UPD? (check all that apply)	2018 Overall [n=173]	2020 Overall [n=152]	2022 Overall [n=251]	2022 Student [n=70]	2022 Faculty [n=97]	2022 Staff [n=84]
Enforcement	38%	39%	39%	49%	34%	37%
Other	35%	39%	35%	23%	32%	48%
Community Policing/Crime Prevention Program	20%	23%	23%	16%	20%	32%
Witness	16%	17%	17%	13%	14%	23%
Victim	8%	11%	14%	10%	21%	11%

Table 4—Encounter with UPD

All respondents were asked to rate UPD employees in terms of their competence, attitude, and performance using a scale of 4=Excellent, 3=Good, 2=Fair, and 1=Poor. Table 5 demonstrates that overall, the campus community rated UPD between excellent and good in all three areas; however, all areas are slightly lower compared to 2020. Additionally, faculty and staff rated UPD more positively in all areas compared to students.

I would rate UPD employees'...	Excellent (4)	Good (3)	Fair (2)	Poor (1)	2020 Overall Mean (sd) [n]	2022 Overall Mean (sd) [n]	2022 Student Mean (sd) [n]	2022 Faculty Mean (sd) [n]	2022 Staff Mean (sd) [n]
Overall performance as:	39%	44%	13%	4%	3.26 (.74) [428]	3.18 (.80) [571]	2.95 (.87) [201]	3.38 (.75) [192]	3.24 (.71) [178]
Level of competence in performing their job as:	41%	42%	13%	4%	3.29 (.74) [416]	3.20 (.82) [568]	2.97 (.89) [197]	3.37 (.78) [194]	3.26 (.71) [177]
Attitude and behavior as:	43%	38%	13%	7%	3.23 (.81) [419]	3.17 (.89) [546]	2.91 (.98) [184]	3.39 (.82) [188]	3.20 (.80) [174]

Table 5—UPD Employees

When respondents were asked to share any recommendations or suggestions for improvement with UPD, 156 wrote a response sharing a variety of comments. Some students, faculty, and staff expressed their positive interactions or that they had not had any encounter with UPD; however, there were students, faculty, and staff who shared about officers being rude, not friendly, or discriminatory. Students suggested officers be more visible throughout campus. Faculty and staff recommended that UPD facilitate more trainings or presentations for student groups. Some respondents also commented about some police officers ignoring crimes or accidents on campus.

A series of questions asked respondents about methods they used to find out information about UPD. Table 6, on the following page, indicates that the UPD website was the most common method of the ones listed; however, a very high percent of the respondents (79%-91%) selected “never” for each method. Staff reported using all methods more than faculty or students.

Share how often you utilize these methods to find out information about UPD.	Daily (5)	Weekly (4)	Once or Twice a Month (3)	Once or Twice a Semester (2)	Never (1)	2022 Overall Mean (sd) [n]	2022 Student Mean (sd) [n]	2022 Faculty Mean (sd) [n]	2022 Staff Mean (sd) [n]
UPD Website	<1%	2%	3%	16%	79%	1.29 (.63) [757]	1.22 (.55) [270]	1.25 (.56) [273]	1.42 (.76) [214]
UPD Twitter Account	1%	2%	5%	9%	84%	1.28 (.74) [755]	1.32 (.75) [268]	1.18 (.61) [273]	1.36 (.85) [214]
UPD Facebook Page	<1%	1%	3%	5%	91%	1.14 (.52) [752]	1.13 (.50) [269]	1.07 (.37) [271]	1.25 (.67) [212]
Attend Presentation/Training	<1%	<1%	1%	13%	87%	1.14 (.40) [753]	1.06 (.33) [269]	1.15 (.36) [271]	1.24 (.49) [213]

Table 6—Marketing Methods

The final question asked respondents if they ever had property engraved by UPD. A majority (94%) of the overall respondents said no (n=693). This figure was similar across students (92%), faculty (95%), and staff (95%).

The survey sample consisted of 60% students, 16% staff members, and 23% faculty members. However, when looking at the makeup of the respondents, 40% were students, 27% were staff members, and 33% were faculty members. Furthermore, the overall sample was made up of 52% male and 49% female; however, this gender make-up was reversed when looking at the survey respondents, which consisted of 53% females and 47% male.

Table 7, on the following page, shows additional student demographics from the survey sample and respondents. The table is in descending order by the survey respondents for each category. Respondents were representative of the sample on most variables. However, slightly more students responding to the survey identified as doctoral and masters students, and International. The biggest difference between the sample and survey respondents was gender with male respondents underrepresented and female respondents overrepresented.

	Survey Sample (n=3,500)	Survey Respondents (n=369)
Classification		
Senior	31%	28%
Junior	22%	19%
Sophomore	17%	15%
Masters	11%	15%
Doctoral	7%	14%
Freshmen	10%	7%
Vet Student	1%	2%
Post Baccalaureate Degree / Non-Degree	1%	<1%
Pharmacy Student	<1%	--
First Generation		
No	68%	63%
Unknown	12%	19%
Yes	20%	18%
College		
Engineering	30%	31%
Agriculture and Life Sciences	11%	11%
Mays Business School	9%	11%
Liberal Arts	12%	10%
Education and Human Development	11%	10%
Science	6%	6%
Veterinary Medicine and Biomedical Sciences	5%	6%
General Studies	5%	4%
Architecture	5%	4%
Geosciences	2%	3%
Public Health	2%	3%
Bush School of Government	1%	1%
Exchange	<1%	1%
Medicine/Nursing/Pharmacy	1%	--
Ethnicity		
White	55%	54%
Hispanic/Latino	22%	18%
International	7%	14%
Asian	10%	7%
Multiracial excluding Black	3%	4%
Black or Multi-Racial with Black	3%	3%
Unknown	<1%	1%
Native Hawaiian or Pacific Islander	<1%	--
American Indian	<1%	--
Sex		
Female	49%	53%
Male	52%	47%
Top Ten Percent		
Not Top 10%	62%	64%
Top 10%	38%	36%

Table 7—Student Demographics

Department Background

According to its website (<https://upd.tamu.edu/Pages/About-Us.aspx>), the mission of the Texas A&M University Police Department is to provide “a safe and secure environment through education, the cooperative spirit of all university community members and the enforcement of laws and regulations.” Additionally, “service” is the motto for the department: **S**ervice, **E**thics, **R**espect, **V**alues, **I**ntegrity, **C**ourtesy, and **E**xcellence.

The department is comprised of 156 positions including 74 state certified Police Officers, 52 Security Officers, 13 Communications Officers, nine administrative support personnel, and six Records Technicians. UPD has an investigations division, a community service unit, a recruiting unit, a training division, a victim advocate, and an emergency communications center.

Project Details

Some caution should be used when generalizing the results from this survey as students responding to the survey were underrepresented, while staff members and faculty were overrepresented.

The Department of Student Life Studies provides quality assessment services, resources, and assessment training for departments in the Texas A&M University Division of Student Affairs and student organizations. Services by Student Life Studies are funded, in part, by the Texas A&M University Advancement Fee. Results of this project and other assessment projects done through Student Life Studies can be found at <https://studentlifestudies.tamu.edu/results/>. Additionally, students and staff can follow Student Life Studies on Facebook.

To work with Student Life Studies for future assessment projects, please complete the Assessment Questionnaire at <https://slsform.dsaapps.tamu.edu/>.

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