

The Clery Act, Campus Safety, and the Perceptions of Senior Student Affairs Officers

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Three hundred and twenty-seven senior student affairs officers (SSAOs) responded to a questionnaire about the effectiveness of the Clery Act and their views of campus safety. As a group, SSAO responses were very homogeneous, resulting in few significant differences when institutional type (public v. private) and status (2-year v. 4-year) were examined.

Since its passage in 1990, the Jeanne Clery Disclosure of Campus Security Policy and Campus Crime Statistics Act (20 U.S.C. §1092 (f)) [hereafter referred to as “the Act”] has continued to be a frequent topic at student affairs and legal issues conferences. During the past 17 years, the Act has been amended several times to expand the reporting requirements and clarify how college administrators report campus crime. Publications designed to help administrators comply with the Act continue to be published (Department of Education, 2005).

The Act’s primary purpose is to require college administrators to report, in a consistent manner, incidents of campus crime (Rund,

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2002). Provisions of the Act, among other things, call for reporting frequencies of selected campus crimes for a 3-year period, making potential students and employees aware of the reports and how to find them, establishing campus security policies and programming, and providing timely warnings when dangerous crimes occur on campus. The goals of the legislation are to (a) provide crime information so that parents, potential students, and potential employees will be better able to evaluate an institution before they make a commitment to it; (b) educate students and employees about campus crime so they might better protect themselves from the risks in their campus environment; and (c) reduce crime (Gregory & Janosik, 2002; Janosik & Plummer, 2005).

During this same time period, researchers have studied institutional responses to the Act. For example, Gehring and Callaway (1997) concluded that college administrators were still unsure of the Act's reporting requirements and many were not including the right material in admission packets, despite considerable efforts to comply with the Act. That same year the National Center for Educational Statistics (1997) reported that 13% of institutions failed to compile annual security report information for students and staff. Kerr (2001) examined public, private not-for-profit and proprietary institutions of higher education in the Midwest and analyzed the extent of compliance with the annual crime report requirements. He reported that while most of the campus security officials indicated they were complying with the Act, "a majority of the institutions did not comply with the requirements of the law, including the requirements established in the 1998 amendments to the law" (p. iv).

The response and reactions of college constituents most affected by the Act have also been studied. Janosik and Gregory (2003) assessed the views of campus law enforcement officers and changes in campus law enforcement practices. A majority of law enforcement officers credited the Act with improving crime-reporting practices, but this same group reported that the Act did little to reduce campus crime and believed that few students made use of the mandated reports required by the Act. More recently, members of the International Association Campus Law Enforcement Administrators (IACLEA) suggested that compliance with the Act has been hindered by a lack of

clear statutory intent and a lack of sufficient federal support (McNeal, 2007).

Other groups such as judicial officers reported closer relationships with campus police but did not believe that students made use of crime statistics in their college choice or personal safety decisions (Gregory & Janosik, 2003). Senior residence life and housing administrators (Gregory & Janosik, 2006), directors of women's centers, and assault victim advocates held similar views (Janosik & Plummer, 2005).

Parents and students have also commented on their knowledge and use of Clery Act information. About 25% of parents and students know of the existence of the Act and less report reading the mandated campus crime reports (Janosik, 2001; Janosik & Gehring, 2003; Janosik, 2004). Less than 10% of parents and students report using campus crime information to help them make decisions about which college to attend (Janosik, 2004).

Absent from the literature are the perceptions of those who serve as senior student affairs officers (SSAOs). These professionals are responsible for the oversight of many of the offices that collect crucial data for accurate Clery Act reporting, establish the overall philosophy for student and parent-administrator relationships, and set program priorities with respect to campus safety. Adding the experiences and impressions of this group to the existing studies done with other major constituents such as students, parents, campus police, and residence life, housing and judicial officers will provide a more complete assessment of the Act's impact on campus safety issues.

The following questions guided this research:

- (1) Are SSAOs aware of the Clery Act?
- (2) What perceptions do SSAOs have about how students use the campus crime information contained in mandated reports?
- (3) What reactions do SSAOs have to the strategies their staffs use to inform students about campus crime issues?
- (4) What perceptions do SSAOs have about their staffs and their Clery-related administrative practices?

- (5) Do these views differ among those SSAOs who work at various institutional types (public v. private) and in various institutional sectors (2- year v. 4-year)?

Specifically then the purpose of this study was to assess SSAOs' awareness of the Act and their perceptions of campus crime prevention strategies. Additionally, we wanted to add to what we know about the Act's effectiveness in meeting its stated goals.

Methods

Participants

To determine the answers to these questions, we solicited the cooperation of the associate executive director of the National Association of Student Personnel Administrators (NASPA). This organization is one of two national associations that serve these professionals. With his help, we identified e-mail addresses for 1,112 SSAOs in the United States. An SSAO was defined by the Association as the voting delegate or senior-most administrator at a member institution. This group of administrators served as the sample for this study.

We tested these e-mail addresses by sending a message to each person on the list. Forty-seven e-mail addresses from the list bounced back and could not be used. The final sample was 1,065.

Instrument

We designed a 33-item questionnaire specifically for this project. Twenty-seven questions addressed this group's knowledge of the Act and assessed respondents' views of the influence of the Act on their administrative operations and student behavior. These questions also elicited information about their perceptions on how college administrators share information, strategies to address campus safety, and relationships with other campus offices. Many of these items were adapted from questionnaires previously developed for other studies (Janosik, 2001; Janosik & Gehring, 2003; Janosik & Gregory, 2003). The reliability coefficient for those questionnaires using the

Chronach's alpha model averaged .73 and appeared very stable across time given the repeated use of similar items.

We also included a demographic section consisting of questions to determine the respondent's institutional type (public v. private) and institutional type (2-year v. 4-year). Neither institutional location of employment nor gender of the respondents was collected.

Six college administrators reviewed the final questionnaire to assess its clarity and content validity. This group was selected because of their knowledge of the Act and its reporting requirements. All were satisfied with the structure and clarity of the questionnaire and made no suggestions or recommendations for improvement.

Procedures

Once the sample was identified, participants were sent an e-mail inviting them to participate and directing them to a questionnaire posted on the Internet. Participants were asked to complete the questionnaire with the understanding that their names and institutions would not be identified.

Reminder e-mail messages were sent 7 and 12 days after the initial contact. Nonrespondents were encouraged to participate. Responders were thanked for their replies. No additional follow-up beyond these two reminders was conducted.

Using this protocol, 351 (32.9%) of the 1,065 SSAOs who received the survey e-mail responded. When their responses were examined, we discovered that 24 (2.2%) respondents were not SSAOs. These questionnaires were eliminated from the analyses. The number of useable responses totaled 327 (30.7%). The demographic characteristics of the respondent group are shown in Table 1.

Table 1
Demographic Characteristics of the Respondents ($N = 327$)

Characteristic	<i>n</i>	%
Institutional Type ($n = 326$)		
Public	141	43
Private	185	57
Institutional Sector ($n = 325$)		
2-Year	40	12
4-Year	285	88

Data Analysis

We calculated frequencies on the demographic data to describe the respondent group. To determine significant differences between groups, we conducted chi-square tests of independence on the two independent variables of interest (institutional type and institutional sector). The level of significance for these tests was set at 0.05. To ensure correct interpretations of the data, pairwise chi-square tests were completed to examine specific between group differences on items where an overall significant difference was found.

In addition, Phi and Cramer's V were calculated to determine the relative strength of these associations. Phi and Cramer's V coefficient represent measures of strength of association between two categorical variables and thus were used as an index of substantive importance of the relationship, as opposed to the chi-square statistic that is used for determining the statistical significance. Cohen's (1988, p. 227) suggestion for interpreting Phi and Cramer's V coefficient is as follows: $.10 < \phi < .30 =$ small effect size, $.30 < \phi < .50 =$ medium effect size and $\phi > .50 =$ large effect size. Phi is the preferred statistic when analyzing 2×2 contingency tables. A small size effect signals that while a difference may be statistically significant, the finding may not be as important in practice.

Results

Knowledge of the Clery Act's Existence

Three hundred and seventeen (98%) SSAOs were aware of the Act. SSAOs at 4-year institutions (99%, $n = 281$) were more likely to know about the Clery Act than their colleagues at 2-year institutions (90%, $n = 36$). This difference was significant ($N = 325$, $C^2 = 10.79$, $df = 2$, $p = .01$). Phi was calculated at .182 and indicated a small effect size.

Use of Mandated Reports

Table 2 displays the responses concerning use of mandated reports. Overall, 85% of SSAOs ($n = 276$) believed that their students received the institution's crime summary in their admission packets. About 10% ($n = 31$) thought that students used this summary when making their college choice decisions, while 64% ($n = 203$) were unsure if students used this information or not.

About 93% of SSAOs ($n = 303$) believed their students received the complete annual report and 15% of respondents ($n = 48$) believed that students read this material. Small percentages of respondents thought that information contained in the annual reports influenced crime prevention behavior such as how students protected their personal property (20%), how students protected themselves (22%), and how students moved around their campuses (18%). And finally, 25% ($n = 71$) of SSAOs believed that the confidence students have in their campus police would increase if they read the annual report. The difference between SSAOs was significant when institutional sector was examined ($N = 284$, $C^2 = 7.46$, $df = 2$, $p = .024$). SSAOs at 4-year institutions (27%, $n = 68$) were much more likely to hold this view than were their colleagues at 2-year institutions (9%, $n = 3$) ($N = 173$, $C^2 = 7.07$, $df = 1$, $p = .008$). Phi statistic was calculated at .202 indicating a small size effect.

Table 2
Chi-Square Results on SSAO Perceptions of
Student Use of Mandated Reports

Item	Yes	No	Don't Know	Chi-Square	df	p
Believe students receive mandated crime summary in their admissions packet						
<i>Institutional Type</i>						
Public	122 (87%)	12 (9%)	6 (4%)	1.96	2	0.37
Private	154 (84%)	15 (8%)	15 (8%)			
Total	276 (85%)	27 (8%)	21 (6%)			
<i>Institutional Sector</i>						
2-Year	35 (88%)	2 (5%)	3 (7%)	0.71	2	0.70
4-Year	241 (85%)	25 (9%)	18 (6%)			
Total	276 (85%)	27 (8%)	21 (7%)			
Believe that this summary influences students' college choice decisions						
<i>Institutional Type</i>						
Public	16 (12%)	38 (28%)	82 (60%)	1.68	2	0.43
Private	15 (8%)	45 (25%)	120 (67%)			
Total	31 (10%)	83 (26%)	202 (64%)			
<i>Institutional Sector</i>						
2-Year	3 (8%)	16 (41%)	20 (51%)	5.01	2	0.82
4-Year	28 (10%)	67 (24%)	182 (66%)			
Total	31 (10%)	83 (26%)	202 (64%)			
Believe students receive the institution's mandated annual crime report						
<i>Institutional Type</i>						
Public	133 (94%)	4 (3%)	4 (3%)	0.57	2	0.75
Private	170 (92%)	6 (3%)	8 (4%)			
Total	303 (93%)	10 (3%)	12 (4%)			
<i>Institutional Sector</i>						
2-Year	37 (92%)	1 (3%)	2 (5%)	0.26	2	0.88
4-Year	266 (93%)	9 (3%)	10 (4%)			
Total	303 (93%)	10 (3%)	12 (4%)			
Believe that students read the institution's annual report						
<i>Institutional Type</i>						
Public	15 (11%)	18 (13%)	105 (76%)	3.61	2	0.16
Private	32 (18%)	28 (15%)	122 (67%)			
Total	47 (15%)	46 (14%)	227 (71%)			
<i>Institutional Sector</i>						
2-Year	2 (5%)	8 (20%)	30 (75%)	4.03	2	0.13
4-Year	45 (16%)	38 (14%)	197 (70%)			
Total	47 (15%)	46 (14%)	227 (71%)			

Table 2, continued

Item	Yes	No	Don't Know	Chi-Square	df	p
Think that annual report helps change the way students protect property						
<i>Institutional Type</i>						
Public	24 (20%)	59 (48%)	39 (32%)	4.01	2	0.13
Private	32 (20%)	96 (58%)	36 (22%)			
Total	56 (20%)	155 (54%)	75 (26%)			
<i>Institutional Sector</i>						
2-Year	7 (21%)	18 (55%)	8 (24%)	0.11	2	0.95
4-Year	49 (19%)	137 (54%)	67 (27%)			
Total	56 (20%)	155 (54%)	75 (26%)			
Think that annual report helps change the way students protect themselves						
<i>Institutional Type</i>						
Public	27 (22%)	58 (48%)	37 (30%)	1.43	2	0.49
Private	36 (22%)	88 (54%)	40 (24%)			
Total	63 (22%)	146 (51%)	77 (27%)			
<i>Institutional Sector</i>						
2-Year	7 (21%)	19 (58%)	7 (21%)	0.77	2	0.68
4-Year	56 (22%)	127 (50%)	70 (28%)			
Total	63 (22%)	146 (51%)	77 (27%)			
Think that the annual report helps students make decisions about how they move around their campuses						
<i>Institutional Type</i>						
Public	22 (18%)	62 (51%)	37 (31%)	3.73	2	0.16
Private	30 (18%)	99 (61%)	34 (21%)			
Total	52 (18%)	161 (57%)	71 (25%)			
<i>Institutional Sector</i>						
2-Year	5 (15%)	21 (64%)	7 (21%)	0.74	2	
4-Year	47 (18%)	140 (56%)	64 (26%)			
Total	52 (18%)	161 (58%)	71 (24%)			
Believe that if students read the annual report it will increase confidence in campus police						
<i>Institutional Type</i>						
Public	35 (29%)	37 (30%)	50 (41%)	3.22	2	0.20
Private	36 (22%)	65 (40%)	62 (37%)			
Total	71 (25%)	102 (36%)	111 (39%)			
<i>Institutional Sector</i>						
2-Year	3 (9%)	18 (54%)	12 (36%)	7.46	2	0.02*
4-Year	68 (27%)	84 (36%)	99 (39%)			
Total	71 (25%)	102 (36%)	111 (39%)			

* Significant finding at the $p < .05$ level.

+ Significant finding at the $p < .01$ level of significance.

Perceptions of Campus Safety Strategies

Survey results related to perceptions of campus safety strategies appear in Table 3. Seventy-three percent of respondents ($n = 231$) thought that students read flyers, posters, news articles or e-mail messages about campus safety. A significant difference was found when institutional type was examined ($N = 231$, $C^2 = 8.81$, $df = 2$, $p = .01$). SSAOs ($n = 138$, 77%) at private institutions were much more optimistic about student behavior in this regard. SSAOs (29%) at public institutions were more likely to indicate they did not know ($N = 41$, $C^2 = 7.29$, $df = 1$, $p = .012$). Phi was calculated at .156 indicating a small size effect.

Eighty-four percent ($n = 270$) believed that students would attend campus safety or crime prevention programs. Roughly 65% ($n = 202$) thought that this type of educational campaign would change the way students protect their property. Seventy percent of respondents ($n = 219$) thought that the information contained in these programs and educational material would change the way students protect themselves from harm and the way they moved around the campus ($n = 175$, 56%). Finally, 58% ($n = 178$) of SSAOs believed that this type of educational material increased student confidence in campus police. These results are shown in Table 3.

Perceptions of College Administrators and Administrative Practice

Almost all SSAOs (99%, $n = 321$), believed that college administrators were being candid about campus crime. In a related question, 3% ($n = 8$) of respondents thought that administrators had attempted to hide crime on their campuses. In these eight cases, SSAOs identified public affairs officers and presidents as the administrators most likely to be responsible. Another eight respondents were unsure if crime information had been intentionally hidden.

Five percent ($n = 16$) of SSAOs thought that the Act was related to reducing crime on their campuses. SSAOs at private campuses (62%, $n = 113$) were less likely to hold this view than SSAOs at public 4-year institutions (55%, $n = 77$), but these differences were not significant.

Table 3
Chi-Square Results on SSAO Perceptions
of Campus Safety Strategies

Item	Yes	No	Don't Know	Chi-Square	df	p
Think students would read flyers, posters, news articles, or email about campus safety						
<i>Institutional Type</i>						
Public	93 (67%)	5 (4%)	41 (29%)	8.81	2	0.01*
Private	138 (77%)	12 (7%)	29 (16%)			
Total	231 (73%)	17 (5%)	70 (22%)			
<i>Institutional Sector</i>						
2-Year	25 (64%)	1 (3%)	13 (33%)	3.68	2	0.16
4-Year	206 (74%)	16 (6%)	57 (20%)			
Total	231 (73%)	17 (5%)	70 (22%)			
Think their student would attend a campus crime prevention/awareness program						
<i>Institutional Type</i>						
Public	114 (81%)	19 (14%)	7 (5%)	2.04	2	0.36
Private	156 (85%)	23 (13%)	4 (2%)			
Total	270 (84%)	42 (13%)	11 (3%)			
<i>Institutional Sector</i>						
2-Year	30 (75%)	7 (18%)	3 (7%)	3.36	2	0.19
4-Year	240 (85%)	35 (12%)	8 (3%)			
Total	270 (84%)	42 (13%)	11 (3%)			
Think these materials and programs would change the way students protect property						
<i>Institutional Type</i>						
Public	86 (64%)	20 (15%)	28 (21%)	3.71	2	0.16
Private	116 (66%)	36 (21%)	24 (13%)			
Total	202 (65%)	56 (18%)	52 (17%)			
<i>Institutional Sector</i>						
2-Year	26 (67%)	4 (10%)	9 (23%)	2.58	2	0.28
4-Year	176 (65%)	52 (19%)	43 (16%)			
Total	202 (65%)	56 (18%)	52 (17%)			
Think these materials and programs would change the way the students protect themselves						
<i>Institutional Type</i>						
Public	89 (66%)	16 (12%)	29 (22%)	4.76	2	0.09
Private	130 (73%)	25 (14%)	22 (12%)			
Total	219 (70%)	41 (13%)	51 (16%)			
<i>Institutional Sector</i>						
2-Year	27 (69%)	4 (10%)	8 (21%)	0.78	2	0.68
4-Year	192 (71%)	37 (14%)	43 (15%)			
Total	219 (70%)	41 (13%)	51 (17%)			

Table 3, continued

Item	Yes	No	Don't Know	Chi-Square	df	p
Think these materials and programs would change the way the student moves around the campus						
<i>Institutional Type</i>						
Public	72 (54%)	34 (25%)	28 (21%)	4.24	2	0.12
Private	103 (58%)	53 (30%)	27 (12%)			
Total	175 (56%)	87 (28%)	56 (16%)			
<i>Institutional Sector</i>						
2-Year	22 (56%)	8 (21%)	9 (23%)	2.25	2	0.32
4-Year	153 (56%)	79 (29%)	41 (15%)			
Total	175 (56%)	87 (28%)	50 (16%)			
Believe that the information shared through these programs and media campaigns increase confidence in campus police						
<i>Institutional Type</i>						
Public	73 (55%)	18 (14%)	42 (31%)	5.51	2	0.06
Private	105 (60%)	34 (19%)	36 (21%)			
Total	178 (58%)	52 (17%)	78 (25%)			
<i>Institutional Sector</i>						
2-Year	16 (42%)	8 (21%)	14 (37%)	4.56	2	0.10
4-Year	8 (27%)	63 (22%)	143 (51%)			
Total	76 (24%)	75 (24%)	166 (52%)			

* Significant finding at the $p < .05$ level of significance.
 + Significant finding at the $p < .01$ level of significance.

On the other hand, 65% of respondents ($n = 208$) believed that the Act had improved crime reporting by the campus police. Responses of SSAOs differed significantly based on institutional type ($N = 320$, $C^2 = 13.28$, $df = 2$, $p = .001$). A pairwise chi-square analysis revealed that SSAOs at private institutions were much more likely to believe that better crime reporting resulted from Clery Act compliance, while SSAOs at public institutions were more likely to report that they did not know ($N = 243$, $C^2 = 13.27$, $df = 1$, $p = .001$). Phi was calculated at .234, indicating a small effect size. That said, 40% of SSAOs thought that the quality of crime awareness programming had improved because of the Act.

Finally, about 24% ($n = 76$) of respondents thought that the process of complying with the Act fostered better relationships with the campus

Table 4
Chi-Square Results on SSAO Perceptions of
College Administrators and Their Administrative Practice

Item	Yes	No	Don't Know	Chi-Square	df	p
Believe administrators are candid about campus crime issues						
<i>Institutional Type</i>						
Public	139 (99%)	2 (1%)	0 (0%)	0.07	1	0.79
Private	182 (99%)	2 (1%)	0 (0%)			
Total	321 (99%)	4 (1%)	0 (0%)			
<i>Institutional Sector</i>						
2-Year	40 (100%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	0.57	2	0.45
4-Year	281 (99%)	4 (1%)	0 (0%)			
Total	321 (99%)	4 (1%)	0 (0%)			
Believe that administrators at their institution have attempted to hide crime						
<i>Institutional Type</i>						
Public	3 (2%)	134 (95%)	4 (3%)	0.26	2	0.88
Private	5 (3%)	175 (95%)	4 (2%)			
Total	8 (3%)	309 (95%)	8 (3%)			
<i>Institutional Sector</i>						
2-Year	1 (3%)	38 (95%)	1 (3%)	0.01	2	0.99
4-Year	7 (3%)	271 (95%)	7 (3%)			
Total	8 (3%)	309 (95%)	8 (3%)			
Believe that Clergy-related activities increase confidence in campus police						
<i>Institutional Type</i>						
Public	27 (20%)	30 (22%)	79 (58%)	3.44	2	0.18
Private	49 (27%)	45 (25%)	87 (48%)			
Total	76 (24%)	75 (24%)	166 (52%)			
<i>Institutional Sector</i>						
2-Year	1 (3%)	12 (33%)	23 (64%)	10.25	2	0.01+
4-Year	75 (27%)	63 (22%)	143 (51%)			
Total	76 (24%)	75 (24%)	166 (52%)			
Believe that the Clergy Act has reduced crime on their campuses						
<i>Institutional Type</i>						
Public	7 (5%)	77 (55%)	56 (40%)	1.94	2	0.38
Private	9 (5%)	113 (62%)	59 (33%)			
Total	16 (5%)	190 (59%)	115 (36%)			
<i>Institutional Sector</i>						
2-Year	2 (5%)	26 (65%)	11 (26%)	1.14	2	0.57
4-Year	14 (5%)	164 (58%)	104 (37%)			
Total	16 (5%)	190 (59%)	115 (36%)			

Table 4, continued

Item	Yes	No	Don't Know	Chi-Square	df	p
Believe that the Clery Act has improved campus crime reporting						
<i>Institutional Type</i>						
Public	80 (58%)	33 (24%)	25 (18%)	13.28	2	0.01+
Private	128 (70%)	44 (24%)	10 (6%)			
Total	208 (65%)	77 (24%)	35 (11%)			
<i>Institutional Sector</i>						
2-Year	21 (54%)	11 (28%)	7 (18%)	3.16	2	0.20
4-Year	187 (66%)	66 (24%)	28 (20%)			
Total	208 (65%)	77 (24%)	35 (11%)			
Believe that the Clery Act has improved the quality of crime awareness programming						
<i>Institutional Type</i>						
Public	56 (41%)	57 (41%)	25 (18%)	4.81	2	0.09
Private	73 (40%)	92 (50%)	19 (10%)			
Total	129 (40%)	149 (46%)	44 (14%)			
<i>Institutional Sector</i>						
2-Year	14 (36%)	20 (51%)	5 (13%)	0.46	2	0.79
4-Year	115 (40%)	129 (46%)	39 (14%)			
Total	129 (40%)	149 (46%)	44 (14%)			
Believe that the Clery Act has fostered better relationships with campus police						
<i>Institutional Type</i>						
Public	40 (29%)	76 (57%)	19 (13%)	0.26	2	0.88
Private	50 (28%)	106 (60%)	22 (12%)			
Total	90 (29%)	184 (58%)	41 (13%)			
<i>Institutional Sector</i>						
2-Year	10 (30%)	23 (61%)	5 (13%)	0.11	2	0.95
4-Year	80 (29%)	161 (58%)	36 (13%)			
Total	90 (29%)	184 (58%)	41 (13%)			
Believe that the Clery Act has encouraged greater crime reporting by students						
<i>Institutional Type</i>						
Public	17 (12%)	73 (52%)	51 (36%)	2.99	2	0.39
Private	16 (9%)	107 (59%)	56 (31%)			
Total	33 (10%)	180 (56%)	107 (33%)			
<i>Institutional Sector</i>						
2-Year	4 (10%)	24 (60%)	12 (30%)	0.42	2	0.93
4-Year	29 (10%)	156 (56%)	96 (40%)			
Total	33 (10%)	180 (56%)	107 (33%)			

* Significant finding at the $p < .05$ level of significance.
 + Significant finding at the $p < .01$ level of significance.

police, and a lower percentage ($n = 33$, 10%) thought that students would be more likely to report crime as a result. These results can be found in Table 4.

Discussion

There are several important findings in this study. First, SSAO responses, when compared to other student affairs professionals who completed the same questionnaire, are very homogenous. Fewer statistical differences were found in this study when compared to other groups such as parents, students, campus law enforcement officers, residence life professionals, judicial officers, and sexual assault advocates. This could be because SSAOs have more experience in student affairs (relative to other administrative groups) and were more likely to have considered the ramifications of policy making on their respective campuses. It could also be that because of their broad responsibilities they have ceded issues related to campus safety to other officials and thus tended to respond based upon the common wisdom about these issues, or from what they have read about these topics in general news reports.

A very small percentage of SSAOs (10%) thought that students used the reports of crime statistics to make admissions decision. However, 64% of SSAOs said they were not sure. As previously noted, we surmise that the distance between the SSAOs and the admissions process may well account for this difference. In light of recent tragedies involving campus safety, gaining more knowledge about the student decision-making processes regarding admissions may be valuable for SSAOs as they make policy, program, and financial decisions.

Ninety-eight percent of SSAOs were aware of the Act but community college SSAOs were statistically less likely to know about the Act. Even though community colleges tend to have less crime than 4-year institutions, this difference was a surprise. The Act applies to all types of institutions regardless of sector.

Additionally, when other significant differences were discovered, SSAOs at private and 4-year institutions were more optimistic about

the effects the Act and the effectiveness of administrative practice. SSAOs at public institutions were less sure. It is likely that institutional size may have played a role in these results. SSAOs at public institutions, which tend to enroll greater numbers of students, may be less in tune with how the Act and campus safety strategies affect student behaviors.

Finally, it is worth noting that all of the significant differences in this study were associated with small effect sizes. This means that while the differences may be statistically significant, these differences may not mean much in daily practice. The real value of these data is that they help construct an important consensus. When viewed from this larger perspective, indeed, these findings have important implications for practice.

Implications for Practice

SSAOs report that mandated summaries and annual reports are not likely to be read and are not likely to affect student behavior. In the opinion of victim advocates; law enforcement, housing and residence life, and judicial officers; students and their parents, and now SSAOs, this required reporting does little if anything to reduce campus crime (Janosik, 2001; Janosik & Gehring, 2003; Janosik, 2004). The majority of these same groups, however, believe that the Act does improve the crime reporting process. The body of research described in this article is remarkably consistent in this regard. National professional associations such as NASPA—Student Affairs Administrators in Higher Education, American College Personnel Association—College Student Educators International, the Association for Student Conduct Administration, and others should spend more time and effort sharing this information with state legislatures, Congress and the federal administration. Efforts by these professional associations have been more reactive than proactive. Thus, elected officials have been more responsive to victim advocates.

According to the perceptions of respondents in this study, passive ad campaigns and campus programming that focus on the timely reporting of crime activity are three times more likely to influence student safety-related behaviors. Students, in two separate studies, also share this view (Janosik, 2001; Janosik & Gehring, 2003).

Professional associations should produce such materials to be adapted and adopted on individual campuses. We recommend that IACLEA take the lead in this effort in cooperation with the associations previously noted. We believe that the Clery Act is an important law that can have a sanguine impact on improving campus safety. However, a change of direction in the focus of this Act, supported by these constituencies and others, is necessary for this to occur.

Conclusion

All research suffers from certain limitations, and this study is no exception. Self-reported data are not as reliable as observed behavior. Because we could not cross-validate the respondent group with the population of SSAOs, we cannot be sure that results are representative and thus, generalizable. Despite these shortcomings, we have no reason to suspect the trustworthiness of these data and believe that they point to several important conclusions listed below.

Given these results, one should conclude that continuing to focus on increasing the categories of crimes reported, as has recently been approved by Congress, would not benefit prospective students or community members. Indeed, the findings of this body of research suggest just the opposite is true. The research seems to indicate that, for the most part, the energy and emphasis devoted to the crime reporting requirements of the Act are ineffective and misplaced. If the Clery Act's purpose is to educate, change behavior, and protect college students, policy makers and college administrators would be better served by focusing their attention on the development of services and programs that seem to make some difference. In addition, it would be helpful to create better support structures for administrators that may still be struggling to comply with the frequently changing requirements of the Act.

Furthermore, given what students and others report, we have reason to believe the passive ad campaigns do a better job of changing student behavior. More should be done, however, to identify best practices based on appropriate outcome measures.

In all of the studies mentioned in this article, a small but important number of respondents believe that college administrators are not candid and intentionally hide information from the public. Infrequently reported incidents such as the one that occurred at Eastern Michigan University, where university officials failed to notify the university community that a murder had occurred on campus, lend credence to those views among students, parents, legislators, and the general public. These cases become fodder for the popular press and reinforce this conventional wisdom. Such behavior is, of course, abhorrent and cannot be tolerated. It is counterproductive and could lead to more onerous legislation and unfunded mandates. In addition, the hiding of campus crime by college and university officials, particularly for the purposes of preserving some image of safety and pristine ivy-covered sanctuaries, is short-sighted and will lead to increased liability.

We need to examine administrative practice more closely to learn whether this minority opinion is accurate. Too often, policy and administrative procedures are driven by emotional responses to a tragedy, a desire to appear responsive, or a hasty search for a quick fix, such as allowing students and others to carry guns on campus. By attending to the findings of this study, college administrators will be able to develop more effective crime reduction strategies that will result in safer college campuses. Failing to respond to the finding of this and other studies will do just the opposite and will ultimately be injurious to those we seek to protect.

While changes in campus administrative practice are especially needed, so too are efforts at the state and national level to seek training, change, and positive efforts to work together. Examples of such efforts are those of the Governor of Virginia. Governor Tim Kaine, in response to the Virginia Tech tragedy, developed a statewide Campus Safety Consortium and has sponsored two statewide Campus Preparedness Conferences, each paid for by the Commonwealth and attended by more than 600 persons from around the state. There are likely other efforts underway elsewhere that will also improve campus safety.

Finally, we know that much has changed on college campuses during the last year with respect to campus safety programming given the shootings at Virginia Tech and Northern Illinois University. Students are being taught how to recognize high-risk students who may present dangers to others, buildings are being retrofitted with additional security devices, and a variety of technologies are being deployed to help with timely warnings when violent acts occur. These changes will cost tens of millions of dollars. Only time will tell if these efforts will bear fruit. No program, no facility modification, and no amount of technology can prevent crime from happening on campuses, but these efforts have much greater potential than continuing to focus on crime statistic reporting.

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