

Texas A&M University Police Department

Campus-Wide Survey of Students, Faculty, and Staff

Spring 2018

Background

The Texas A&M University Police Department (UPD) is required to survey “citizens” as a part of national accreditation requirements with International Association of Campus Law Enforcement Administrators (IACLEA). UPD surveys the campus community on a regular basis 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 February 2010 to specifically address 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, and 2018.

Method and Sample

The 14-question survey was developed using Qualtrics[®], survey design software that creates web-based forms and databases. The electronic survey consisted of 12 quantitative and two qualitative questions. Due to branching technology, not all respondents saw all of the questions. The data was analyzed using SPSS[®], a statistical software package, and Microsoft Excel[®].

The survey was sent to a random sample of 2,500 students on February 15, 2018. Non-respondents received up to three reminder emails before the survey closed on February 28, 2018. Some student email addresses bounced and those students did not receive the email invitation. Of the 2,495 students who received the survey, 467 responded to some part of the survey, yielding a 19% response rate (a 2% increase from 2016).

Additionally, the survey was sent to a random sample of 500 faculty members and 601 staff members on February 15, 2018. Up to three reminders were sent to non-respondents before closing the survey on February 28, 2018. Some email address for faculty and staff were not valid and the survey links were not received by the respondents. Of those who received and responded to at least some part of the survey, 144 were faculty (29% response rate) and 179 were staff members (30% response rate).

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 2018 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 the 2016 results are made where applicable. Additionally, demographic information was collected from the university information system when the samples were drawn and are reported for the samples and respondents.

Respondents were asked two questions about safety and security, using a scale of 5=Strongly Agree, 4=Agree, 3=Neutral, 2=Disagree, and 1=Strongly Disagree. Table 1 illustrates that the campus community generally feels safe, but also that respondents feel safer during the day than at night. Overall, 96% agreed or strongly agreed to the statement about feeling safe during the day compared to 70% at night. This pattern was similar for students and faculty/staff; however, students reported feeling slightly less safe than faculty/staff at night.

Statement	2016 Overall Mean (sd) [n]	2018 Overall Mean (sd) [n]	2018 Student Mean (sd) [n]	2018 Faculty/Staff Mean (sd) [n]
I feel safe and secure on campus during the day.	4.65 (.57) [860]	4.61 (.60) [731]	4.61 (.58) [428]	4.61 (.63) [303]
I feel safe and secure on campus at night.	3.90 (.86) [854]	3.86 (.87) [723]	3.84 (.88) [427]	3.91 (.87) [296]

Table 1—Safety

Survey respondents were provided the opportunity to share any concerns they had regarding safety and security on campus and 217 individuals wrote a response. Increasing the lighting on campus was the most common response from students and faculty/staff. Students also suggested increasing the emergency phones or blue light towers on campus. Other ideas mentioned included managing bike traffic more, installing more cameras, increasing officers patrolling campus (especially at night), and adding an SOS feature to the Texas A&M app. Additionally, there were several comments related to the campus carry law with some asking for no guns to be on campus and others wanting an increase in those able to carry guns on campus.

When asked if they have had an encounter with UPD while at Texas A&M University, 24% of all respondents said yes (18% of students and 31% of faculty/staff). Those who indicated that they have had an encounter with UPD were asked a follow-up question to describe the type of encounter. Using a check-all-that-apply question, Table 2 reveals that overall enforcement was the most common type of encounter. Those selecting the “other” response option were provided the opportunity to write a response and 53 shared a comment. Faculty/staff mentioned training workshops, information meetings, car accidents, and responding to a situation. Students reported encounters with UPD through responding to a situation, dealing with a car accident, making a traffic stop, and having a friendly conversation. Compared to 2016 there was a decrease in respondents who reported their encounter with UPD was as a victim.

Which describes the type of encounter you had with UPD? (check all that apply)	2016 Overall [n=204]	2018 Overall [n=173]	2018 Student [n=77]	2018 Faculty/Staff [n=96]
Enforcement	35%	38%	43%	34%
Other	33%	35%	31%	38%
Community Policing/Crime Prevention Program	23%	20%	13%	26%
Witness	14%	16%	12%	20%
Victim	15%	8%	9%	7%

Table 2—Encounter

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. Additionally, respondents could select no opinion, which was removed from the analysis. Table 3 demonstrates that overall campus community members rated UPD between excellent and good in all three areas. This is similar when compared to 2016. Additionally, faculty/staff rated UPD more positively in all areas compared to students. In further analysis, overall respondents reporting that they had an encounter with UPD generally rated UPD employee's level of competency and performance just slightly higher than those who did not have an encounter. Alternatively, respondents reporting having an encounter with UPD rated employee's attitude and behavior slightly lower than those who did not have an encounter.

Statement	2018 Overall				2016	2018	2018	2018
	Excellent (4)	Good (3)	Fair (2)	Poor (1)	Overall Mean (sd) [n]	Overall Mean (sd) [n]	Student Mean (sd) [n]	Faculty/Staff Mean (sd) [n]
I would rate UPD employees' level of competence in performing their job as:	43%	47%	10%	1%	3.33 (.63) [629]	3.31 (.69) [550]	3.21 (.73) [326]	3.45 (.59) [224]
I would rate UPD's overall performance as:	42%	46%	11%	1%	3.30 (.65) [651]	3.29 (.69) [571]	3.21 (.73) [339]	3.42 (.62) [232]
I would rate UPD employees' attitude and behavior as:	43%	42%	13%	3%	3.28 (.72) [612]	3.24 (.78) [542]	3.11 (.83) [321]	3.43 (.67) [221]

Table 3—UPD Employees

When respondents were asked to share any recommendations or suggestions for improvement with UPD, 93 wrote a response. There were a mix of comments from respondents. Many were positive or that the respondent had not had any encounter with UPD; these comments were more common from faculty/staff than students. Students indicated to improve student relations, follow-up with students after an incident, to take sexual assaults seriously, and issue fewer traffic tickets.

A new series of questions on the 2018 survey asked respondents about methods they used to find out information about UPD. Table 4, on the following page, indicates that the UPD Twitter Account was the most common method of the ones listed; however, more than three-fourths of the respondents selected never for each method. Students reported using the UPD Twitter Account and Facebook Page at slightly higher rates than faculty/staff; however, students reported lower rates compared to faculty/staff for using the website or attending a presentation or training.

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)	2018 Overall Mean (sd) [n]	2018 Student Mean (sd) [n]	2018 Faculty/Staff Mean (sd) [n]
UPD Twitter Account	3%	5%	8%	7%	77%	1.50 (1.03) [707]	1.67 (1.11) [409]	1.27 (.84) [298]
UPD Website	<1%	1%	3%	15%	80%	1.26 (.59) [707]	1.21 (.53) [407]	1.33 (.66) [300]
UPD Facebook Page	<1%	1%	3%	7%	89%	1.18 (.58) [705]	1.21 (.62) [405]	1.13 (.50) [300]
Attend Presentation/Training	--	<1%	<1%	17%	83%	1.18 (.41) [701]	1.14 (.38) [404]	1.23 (.43) [297]

Table 4—Marketing Methods

The final question asked respondents if they had ever had property engraved by UPD. A majority (93%) of the overall respondents said no (91% of students and 95% of faculty/staff).

The sample consisted of 69% students, 14% staff members, and 17% faculty members. However, when looking at the makeup of the respondents, 59% were students, 23% were staff members, and 18% were faculty members. Furthermore, the overall sample was made up of 52% male and 48% female; however, this evened out when looking at the respondents, which consisted of 50% male and 50% female.

Table 5, on the following page, shows additional student characteristics from the survey sample and the respondents. The student respondents were fairly representative of the sample on most variables. However, slightly more students responding to the survey identified as juniors, master-level students, doctoral students, International, White, and from the Colleges of Agriculture and Life Sciences and Engineering. Alternatively, there were slightly fewer seniors, first generation, and Hispanic students who responded to the survey compared to the sample.

	Survey Sample (n=2,500)	Survey Respondents (n=467)
Classification		
Freshmen	10%	10%
Sophomore	17%	17%
Junior	19%	21%
Senior	31%	27%
Masters	11%	13%
Doctoral	7%	10%
Vet Student	1%	1%
Dental, Medical, or Pharmacy Student	2%	1%
Law Student	1%	<1%
Post Baccalaureate Degree / Non-Degree	1%	1%
First Generation		
Yes	23%	19%
No	65%	65%
Unknown	13%	16%
College		
Agriculture and Life Sciences	12%	16%
Architecture	5%	4%
Bush School of Government	1%	<1%
Mays Business School	10%	10%
Dentistry/Medicine/Nursing/Pharmacy	3%	2%
Education and Human Development	10%	9%
Engineering	29%	32%
General Studies	4%	3%
Geosciences	2%	3%
Liberal Arts	13%	12%
Rural Public Health	1%	1%
Science	6%	5%
Veterinary Medicine and Biomedical Sciences	5%	4%
Law School	1%	--
Ethnicity		
White	56%	60%
Black/African-American	3%	2%
Hispanic/Latino	23%	17%
Asian	7%	5%
American Indian	<1%	<1%
Multiracial	2%	2%
International	8%	13%
Native Hawaiian or Pacific Islander	<1%	--
Unknown	1%	1%

Table 5—Student Demographics

Conclusions and Recommendations

Overall, students, faculty, and staff had a positive view of the Texas A&M University Police Department. Additionally, all three populations generally felt safe on campus; however, more community members reported feeling safer during the day than at night. Faculty/staff were slightly more positive than students in terms of UPD staff being competent and UPD's performance and attitudes; however, overall the campus community rated UPD staff between excellent and good.

Both groups provided positive feedback in their comments, with a few negative experiences and perceptions noted. Furthermore, both faculty/staff and students reported concerns over areas of campus that are not well-lit and expressed a desire to see more officers on campus, especially at night. Pedestrian, cyclist, and vehicle traffic safety and rule enforcement were identified as additional concerns.

University Police Department may want to consider looking at results by different demographics. Do women and men feel equally safe on campus or have the same experiences when interacting with UPD? Do those from all ethnic origin have the same experience related to UPD or their level of safety on campus? If University Police staff would like additional analysis conducted on the respondents from this survey, Student Life Studies would be happy to assist in conducting that analysis.

The department is encouraged to read all qualitative comments to gain a fuller understanding of the themes presented in this report. Additionally, it is recommended the department 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.

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