

THE UNIVERSITY OF TEXAS AT ARLINGTON POLICE DEPARTMENT



CUSTOMER SATISFACTION SURVEY SPRING 2012

Customer Satisfaction Survey for the University of Texas at Arlington Police Department Spring, 2012

Introduction

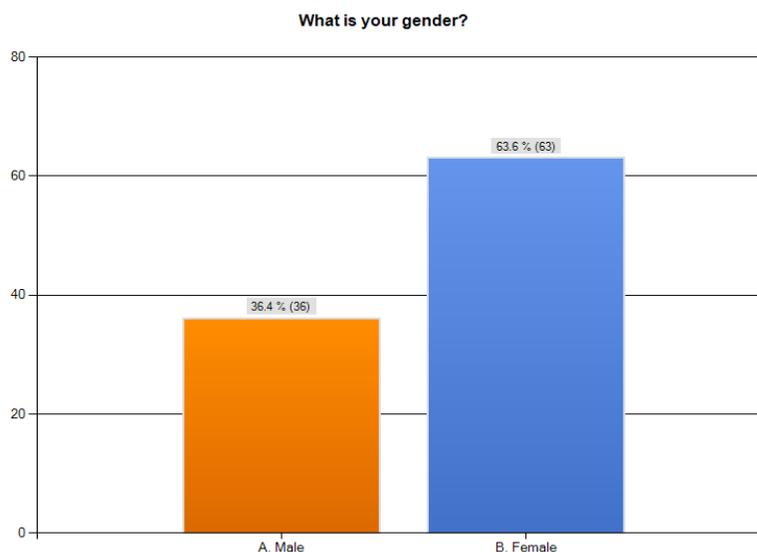
The reporting of major incidents on America's college and university campuses in recent years has raised public safety concerns for the academic environment. Reporting of these incidents has highlighted a growing awareness and apprehension for safety as a reality of life on campus. As a proactive effort, the University of Texas at Arlington (UTA) Police Department conducted a survey in the spring of 2012 to better understand the perceptions of university constituents (students, staff, faculty, and administrators) regarding crime and safety, as well as attitudes toward the police department. The campus survey reported below is a small representation of those perceptions and attitudes.

Method

The sampling frame consisted of the broad population of University of Texas at Arlington students, faculty, staff, and administration. This constituent group was surveyed through the use of an on-line questionnaire using SurveyMonkey. An invitation to the UTA population at large was generated through the electronic distribution of the University newsletters via email. The invitation to participate was accompanied with a direct and active web-link to the on-line survey. Access to the survey began on April 16, 2012 and the survey was ended and locked on May 14, 2012. Each student, faculty, staff, and administrator who checked their email had an opportunity to participate in the study. There were a total of 101 respondents; however, not all respondents answered all questions.

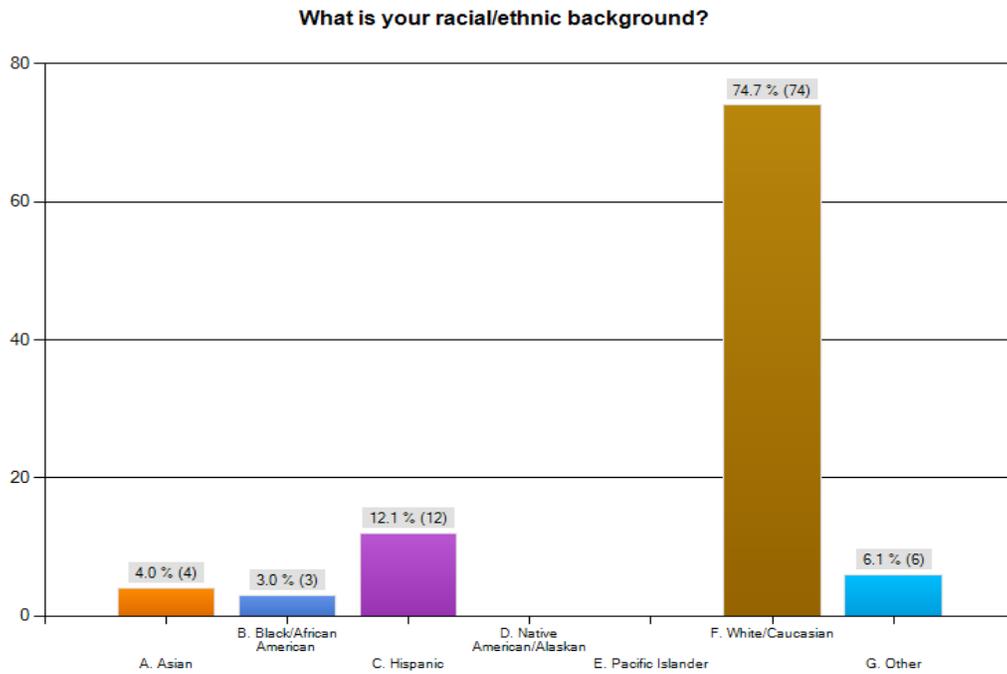
Demographics

Self-reported demographic data obtained from respondents were classified into categories to represent constituent gender, race, and institutional status. Of the respondents, 63.6% claimed to be female and 36.4% claimed to be male.



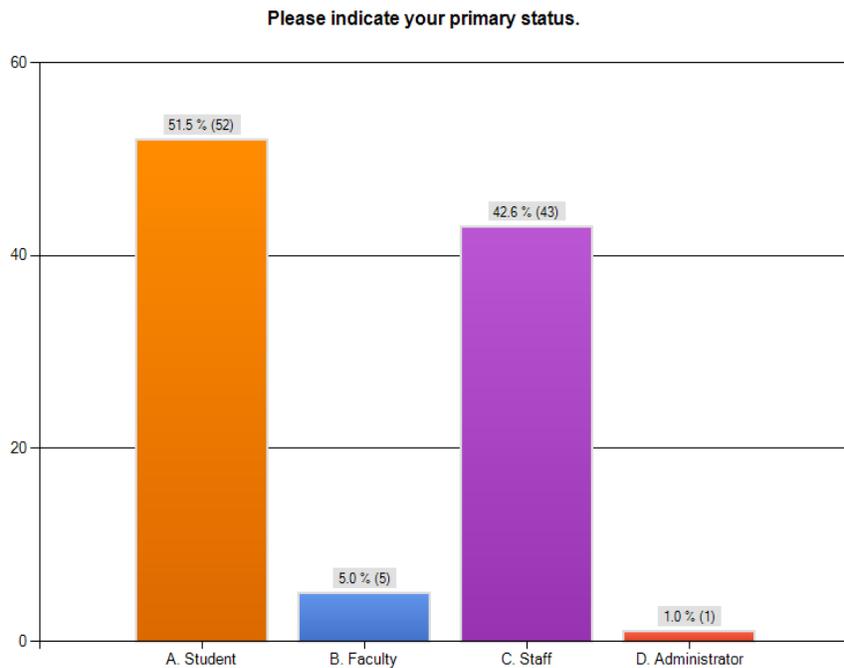
Answered Question - 99

Race/ethnicity distribution included 74.7% white, 4% Asian, 3% African-American, 12.1% Hispanic, and 6.1% indicated “Other.”



Answered Question - 99

The majority of the sample claimed primary status as “Student” (51.5%), while 42.6% claimed “Staff,” 5% claimed “Faculty” and 1% claimed “Administrator.”

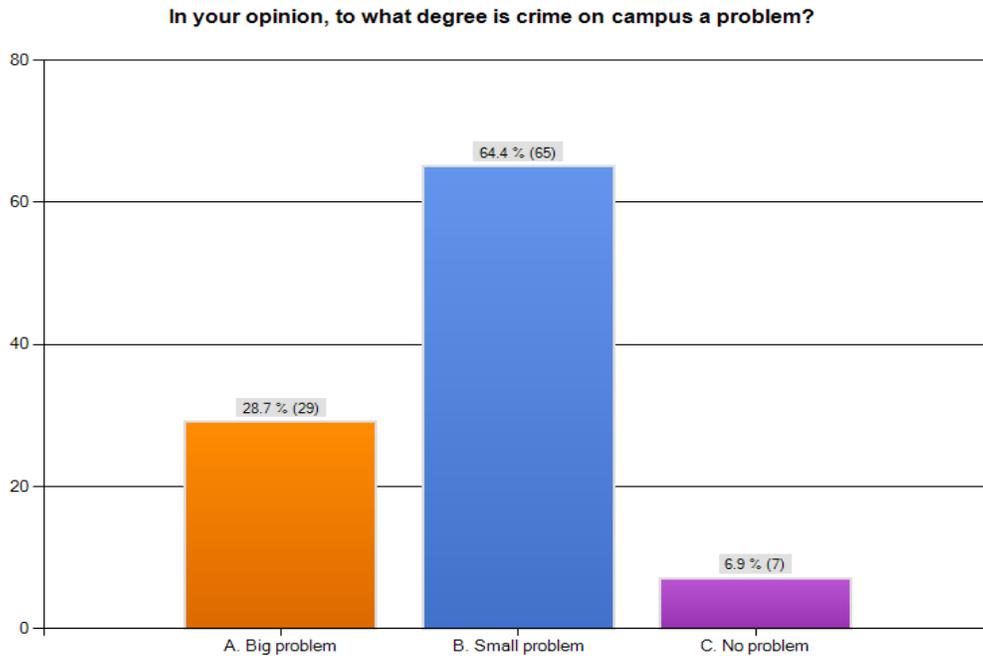


Answered Question - 101

Results

Perception of crime and safety

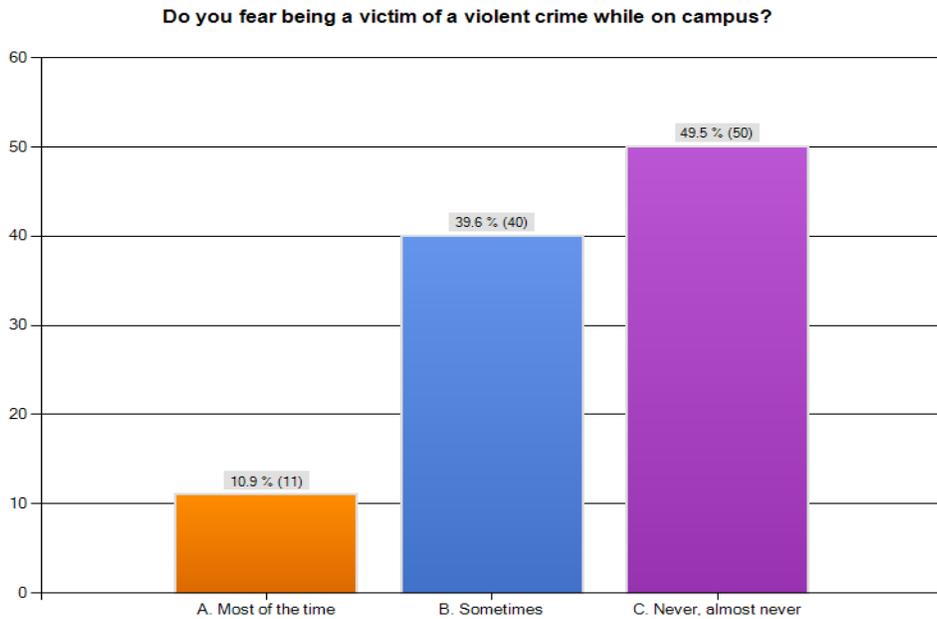
In order to measure individuals' perceptions of crime on campus, constituents were first asked to evaluate the degree they perceive crime to be a problem on campus (no problem, small problem, or big problem). A majority of respondents (64.4%) believe the degree of crime on campus is a small problem, whereas 28.7% of respondents believe crime is a big problem. The remaining 6.9% believe that crime is not a problem on campus.



Answered Question - 101

The consensus with all constituent groups is that crime is a small problem on campus. Of the groups, 51.9 % of students, 76.7% of staff, 80% of faculty, and 100% of administration answered accordingly. More females, overall as a group (68.3%), believe crime is a small problem on campus when compared to males (58.3%). As a group, white or Caucasians had the highest percentage of respondents (70.3%) who believe that crime is a small problem on campus compared to the other racial or ethnic groups.

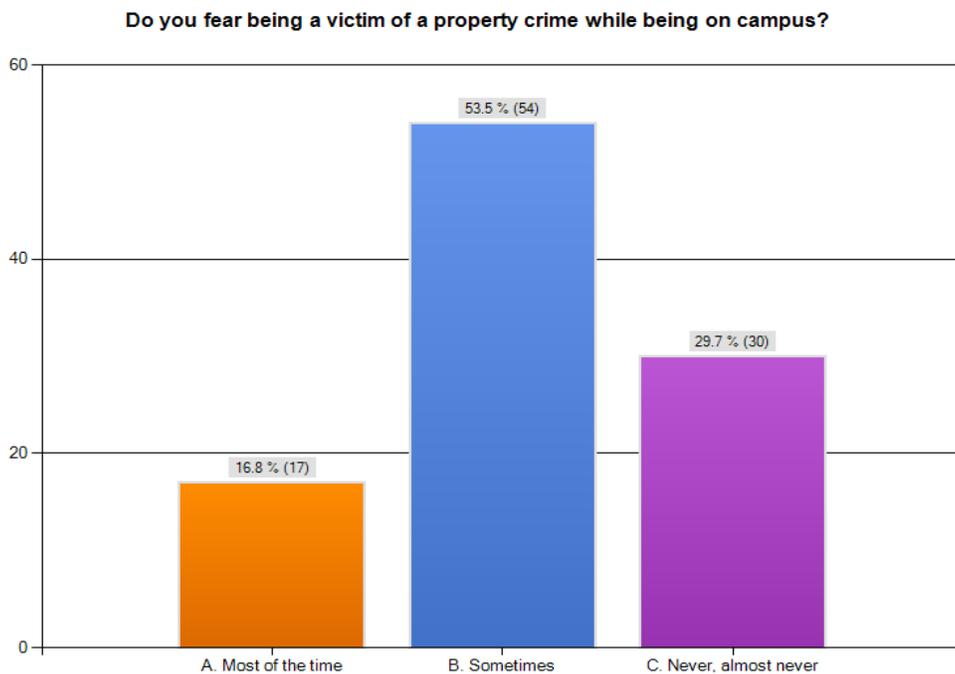
Constituents were then asked if they feared being a victim of either a violent crime or a property crime while being on campus (most of the time, sometimes, never or almost never). Violent crime refers to acts which involve physical harm or serious threats of physical harm. Property crime refers to damage to or theft of personal property without inflicting harm or threats of harm. In regard to violent crime, 49.5% of respondents never feared being a victim of a violent crime while on campus; whereas 39.6% responded sometimes and 10.9% responded that they feared being a victim of a violent crime most of the time.



Answered Question - 101

As a group, “Staff” had the highest percentage who responded (60.5%) never fearing being a victim of a violent crime when compared to the other constituent groups. More males, overall as a group (52.8%), answered that they never fear being a victim of a violent crime when compared to females (49.2%). White or Caucasians had the highest percentage of respondents (55.4%) who answered that they never fear being a victim of a violent crime compared to the other racial or ethnic groups.

As for property crime, constituent responses indicated that the majority (53.5%) feared being the victim of a property crime sometimes, 29.7% responded never, and 16.8% responded most of the time.

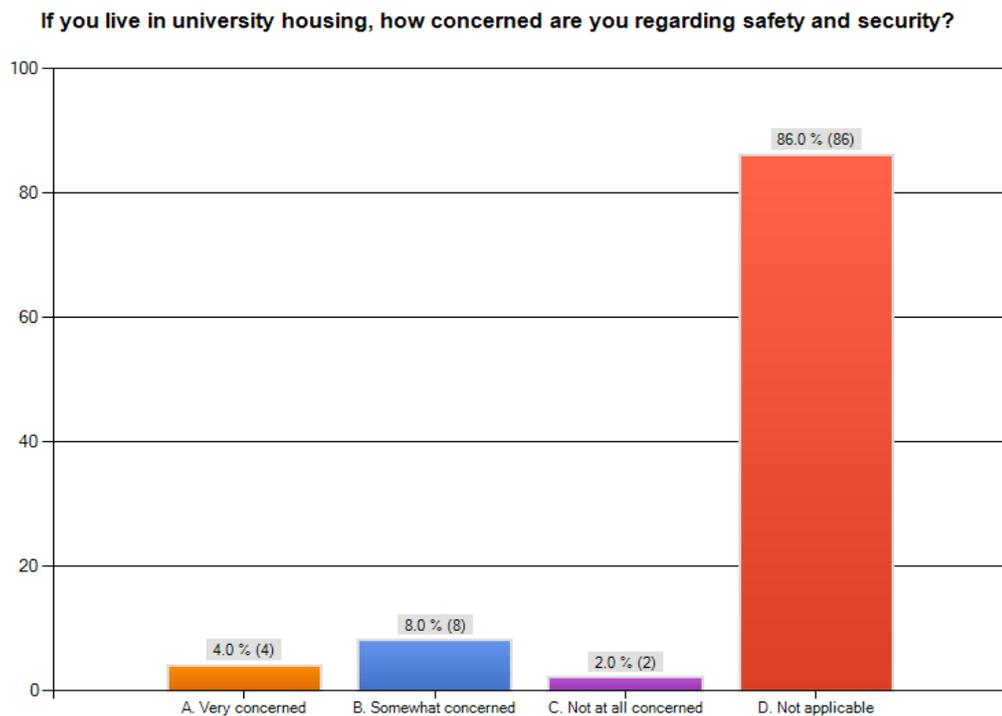


Answered Question - 101

Faculty, overall as a group, had the highest percentage of respondents (100%) who reported fearing being a victim of a property crime sometimes. More females, overall as a group (57.1%), answered that they fear being a victim of a property crime sometimes when compared to males (47.2%). Those indicating “Other” (66.7%) or African American (66.7%) answered more often that they fear being a victim of a property crime sometimes compared to the other racial or ethnic groups.

University Housing

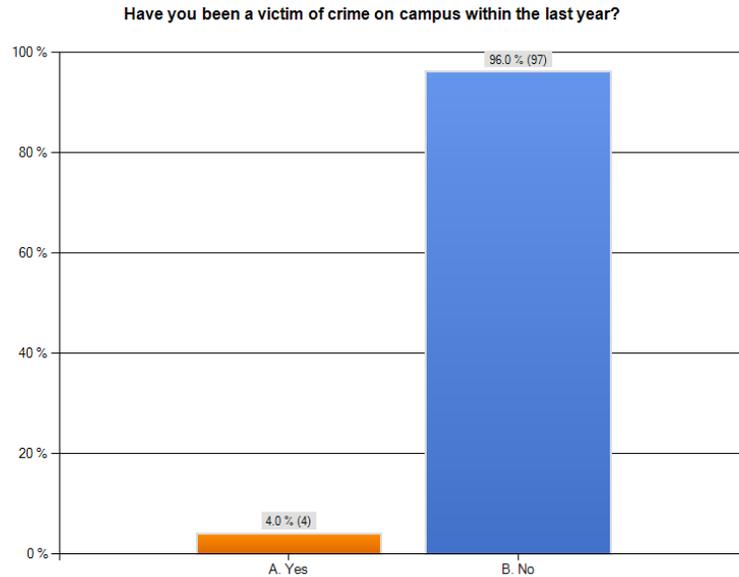
Respondents were asked if they lived in university housing, how concerned were they regarding safety and security (very concerned, somewhat concerned, not at all concerned). Of those who indicated they lived in university housing ($n = 14$), most (57.1%) responded somewhat concerned, 28.6% responded very concerned, and 14.3% indicated they were not concerned at all.



Answered Question – 100

Actual Victimization

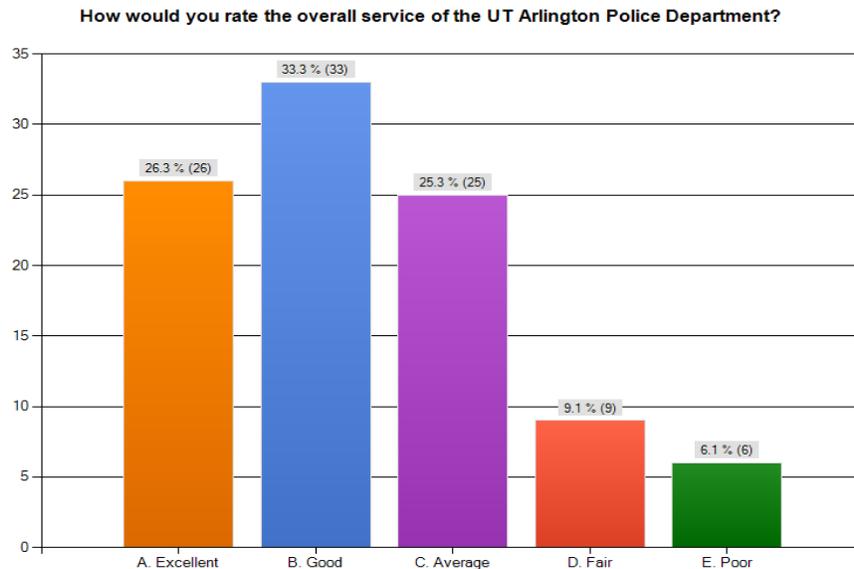
Constituents were asked if they had been a victim of crime within the last year. A small proportion (4%) of the respondents reported being victims of crime ($n=4$), whereas 96% indicated that they had not been victims.



Answered Question – 101

Attitudes toward the Police Department

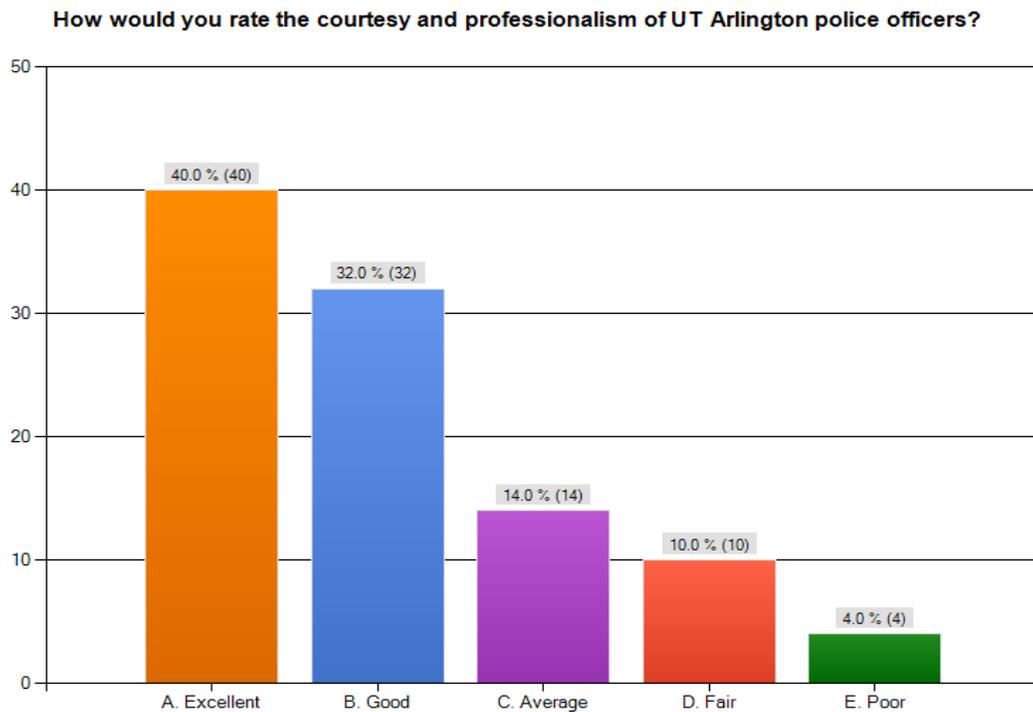
To obtain an overall assessment of the campus police, constituents were first asked to rate the overall service of the UTA police department (excellent, good, average, fair, poor). A majority of respondents (59.6%) rated overall service as being either excellent (26.3%) or good (33.3%). Slightly more than 25% responded average, 9.1% responded as fair, and 6.1% reported service as being poor.



Answered Question - 99

Constituents were then asked to rate the courtesy and helpfulness of UTA police officers (excellent, good, average, fair, poor). A majority of respondents (72%) rated courtesy and helpfulness as being

either excellent (40%) or good (32%). Another 14% responded average, 10% responded as fair, and 4% reported courtesy and helpfulness as being poor.



Comments and Suggestions

- Be around more. I have only seen two police officers this whole semester on campus. It was on the first day of classes. I go at night, so that worries me even more.
- I am not worried myself, I am male. I worry for the females. It seems every week a female is reporting an incident. Instead of watching meters and worrying about stickers on cars, MAKE A PRESENCE! I see thug looking people driving the campus streets. I see no police while students walk back to our vehicles at night.
- Protecting our bicycles more, maybe talking with UTA to installing proper bicycle racks. Over night bicycle racks would be the best thing to happen to this campus! I would sign up in a heart beat. The officers have been extremely courtesy, and I would like to see them more in person around, especially around the library. I would like to see more done about the book thefts in the library.
- Begin by installing cameras in all student parking lots because that is where most of the crime occurs. When I reported the crime of someone crashing into my car, there was no evidence of who did it because the police said there are no cameras in that parking lot. I thought that was ridiculous since most crime bulletins on campus have parking lots as the #1 crime location. In addition, the police officer that I spoke with on the phone was extremely rude and short with me. When I did a follow up call to speak with the person who he said was in charge of camera and security issues, I left a voicemail on his machine and he never returned my call. Poor customer service! So much for protection. I havent had my car fixed to this day and have never

known who hit it. I would hate to be a victim of violent crime, I was lucky it was just my car that got damaged. The police did not care though saying the only thing I could do was file a report and that would be the end of that.

- The parking lots are open late. Many classes get out after 9:30pm. The parking lots closest to the buildings are full very quickly, so students have to walk a long ways, at night, in areas that aren't well lit or safe. When do the shuttles end? Waaay before classes. UTA Police are asking for problems.
- Graduate student parking (biology department) is a big problem because most of us are on campus late at night due to research requirements. For some reason we are restricted access to the faculty parking lot which makes no sense because there are so many empty spaces. When I leave the building at night, I have to walk far out to my car and I'm always afraid I'm going to be raped or held up. This is a simple problem that could be corrected very easily but for some reason it seems the safety of graduate students is disregarded. I'm searching for another university to continue my graduate education.
- I reported a abandoned bike in the bike rack at the library on the first day of class a year and a half ago and it is still there and no one called me back. Racks are getting filled up and people attaching bikes to light poles. Lets remove the abandoned bikes.
- Common sense and basic rational reasoning are always a plus.
- Need to be a police presence around campus (walking around, socializing, attending events) and not just in an emergency. Maybe have a substation at the UC and workshops about safety on campus.
- I've actually had very little experience with the UT Arlington Police Department. In the few times I've called (about bike locks, to report a found wallet) or talked with them on campus, they were always professional and friendly. My only suggestion would be increased visibility on campus both outside and in buildings.
- would feel safer if the lights in the parking lots were on earlier in the mornings (especially in the winter when it is darker in the mornings); also, and increased police presence in and around the parking lots in the evenings.
- The Police and Security officers need to be more personable and accessible to the general student body. Response times need to improve and emphasis on prevention rather than solving crime be pushed, strongly.
- I think they're doing a great job in a thankless position. I have heard, though, of an officer or someone out on the street giving wrong information about parking rules. So be sure everyone knows the correct information.
- More security on campus at night when evening classes let out.
- Greater outreach on crime prevention on campus.

- You should escort students even after 2am. I always have to walk down to centennial court from ERB as escort services stop after 2am.
- more visible officers stationed throughout campus during the day. officers should be proactive instead of reactive.
- more campus police and allow concealed carry on campus.
- The department focuses too much of its time and resources to enforce single policies at once, and as a result looks stupid and incompetent, failing to gain the trust and respect of the students and faculty. I feel this results in a top-down leadership issue, that must be remedied. Even if I had been a victim of a crime, I would not report it as I do not trust the Department to focus the resources on solving it. Trust is a major issue between the students and this Department.
- Hire more officers in order to have a bigger presence on campus 24/7.
- I would suggest more patrol bicycles than patrol cars. I think this allows the police into more areas than just the roads around campus. It is also a healthier and greener choice. I came from a campus with bike and car patrol and the bikes just seemed to provide a greater sense of security because the officers are out in and with the public which is exactly what they are to be patrolling. I think our officers should be more visible, not the cars but the actual officers.
- We must see officers more. There is not a visible police presence on campus.
- Install cameras at the intersection of Cooper Street and Nedderman Drive. I see illegal left turns and U-turns almost daily. I have been nearly hit twice in the last few months as I crossed the street at the crosswalk. I have also seen students legally crossing the street being nearly hit by illegal left turners. Another option would be to reconfigure the traffic light to allow for left turns. Let's not wait for someone to be injured or killed to fix this problem.
- Walking through all buildings on campus during the daytime hours to deter potential criminal activity. More physical presence at various times to let the criminals know that police are around and watching.
- Increased foot/bike patrol on campus. I hardly ever see officers on the grounds. Not sure if this happens, but have more plain clothes patrolling too.
- Spend less money on new cars and additional personnel and use that money to reduce the cost of parking. UTA has way more police officers than it needs.
- Have more of a presence on campus, specifically where most of the students are, such as the library, etc.
- Sometimes I have noticed that younger officers seem to exhibit an attitude of smug, macho arrogance in their interactions with people.

- If there are laws and rules in effect, do enforce them consistently (e.g. tobacco-free campus).
- Need more walking and/or bike patrol police presence in the central campus area. Patrolling the parking lots is good, but get out of the car and walk/bike in the car inaccessible areas. Walk through the common areas of the buildings on a regular basis.
- provide more campus transportation, especially on weekends.
- more call boxes all over campus.

Limitation of the Survey

Generalizations from these findings should be carefully made because of limitations in the sampling procedure. Minorities were underrepresented, especially African Americans as only 3% of respondents were African Americans although African Americans represent 14.7% of the student population. This survey may be used in a general description of how University members may view the police department and police activity, but care should be taken not to generalize this report outside that narrow arena.

Conclusion

This sample of UTA community members surveyed expressed generally positive results regarding the police department. Conclusions that can be surmised from the results of this survey are that community members believe that the police department provides an overall satisfactory service and that officers are courteous and helpful when called upon. In assessing officer performance, 59.6% of respondents reported that the overall service the campus police were providing was either excellent or above average. In addition, an overwhelming majority of respondents (72%) reported that the courtesy and helpfulness of campus police officers was either excellent or good.

The results also indicate that the perception of crime by a majority of respondents (64.4%) is that they believe crime on campus is a small problem. The survey indicated that constituents feared being a victim of a property crime more so than a violent crime while on campus. Slightly less than half (49.5%) responded that they never feared being a victim of a violent crime, whereas only 29.7% of respondents feared never being a victim of a property crime. Of those in university housing, 71.4% indicated that they were either not at all concerned or only somewhat concerned about safety and security.

Recommendations

There are three major areas of concern that surfaced from this survey. First, although a majority of respondents (64.4%) believe the degree of crime on campus is a small problem, there are still a substantial percentage of people who fear being a victim of violent crime either sometimes (39.6%) or most of the time (10.9%). The percentages increase for property crime as 53.5% responded they fear being a victim of a property crime sometimes and 16.8% responded they feared being a victim most of the time. Secondly, 28.6% of campus residents expressed that they were very concerned with safety and security on campus. Finally, most of the comments and suggestions centered around more officer presence.

Citizens' perceptions of crime are usually based on assessments of the conditions in their community, their past experiences as crime victims, the visibility of the police, and the activities that the police perform. To address these issues, we recommend the following:

1. Increase visibility on campus by creating a sense of omnipresence – a concept that suggests that the police “are always there.” This can be accomplished through routine patrol, increasing foot and bike patrol in the interior areas of the campus to include going into buildings and walking through residence halls and apartment complexes, responding to calls by citizens to deal with problems that may cause crime, and arresting offenders to maintain order and protect life and property.
2. Encourage community engagement. Community engagement could be as simple as officers having casual conversations with members of the campus community to presenting crime prevention seminars and being involved in the various campus committees. Community engagement will help to foster partnerships between the police and the campus community to open avenues of information sharing to solve problems and reduce crime. This allows law enforcement an opportunity to receive a better understanding of community problems and, in turn, the community can find out what help law enforcement can offer on issues of crime and disorder.

To address conditions in the community, studies indicate that the most disruptive behaviors affecting communities include illegal alcohol and drug use, gang activity, and disturbances. Therefore, our recommendation is to implement zero-tolerance strategies by doing the following:

1. Police will consistently take the appropriate action to cite or arrest for illegal consumption of alcohol and drug use.
2. Be vigilant to watch for gang activity and stop and identify people who appear suspicious as well as report graffiti immediately to get it removed. If we let it remain it lends itself to the “Broken Windows” theory.
3. Respond to disturbances, especially loud noise disturbances, and take the appropriate action of citing or arresting.

Finally, follow-up and additional evaluations should be pursued because the success of the police department is dependent on using good data as a foundation for understanding public perceptions and developing partnerships to address pertinent issues. In regard to future surveys, a concerted effort must be made to gain the participation of minorities and especially students for they are our number one client.