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Perspectives of Campus Safety: Viewpoints of Community College Faculty and Staff Members

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PERSPECTIVES OF CAMPUS SAFETY: VIEWPOINTS OF COMMUNITY COLLEGE FACULTY AND STAFF MEMBERS

by

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A DISSERTATION

Presented to the Faculty of The Graduate College at the University of Nebraska In Partial Fulfillment of Requirements For the Degree of Doctor of Philosophy

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Under the Supervision of Professor Marilyn Grady

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PERSPECTIVES OF CAMPUS SAFETY: VIEWPOINTS OF FACULTY AND STAFF MEMBERS AT TWO MIDWESTERN COMMUNITY COLLEGES

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University of Nebraska, 2019

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There is research available on campus safety perspectives and issues, but these studies are primarily from the student perspective. Of the few studies that show campus safety perspectives from the faculty and staff viewpoint, fewer of these studies reflect these perspectives as they occur on community college campuses. The purpose of the study was to examine the perspectives of faculty and staff members on campus safety. For the study, twenty faculty and staff members were interviewed about their perceptions of campus safety.

The results of the study were that although the participants generally felt safe on their campuses, they were still able to discuss certain issues, scenarios or areas where they could feel unsafe (or could understand how someone else could feel unsafe). The participants also were able to discuss the trainings they received related to campus safety issues on their campuses, especially training on how to respond to an active shooter.

Six themes emerged from the study: safety, violence, training, reporting, campus police, and concealed carry. Recommendations included ensuring that faculty and staff members receive training to help alleviate safety concerns they have as well as having a campus police department that practices community policing concepts.
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CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION

Campus safety issues gain national attention whenever there are crimes of violence against college students in the United States. Even though violent crime exists everywhere (and college campuses are no exception), more attention is paid when these incidents occur on a college or university campus. An example of this was the tragedy that occurred at Virginia Tech. Also, sexual assaults on college campuses are a topic of national conversation. Many college and universities are under Title IX investigations because of alleged mishandling of sexual assault or harassment cases that occurred on their campuses (U.S. Department of Education, 2014).

These campus safety issues also can affect the reputation of a college or university. An example of this kind of negative publicity occurred at Florida State University. In 2016, the university agreed to pay a former student $950,000 to settle a suit that was brought against them because of their mishandling of a sexual assault case involving a football player (Axon, 2016). Another example of negative publicity involved the University of Missouri. A female student athlete was raped in 2010 and the university failed to properly investigate her complaint. The student athlete committed suicide in 2011 and the incident became embarrassing for the university when a story was televised nationally by ESPN (Matter, 2015). These types of incidents can have a negative impact on how a university is perceived on both the local and national level and it is not the type of publicity that is desirable.

Students are not the only ones who are affected by campus safety issues. Faculty and staff members can be the victims of harassment and violence as well. A student who
was failing his course work shot and killed three instructors at the University of Arizona nursing school (Broder, 2002). Two staff members at Greensboro College were hospitalized after being assaulted by a student (Newsom, 2018). A staff member at Wayne Community College (in North Carolina) was shot and killed on that campus by a student with mental health issues (Dalesio & Waggoner, 2015). Three faculty members at the University of Alabama in Huntsville were shot and killed, while three others were wounded, during a meeting of the biology faculty on that campus (Wheaton and Dewan, 2010).

Unfortunately, these are just a few of the examples of faculty and staff members suffering death or serious bodily injury at institutions of higher education in the United States. Although these are extremes examples of violence that occurs on college campuses, these incidents can cause faculty and staff members to feel unsafe while on their campuses. If they feel unsafe, does this have an effect on their job performances? Are there other issues that occur on college campuses that faculty and staff members perceive as having a negative effect on their feeling of safety?

**Researcher’s Interest**

There are two reasons why this research is of interest to me. The first is that I am a police officer at a large university and I deal with campus safety issues on a daily basis. While campus safety issues interest me from an academic standpoint, I am also front and center providing a safe campus to the community that I serve on a daily basis.

The second reason why this research is of interest to me is that I am also an adjunct faculty member at a local community college. Even though I teach online courses, I do make occasional trips to campus buildings and I realize that I am not as
knowledgeable with the community college’s safety procedures as I am compared to the campus I work at on a daily basis.

Working at both a community college and a large university, I realize that there are safety differences in four-year colleges compared to community colleges. According to Wade (2018) the community college environment ranges from teenagers to senior citizens and they also offer numerous branch locations to serve the community served. Also, most community college students are commuters and the branch locations can be in malls, churches, or other buildings that the school can rent out (Wade, 2018). This shows a difference in both demographics and physical locations when compared to four-year institutions.

There is not a one-size fits all approach to campus safety. Fox and Savage (2009) advised that steps to prevent shootings at colleges and universities may not be appropriate for middle and high schools due to the different populations (ages) they serve. Does this mean there could also be differences between community colleges and four-year universities?

Faculty and staff members on college campuses are not immune to becoming victims of violence. Although campus safety issues related to the safety of students have been studied, there is limited information about the faculty and staff perspectives on the issues. Although students are an integral part of any college campus, faculty and staff are just as important and their perspectives should be explored. The extant research is limited on the perspective of campus safety specifically to community college faculty and staff. There is a gap in the literature that this study will address.
Purpose of the Study

The purpose of the study is to understand the campus safety perspectives of community college faculty and staff members. Building upon the literature review and conceptual framework of campus safety issues, I studied, analyzed, compared and contrasted the similarities and differences in campus safety perspectives of community college faculty and staff members. The findings of the study fill a gap of knowledge based on safety perspectives in community colleges as they relate to faculty and staff. Interpretation of the results of the study can lead to better education of faculty and staff as well as reveal services that can be provided to these groups to help them feel safe when they are on their respective campuses.

Qualitative Research

The use of a qualitative approach to the research was designed to capture the actual experiences of the participants. Qualitative research methods are used to provide an in-depth description of a specific program, practice, or setting (Mertens, 2010). A qualitative approach is also used when “a concept or phenomenon needs to be explored and understood because little research has been done on it or because it involves an under-studied sample” (Creswell and Creswell, 2018, p. 19). Using a qualitative method allows the researcher to make sense of a situation without imposing preexisting expectations on the phenomena under study (Mertens, 2010). This type of research focuses on individual meaning that includes collection of data in the participant’s setting and allows for the reporting of a complex situation (Creswell & Creswell, 2018).

Phenomenological research emphasizes the individual’s subjective experience and seeks out their perceptions and meanings of that experience (Mertens, 2010). The
personal significance of perceptions of campus safety by faculty and staff members at community colleges was a focus of the interviews with the participants. Phenomenological research emphasizes the description of the lived experiences of individuals who have experienced the same phenomenon (Creswell & Creswell, 2018). Qualitative research satisfied the goal of the study which was to understand what community college faculty and staff members experience in terms of campus safety on their college campuses.

I followed the guidance of Creswell (2016) when deciding to conduct the study outside of my home state. Creswell (2016) stated, “you need to be careful about conducting a study where you work, or with agencies or sites you are affiliated with, because of problems that may arise due to your role and the roles of people with whom you work” (p.19). While this added some logistical issues and extended my timeframe to complete the study, it was worthwhile to get out of my area and conduct research at two institutions that I was not familiar with prior to selecting them.

Limitations of the Study

There were several limitations of the study. First, I only explored the perceptions of safety of faculty and staff members at two specific community colleges. Each community college is unique in terms of location, culture, and practices so the results of the study may not produce similar results if two different community colleges were studied.

Second, a purposeful sample was used for the study. I was only interested in the perspectives of faculty and staff members from the community college viewpoint so the results are not generalizable to all institutions of higher education.
Finally, I tried to keep any personal biases I have on the subject from entering into the interview process, so they would not have an effect on the participants’ answers. Even though most participants knew my name prior to being interviewed, I refrained from discussing my professional role, as a university police officer, to avoid my job from having an influence on their answers. If they performed an internet search of my name prior to the interview, this could have negatively impacted the answers they gave to the interview questions.

**Organization of the Study**

The dissertation is organized into six chapters. The first chapter includes the introduction, researcher’s interest, purpose of the study, qualitative research, limitations of the study, and organization of the study. The second chapter includes a review of the relevant literature. The third chapter contains the methods and includes an overview, the purpose and research questions, qualitative research, interviewing, participants, interview questions, confidentiality, and the approval process. Chapter four contains the research findings and includes an overview of the participants, data analysis, and the themes that were emerged. Chapter five contains a summary of the research questions and differences in the data. The final chapter, chapter six, recaps the purpose of the study, identifies the study findings, relationship to prior research, implications for practice, and possible future research.

**Summary**

The first chapter introduced the purpose of the study and conceptual framework of campus safety. This provides the context for the qualitative research study on faculty and staff perceptions of safety at community colleges. In this chapter the introduction, the
researcher’s interest, purpose of the study, qualitative research, limitations, and organization of the study were presented.
CHAPTER TWO
LITERATURE REVIEW

Introduction

In this chapter, a review of the literature on campus safety is presented. The purpose of the study was to examine the perspectives of community college faculty and staff members on campus safety. The literature review includes the history of campus safety, topics related to campus safety (from student, faculty and staff perspectives), and the roles of campus police/security. Although there is research related to faculty and staff perceptions of safety issues (Gover, Tomsich, Jennings and Higgins, 2011; Bennett, Kraft, and Grubb, 2012; Schaefer, Lee, Burruss, and Giblin, 2017; De Angelis, Benz, and Gillham, 2017), there is little research available on campus safety from the perspective of community college faculty and staff members (Dahl, Bonham, and Reddington, 2016; Woolfolk, 2013; Wade, 2018). The research related to campus safety issues at community colleges is primarily from the student perspective (Patton and Gregory, 2014; Agubokwu, 2016; Beggan, 2019; Rivituso, 2014; Burruss, Schafer, & Giblin, 2010). From a research perspective, there is a gap in the available literature in terms of the faculty and staff perspectives of safety in community colleges.

A literature review was conducted to identify the relevant background information on the dissertation topic. The literature review includes the history of campus safety issues, perceptions and fear of crime on college campuses, the Clery Act, Title IX and violence against women, firearms on campus, threat assessment, emergency (crisis) management, campus police/security, and research specifically related to community college safety.
History of Campus Safety Issues

The earliest higher education institutions in the United States formed during the colonial era. According to Sloan and Fisher (2010), “the historical record also contains well-documented accounts of students at these earliest colleges engaging in a variety of improper, if not downright illegal behavior…students also engaged in vandalism of college facilities and theft from one another and from faculty members” (p.8). There were also accounts of stabbings and shootings that occurred during this early period of higher education in the United States.

Specific examples of violence on campus, according to Rudolph (1990), were evident in 1833 when two students reached for a plate of trout at the same moment in a commons room at South Carolina College. A duel resulted from the incident and only one student survived. Other examples of violence included a professor who was shot and killed (at the University of Virginia in 1840), a president who was stabbed (at Oakland College in 1851), and a student who was stabbed in the leg (at Illinois College in 1836).

Early safety issues on college campuses other than violence existed. According to Gelber (1972), “the physical needs of early American higher education focused major concern on the construction of buildings, providing heat, the disposal of waste, the avoidance of fires, and the protection of property from both straying animals and townsfolk” (p. 16).

Sloan and Fisher (2010) noted that “during the first decades of the 20th century, on-campus alcohol consumption by students (and alumni) became a highly regarded tradition. Indeed, excessive drinking before, during, and after collegiate football games was a major weekly highlight on many campuses” (p.13). Increased consumption of
alcohol would lead to fights on campus and other low level crimes (an example is vandalism to school property). During the middle of the 20th century, alcohol continued to be an issue on campus along with other new fads that appeared. Piano wrecking (seeing how fast it could be smashed into pieces and stuffed into a hole) as well as panty raids became new types of illicit activities seen on college campuses (Sloan and Fisher, 2010).

The 1960s and 1970s brought more violence to college campuses because of the civil unrest in the United States during that time. Campuses experienced many types of disruptions because of the protests against the Vietnam War. These ranged from simple gatherings of students to complete take-overs of campus buildings and property. These events would cause disruption to the institutions’ day to day operations (from lost class time to complete closure of the campuses involved). According to Sloan and Fisher (2010), the 1960s saw students “drive college administrators, faculty members, state legislatures, and even the president of the United States to the point of distraction with the chaos, bloodshed and disruption that was occurring” (p. 20). At universities such as the University of Michigan, the University of California at Berkley and at Columbia University, students would organize and express their frustration by holding large demonstrations where they would burn their draft cards and bras as well as take over campus buildings.

Assaults also occurred on U.S. campuses in relation to Vietnam War protests. One occurred in October of 1967 at the University of Wisconsin at Madison. The university experienced protests relating to the presence of Dow Chemical (a manufacturing company that made napalm, a chemical which was used in Vietnam) on
Several hundred people (students and non-students) went into a university building where Dow Chemical was holding job interviews. Campus police were called in to remove them and when that was not successful the city of Madison police were also called. The police tried to push their way in but the students pushed back. Police then smashed doors and windows and began to drag the protesters out (they also used their clubs which bloodied the protesters). The protesters pushed back at these beatings and more protesters started to arrive. Because of the beatings handed down by police, this had the effect of changing the mood of the witnesses to the protest. One person said “the second the cops started clubbing heads…people who were a little ambivalent about the war but who would never go to a demonstration, were unbelievably outraged” (Fraser, 1988, p.153).

Other incidents during the 1970s led to the death of students at the hands of authorities. On May 4, 1970, four students at Kent State University (Ohio) were shot and killed by members of the National Guard. Eight other students were also wounded. This occurred after the National Guard broke up a rally. After breaking up the rally, they began to deploy tear gas into the crowd in order to get the crowd to disperse. The National Guard was on campus because a few days prior the ROTC building on campus was burned down (Kifner, 1970). Also in May of 1970, there was a shooting at Jackson State College (now known as Jackson State University) in Jackson, Mississippi. According to the U.S. Department of Health, Education and Welfare (1970), two nights of campus demonstrations led to tragedy when the National Guard and members of the Mississippi Highway Patrol (MHP) fired into a building, killing a Jackson State student.
and a local high school student. There were also other incidents of authorities clashing with students on college campuses during this time period.

During the 1980s and 1990s, there was more focus on the victimization of students on college campuses. Reports of sexual assaults at all colleges became common. There were also incidents of hazing involving fraternities where students were hurt or killed. The presence of firearms on campus became an issue and new technology led to increased campus deviance (illegal downloading of copyrighted material and use of the internet leading to online bullying are examples). Students also continued to abuse alcohol and drugs (Sloan & Fisher 2010).

Although the issues from the 1980s and 1990s are still present on campuses, violent, mass casualty incidents have started to appear on college campuses in the United States. According to Lankford (2015), “mass shooters who arm themselves with more weapons and kill more victims are propelled by more powerful perceptions of personal victimization, social injustice, and general hopelessness” (p.369). For these mass shooters, colleges and universities are the perfect place for them to make a statement and also allow for access to a large number of potential victims. Langman (2013) examined sixteen school shooters at colleges and universities. Even though many shooters showed warning signs, it was often not clear what action was needed to maintain safety. It also may not be possible for schools to prevent attacks by those who are not associated with the university.

There have been three major incidents of active shooters on college campuses since the late 2000s. These incidents occurred in 2007 at Virginia Polytechnic Institute
and State University (Virginia Tech), in 2008 at Northern Illinois University, and in 2015 at Umpqua Community College.

**Virginia Tech**

On April 16, 2007, at approximately 7:15 A.M., a student at Virginia Tech named Seung-Hui Cho shot and killed a student in her dorm room as well as a resident assistant who came to investigate the noise. He fled the scene and returned to his dorm room to change his clothes and prepare for his next act. While campus and local law enforcement were investigating that crime, Cho would eventually enter an academic building on campus (Norris Hall). Once there, at approximately 0940 hours, he started to shoot at students, faculty and staff in the building. Responding law enforcement officers had some trouble entering the building since Cho chained the doors shut from the inside. By the time he took his own life at 9:51 A.M., he had fired 174 shots and killed 30 people in Norris Hall. There were also seventeen people who were wounded. Cho would ultimately be responsible for a total of 32 deaths (Virginia Tech University, 2009). The incident at Virginia Tech is the deadliest mass shooting incident on a college campus (Beggan, 2019).

There were numerous recommendations made in the aftermath of this active shooter event. Among them were that universities should have a threat assessment team, campus emergency communications must have multiple means of sharing information, campus police should train with local police in responding to active shooters and other emergencies, and all states should report information necessary to conduct federal background checks on gun purchases (Virginia Tech University, 2009).
Northern Illinois University

On February 14, 2008, at approximately 3:15 P.M., former student Steven Kazmierczak (who graduated from the school in 2006) entered Cole Hall Auditorium where there were approximately 120 students attending a geology class. He started shooting a shotgun at the instructor and the students in the class. When he expended all of the rounds in the shotgun, he started firing from a handgun. By the time his rampage was over, he killed five students and injured twenty-one others. Kazmierczak committed suicide in Cole Hall prior to the arrival of campus police (Northern Illinois University, 2008).

It was estimated that from the time the shooting started until Kazmierczak committed suicide approximately six minutes had passed. A review of this incident did not reveal any major changes or reforms to the university’s response to an active shooter. The university reviewed emergency notification procedures, response actions, and communications and made small adjustments which were not shared in the report so as not to compromise their effectiveness (Northern Illinois University, 2008).

Umpqua Community College

A student, Chris Harper-Mercer, entered Snyder Hall heavily armed and fatally shot a professor and eight students on the campus of Umpqua Community College in Roseburg, Oregon. Eight students were also wounded. This tragedy occurred on October 1, 2015, and ended the same day when he eventually killed himself at the scene. A manifesto written by Harper-Mercer, that contained racist and other ramblings, was located after the incident (Theen, 2017). Even though this was a major shooting that occurred on a college campus, no official report on the incident was ever released (as
compared to the Virginia Tech and Northern Illinois incidents). This incident was also unique as it occurred on a community college campus; but yet, it has not been studied in as much detail as the Virginia Tech and Northern Illinois shootings.

The history of campus safety issues shows that violence and violent incidents have occurred on college campuses since the very beginning of higher education in the United States. It is not a new phenomenon. However in recent years, more and more incidents of mass casualty events occurred on college campuses. These types of incidents can have a negative effect on an institution for years, particularly if the campuses are not prepared to deal with them.

**Perceptions and Fear of Crime on College Campuses**

There have been studies that examined the fear of crime and victimization (Garofalo, 1981; Warr & Stafford, 1983; Gabriel & Greve, 2003; Barton, Weil, Jackson, & Hickey, 2016). However, few studies to higher education institutions. A reason for this deficit may be that colleges and universities are usually perceived to be safer than the areas that surround their campuses (Wada, Patten, and Candela, 2010).

Of the studies that relate to the fear of crime and victimization on college campuses, gender plays a role. In a study of victimization and fear among college students, females were found to be victimized more and be more fearful of crime than males were (Fox, Nobles, & Piquero, 2009). Woolnough (2009) examined fear of crime on campus, but focused on measures students took for self-protection. Woolnough’s findings showed that female students report they are more fearful of crime and that they also are more likely to engage in behaviors that will aid their protection against crime compared to male students.
When looking at the perceptions of the emergency alert system at the University of Central Florida, Kopel, Sims, and Chin (2014) found female students were more interested in safety concerns than males were. One study at a public, southern university that tested hypothetical emergency warnings issued on a college campus found that women students take emergency warnings more seriously than males do (Sheldon and Antony, 2018). Fisher and May (2009) found that females were more fearful than males when looking at four crime specific categories (larceny-theft, aggravated assault, simple assault, and sexual assault). The residency status (on or off campus) and the location of a college (metropolitan, micropolitan or rural) also can affect females’ perceptions of safety (Pritchard, Jordan, and Wilcox, 2015).

Jennings, Gover, and Pudrzynska (2007) found that males are more likely to be victims of personal and property crimes while females report being victims of sexual assault. However, males reported being safer and having lower levels of fear. Lane, Gover and Dahod (2009) looked only at the perceptions of the crimes of robbery and sexual assault between males and females and found that overall, women perceive their risk of robbery and assault to be higher than men do. Race also has a significant impact on students’ fear of crime on campus (Crowl and Battin, 2017; Kaminski, Koons-Witt, Thompson, & Weiss, 2010; Lane et al., 2009).

College students are concerned about safety as they navigate campus; and they must take precautions to protect themselves. However, they may not be aware of the resources available to them (Checkwa, Thomas, & Jones, 2013). Students may also not think about campus safety measures and are more likely to act alone than to rely on others to protect themselves (Schafer, Lee, Burruss, & Giblin, 2017). Students may
become complacent and develop a false sense of security while on campus so that they may not be aware of their surroundings (Jacobsen, 2017).

Only a few studies have looked at the perceptions of safety on campuses from a non-student viewpoint. Fletcher and Bryden (2009) surveyed women employees of a campus, located in Canada, and found that while overall they felt safe on campus during the day, some felt unsafe being on campus at night or on the weekends. They also found that more faculty members reported being victimized on campus compared to staff members. Baker and Boland (2011) surveyed both faculty and students where the majority of them felt their college was safe (with some differences between the two groups). The number who reported being victims of violence was low.

Although research has shown that there is not an exact way to reduce the fear of crime on college campuses, especially among females, colleges and universities should consider adopting security policies and procedures that adopt a community-oriented policing approach (King, 2009). This approach would allow colleges and universities to determine what the safety issues are on their campuses and how to best eliminate or minimize the fear their students have.

**Clery Act, Title IX and Violence against Women**

The Jeanne Clery Disclosure of Campus Security Policy and Campus Crime Statistics Act (referred to as the Clery Act) was named for a student who was murdered in her dorm room in 1986 (U.S. Department of Education, 2016). In 2013, the *Violence Against Women Reauthorization Act* was signed into law and this included amendments to the Clery Act that required higher education institutions to disclose statistics, policies,
and programs that relate to dating violence, domestic violence, sexual assault and stalking.

The Clery Act was implemented to make sure that prospective and current students have knowledge of safety issues (and crimes that occur) on their campuses. However, there limited research on the collection of this data and no reporting agency or process is perfect. These issues make it difficult to determine how accurate the reports are (Lee, 2017). In addition to the yearly reports that are required by the Clery Act, some colleges and universities will administer campus climate surveys that help determine the prevalence of sexual assaults on campus. Even though this adds to the data that is available, “the field of climate surveys is plagued by inconsistency and a disconnection from established best practices in survey design for sexual assault, effectively hampering the ability to harness data from climate surveys” (Moylan, Hatfield, and Randall, 2018, p. 4).

Title IX of the Educations Amendments of 1972 protects people from discrimination based on sex in education programs or activities that receive federal financial assistance (U.S. Department of Education, 2015). There are certain areas where recipients have Title IX obligations; recruitment, admissions, counseling, financial assistance, athletics, sex-based harassment, and employment. Any retaliation is considered a Title IX violation (U.S. Department of Education, 2015). A result of the implementation of Title IX it “significantly increased women’s access to college and paved the way for dramatic increases in women’s higher educational attainment” (Rose, 2015, p.177).
Even with the reporting requirements that are in place there is research that points to a wide gap between the number of reported (to law enforcement) sexual assaults that occur on colleges campuses and the actual number of sexual assaults that occur (Krebs, Lindquist, Warner, Fisher, & Martin, 2007; Spencer, Stith, Durtschi, & Toews, 2017). A study of rape and sexual assault victimization among college-aged females showed female college students who were raped/sexually assaulted were less likely to report the incident to police than non-students, and more students than non-students divulged that the incident was not that important to report (Sinozich and Langton, 2014). For both groups, the offender was known in about 80% of the cases that were reported in the National Crime Victimization Survey.

When sexual assaults are reported, factors that include the number of students who live on campus, the type of athletic program, and the alcohol policy of the school are also related to the number of reported sexual assaults (Stotzer & MacCartney, 2016). Even with strong reporting procedures in place, the number of sexual assaults that occur on campus is still not accurately reported. Although colleges and universities are more involved in sexual assault intervention and prevention, and the number of sexual assault prevention studies is increasing, limited research focuses on relationship abuse or stalking (Banyard, 2014).

Firearms on Campus

A recent issue that has emerged on college campuses is the issue of firearms being allowed on campuses. There is a limited “middle ground” on this issue as people are either for or against firearms on campus. According to Teeple, Thompson, and Price (2012), proponents of firearms on campuses believe they increase campus safety while
opponents believe the absence of guns (concealed carry) increase campus safety. When legislation is approved allowing for firearms on campus, it is often controversial. A study by Shepperd, Pogge, Losee, Lipsey, & Redford (2017) was the first to show that everyone, including gun owners who own guns for personal protection, generally feel safe on their college campus where guns are not allowed. However, there were differences where gun owners felt less safe, but not unsafe, than other groups on campuses where firearms are not allowed.

Overall, students do not favor laws that support firearms on campus. A study conducted by Eaves, Shoemaker, & Griego (2016) found that a majority of students indicated they strongly disliked or disliked a Texas law that would allow firearms on campus. The study did show that males in general had greater support for the law. Another study of the same Texas law, conducted by Bartula and Bowen (2015), showed that an overwhelming majority (91.5%) of the respondents, who were university and college officials, were not in favor of open carry on campus. There are studies that have shown that white male gun owners, with conservative political views, who had parents who owned a gun, were more likely to feel safe if qualified students and faculty are allowed to carry concealed weapons on campus (Verrecchia & Hendrix, 2018; Schildkraut, Carr, & Terranova, 2018; Patten, Thomas, & Wada, 2013).

Faculty views of firearms on campus are similar to those of students as they are overwhelmingly opposed to firearms on campus (Thompson, Price, Dake, & Teeple, 2013; Bennett, Kraft, & Grubb, 2012). A majority of students, faculty, and staff at a single university in the Southeast responded that, if guns were allowed on their campus, it would harm classroom debate and the learning environment, and would decrease feelings
of safety during heated exchanges (Sheppard, Losee, Pogge, Lipsey, Redford, & Crandall, 2018). A study of faculty and staff at a rural university provided support for the argument that allowing concealed firearms on campus may lead to lower perceptions of safety (De Angelis, Benz, & Gillham, 2017). Police chiefs of college campuses believe that allowing students to carry concealed weapons would not prevent some, or all, campus killings (Thompson, Price, Mrdjenovich, & Khubchandani, 2009).

Allowing firearms on college campuses is a controversial issue; but this decision may be better left to individual colleges and universities to decide. Kyle, Schafer, Burruss, & Giblin (2017) advised that “consideration of campus user attitudes and opinions in these matters is crucial as a lack of support from those individuals that such policies are intended to protect…may adversely affect the campus climate and institution’s mission” (p.663). With this issue, however, “policymakers are more likely to be swayed by good stories than by good data, and one improbable hypothetical can be worth a thousand statistic tables” (Birnbaum, 2013, p. 13).

**Threat Assessment**

With campus safety issues that occur on college campuses, colleges and universities must be prepared to deal with them before they actually occur. One way this can be accomplished is by engaging in threat assessment. Threat assessment usually occurs before an incident takes place and involves a group of campus representatives who are responsible for campus safety.

Threat assessment has been used for several decades by the United States Secret Service to investigate and analyze threats to persons (Fein and Vossekuil, 1998), but its use in higher education is more recent. Even though some colleges and universities such
as Iowa State University and Arizona State University did have threat assessment teams prior to the Virginia Tech shooting in 2007, its use in higher education institutions increased after that incident. Threat assessment is behavior based and prevention focused. Threat assessment focuses on facts and the conclusions those facts lead to regarding a person’s intent to do harm. The use of threat assessment was enhanced by the United States Secret Service to assist them with protecting public figures. They assisted the U.S. Department of Education in creation of a school threat assessment model (Randazzo & Cameron, 2012). Instead of limiting campus threat assessments to reviews of large scale attacks that occur, threat assessment also should be viewed as a form of violence prevention (Hollister & Scalora, 2015).

The basic function of a college threat assessment team is to consult and assist others when dealing with a potentially dangerous situation. There are four basic steps in threat assessment; identify threats, evaluate the seriousness of the threat, intervene to reduce the risk of violence, and follow-up/re-evaluate the effectiveness of the safety plan (Cornell, 2010). Threat assessment teams generally consist of campus police, student life professionals, mental health professionals, and administrators. Forensic mental health professionals should also be active members of the teams as well (Regehr, Glancy, Carter, & Ramshaw, 2017). While campus administrators worry about the next act of violence that may take place, it is more likely that they may deal with a student who disrupts the campus environment or even threatens their safety (Matthew, Kajs, & Matthew, 2017).

The use of threat assessment approaches does not address the problem of the tendency for students to underreport threatening individuals (Sulkowski and Lazarus,
With exceptions to very severe crime, there is a tendency for students to not report crime to police (Hart & Colavito, 2011). A study of college students by Hollister, Scalora, Hoff, Hodges, & Marquez (2017) found that observed campus safety concerns were unlikely to be reported and several dangerous situations appeared to exist outside the awareness of campus authorities.

One way to increase reporting of such incidents is for schools to create a climate in which students believe that staff want to hear from them about threats or possible attacks and that these reports are taken seriously (Pollack, Modzeleski, & Rooney, 2008). Students who feel connected to a campus community and have trust in the college support system are more willing to report threats of violence (Sulkowski, 2011).

Creating the type of environment on college campuses that encourages reporting suspicious behavior is important as it may prevent a tragedy from occurring. A descriptive study of 63 active shooters that was conducted by the Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI) showed that in a majority of the cases (sixty-four percent) the active shooter specifically targeted at least one of the victims. Fifty-six percent of all of the active shooters in the study intentionally or unintentionally revealed their intentions to a third party through some type of leakage (Silver, Simons, & Craun, 2018). The same study also found that those who observed concerning behaviors from the active shooter prior to the incident became aware of them because of verbal communication from the shooter and from observing other physical actions of the shooter. Those who noticed these behaviors were usually classmates, spouses/partners, and family members.

Drysdale, Modzeleski, and Simmons (2010) researched open source data on campus attacks and offender motivations for these attacks. A majority of the subjects
(60%) who committed attacks were identified as either current or former students of the
higher education institutions they attacked. They also identified threat assessment teams
as performing important functions related to identification of individuals whose specific
behaviors caused a concern towards a person or the institution, identifying if they have
the intent and ability to carry out an attack, and managing the threat and imposing
strategies to come to a resolution.

The use of threat assessment teams at colleges and universities is something that
should be utilized at all institutions of higher education. Although threat assessment
teams can vary in membership and size, the absence of one at a college or university has
the potential to cause an institution serious issues; especially if an incident occurs that
could have been anticipated by a threat assessment team.

**Emergency Management**

Emergency (crisis) management is used to manage incidents before, during or
after they occur. Colleges and universities should have procedures and plans in place for
responding to campus safety incidents and for dealing with the aftermath of incidents.
According to Sokolow, Lewis, Keller, and Daly (2008), planning, communication, and
prevention efforts are important for minimizing future risks to higher education
institutions.

The Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) acknowledges that there is
a wide range of potential emergencies facing higher education institutions. These
emergencies can include active shooters, fires, tornadoes, floods, hurricanes, earthquakes
and pandemic influenza. FEMA developed guidelines to follow and identified planning
that needs to be supported by senior leadership. These guidelines are that assessment is
customized to the institution, planning needs to consider a wide range of threats/hazards, and planning involves the whole community. They should also consider all settings/times, it considers individual preparedness of students, faculty, and staff, planning meets all applicable laws, and that the planning process should be collaborative. There are also five areas of emergency preparedness; prevention, protection, mitigation, response, and recovery (FEMA, 2013).

Even if plans and procedures are in place to deal with emergencies, “preparedness will not exist unless each and every faculty member and administrator feels comfortable and confident that they know their roles” (Connolly, 2012, p.377). Seo, Torabi, Sa, and Blair (2012) found that small schools were less likely to have students who understood emergency procedures and provided less education to employees on how to deal with emergency situations. It was suggested that this could be remedied by small colleges providing regular education sessions for employees and students to give them knowledge on how to deal with campus emergencies. In a study by Skurka, Quick, Reynolds-Tylus, Short, and Bryan (2018), it was found that even showing a brief, professionally developed emergency preparedness video to college students can increase the likelihood that they will take appropriate actions during an incident on campus.

When emergency management teams are established, they should go through crisis leadership training so members can obtain the knowledge and skills necessary to make decisions in times of crisis as this will help them with their roles and responsibilities during an actual crisis. Regular staff should be trained as well since they may be on the scene of a crisis and may need to aid in the response (Booker, 2014). When a crisis does occur, school leaders need to be decisive in their decision making,
provide clarity and certainty, and ensure open and credible communication (Smith and Riley, 2012). A time of crisis is also not a good time to try and reorganize an adequately operating response and it is not a good time to implement wholesale organizational changes (Van Wart & Kapucu, 2011).

**Campus Police and Campus Security**

The formation of campus security in the United States started at Yale University in 1894. Frequent confrontations between the college students and local townspeople led to a large riot that started because of a rumor that some Yale students were digging up corpses. Because of these tensions, two local law enforcement officers were initially assigned to the campus to improve relations. Eventually those officers were hired by the university and the Yale Campus Police Department was formed (Powell, Pander, & Nielsen, 1994).

The modern campus police force owes its beginnings to custodians and administrative officials as well as the need for a night watchman. These early duties were to detect fire hazards, check boilers, detect leaky pipes, and perform preventative maintenance duties. These early officers held watchmen-type duties until the 1950s when university administrators realized the need for a more organized, protective force (Bordner & Petersen, 1983).

Due to incidents on campuses during the 1960s and 1970s, campus police departments became more professionalized. A reason for the professionalization was because of the negative experiences with the interventions of local police and national guardsmen on campuses. If universities did not govern themselves, then it would be left
to others who might be less responsive to the campus community (Bordner & Petersen, 1983).

Although there are differences in the constituencies, mission, and duties of campus police departments, they are an integral part of higher education institutions and also are connected to the law enforcement community (Peak, Barthe & Garcia, 2008). Even though campus police departments are part of the law enforcement community, Giblin, Haynes, Burruss, & Schafer (2013) recommend that there can be better collaboration between campus public safety departments and local law enforcement can be improved. This would include participating in joint training exercises that deal with a response to a critical incident.

Johnson & Bromley (1999) suggested, given the expressed desire for campus police departments to adopt comprehensive approaches to community policing, a need to actively solicit community input and opinions. This approach is important as “campus police may face the challenge of rectifying social disorders on the college campus. Doing so could involve assessing the perceptions of community members about the extent and magnitude of the disorders, walking the campus, and identifying dangerous areas” (Sloan, Lanier, & Beer, 2000, p. 8). According to Reaves (2015), most campus law enforcement agencies implement various forms of community policing practices and many meet regularly with advocacy groups, groups seeking to prevent domestic violence, and groups seeking to prevent sexual violence. Also, most law enforcement agencies that serve more than 5,000 students had designated personnel to address general crime prevention, rape prevention, drug and alcohol education, victim assistance, and intimate partner violence.
Williams, LePere-Schloop, Silk, and Hebdon (2016) found that, like other public agencies, campus police departments also face the challenge of being co-active, or partnering with individuals and groups to solve problems and deliver services. However, even though campus police departments are thought to be an ideal location for community policing strategies, they may not be properly implementing the strategies on campuses (Hancock, 2016).

Campus police officers are sometimes put in an awkward position as control and arrest are their primary law enforcement function; but they are also focused on prevention as well (Wada, Patten, & Candela, 2010). Campus policing strategies should not alienate college students since forging relationships with students will allow officers to do their job more effectively (Jacobsen, 2015). A study by Allen (2016) examined the issue: do campus police ruin students’ fun. Most respondents answered “no” (69%) and the reasoning was that the officers were seen as legitimately performing their job.

An issue with campus police officers that persists is whether or not the campus police should be authorized to carry firearms on duty. Even with some of the recent incidents involving active shooters and active violence on campuses, there are a few institutions where campus police officers are not allowed to carry firearms. Reaves’ (2015) research showed that 66% of surveyed colleges had armed officers; and the officers were armed at more than 9 in 10 campuses that used sworn personnel. Wilson and Wilson (2011) conducted research in Rhode Island, which at the time was the only state that did not allow public agencies to maintain armed campus police officers. The study showed that a majority of students, faculty, and staff at three Rhode Island state institutions wanted campus police officers to be armed during the course of their duties.
A study by Patten, Alward, Thomas, & Wada (2016) also found support, as 80% of the sample supported armed campus police. Another study by Wilson and Wilson (2015) showed that while the law in Rhode Island changed to allow governing boards to authorize campus officers to carry firearms, only one of the three state-supported institutions authorized officers to carry firearms. This has led to dissatisfaction among campus police officers in Rhode Island.

Campus security has evolved. Throughout its history it “has involved a variety of services performed by numerous individuals…the watchman, the janitor, the guard, and various levels of faculty and administration, at different times and places, have each performed acts that are today considered within the responsibility of the campus security officer” (Gelber, 1972, p.33). The role of campus security/police officers will continue to evolve and they will be expected to take on even more duties and responsibilities to provide for a safer campus community.

Community College Safety

When looking at campus safety issues from the perspective of community colleges, there is a limited amount of literature on the topic. According to Cohen and Brawer (2008), there will be an increase in campus security at community colleges and “budgets for campus safety and student surveillance will certainly increase” (p.462). Pierce (2017) found that community colleges have formed relationships with local public safety agencies to help train public safety workers for jobs in the field. However, most of these public safety workers will end up working for local or state agencies.

Flannery and Quinn-Leering (2000) suggested that community colleges create a comprehensive plan to address anti-social behaviors committed by some students and to
also make it difficult to commit acts of violence on campus. These efforts should include adding security guards, installing cameras and alarms, and restricting access to buildings. Connolly (2012) suggested that community colleges have an emergency action plan in place and this is necessary because “community colleges are responsible not only for the education but also for the safety and welfare of their students” (p. 376).

To try to ensure the safety of students, community colleges can create threat assessment teams. However, creating threat assessment teams at community colleges may pose a challenge due to the multiple roles that an individual employee may have on their campus and because there may be a limited amount of funds that are available to provide training on this topic (Pendleton, 2017). Cohen, Brawer, and Kisker (2014) stated that there will be major changes in community colleges with an increase in campus security and “budgets for campus safety including armed guards and student surveillance, profiling, and mental health assessment, will certainly increase” (p.449).

Gnage, Dziagwa, and White (2009) showed how a community college in West Virginia was able to integrate low and high tech means of communication, from bullhorns to mass emails, into their overall safety plans. Administrators on that campus also developed partnerships with first responders in the area and also conducted a full scale exercise to test interagency coordination.

Anthofer, Bernabe, Bowers, Carroll, Hogquist, Parchim, Plummer, Okaty, Rosenberg, & Upton (2012) looked at the state of two year institutions and stated that public safety at community colleges requires a different approach compared to four year colleges and universities. One of the main issues is that students at community colleges usually do not spend more than two years at the institution so it can be difficult for
campus safety representatives to establish lines of communication with student leaders because those leaders are constantly changing. There are also issues of staffing levels, full time vs. part-time security officers, training, finding time and money to train personnel on threat assessment, emergency plans, and emergency notification systems, and funding. Staffing and equipment may be hard to procure due to budget constraints.

Anthofer et al. (2012) also recommended that future research is needed in the areas of technology and emergency notifications, threat assessment, emergency management, and funding for campus safety at two year institutions. They pointed out that there is little research that addresses public safety specifically at two year institutions.

A study that only focused on community college students’ perceptions of safety was conducted by Patton and Gregory (2014). The study found that part-time students, who were more likely to be older and attend class during the evening, felt less safe than full-time students. Students also reported fearing becoming a victim of a robbery (24%) over other types of crime even though there were more reports of motor vehicle theft and aggravated assaults on the campuses (Patton & Gregory, 2014).

A study of student perceptions of safety at urban, suburban, and rural community colleges found that students across all locations did not differ in their perception of crime and that female students were more likely to believe that they would be victimized (Agubokwu, 2016). A study of students, faculty and staff at Central Carolina Community College showed that overall they felt safe on campus, 93.7% for faculty and staff, and 95.9% for students. There was a desire for more police and armed security on campus (Wicker, 2017).
One of the few studies that relates to community college faculty or staff perceptions of safety utilized the same questions as Thompson et al. (2013). Dahl, Bonham, and Reddington (2016) surveyed 1,889 community college faculty members in reference to firearms on campus and other safety perceptions. The outcome revealed that the majority of community college faculty feel safe on their campus and they did not support concealed firearms on campus. Also, community college faculty were more concerned with becoming a victim of violence on campus than their counterparts in the Thompson et al. (2013) study.

**Summary**

Based on this literature review, there is a gap in perceptions of safety from the perspective of community college faculty and staff members related to their experiences on their respective college campuses. Although there are studies that examine these perspectives based on four year institutions, there is a difference between these institutions and community colleges. The perspectives from the community college faculty and staff are important and need to be studied. This gap in the literature based on the safety perspectives of community college faculty and staff is the focus of this research study.
CHAPTER THREE
METHODOLOGY

Overview
This chapter is centered on the phenomenological qualitative data collection and analysis methods utilized for the study. The purpose of the study was to explore safety perceptions by asking faculty and staff members at community colleges to share their actual experiences of safety issues on their campuses. This was accomplished by in person, face-to-face interviews with the faculty and staff members to better understand how they perceived their campus in terms of safety. Implications of the findings can be used to help inform campus leaders to ensure that they understand the needs of their employees and are utilizing best practice safety measures on their campuses.

Purpose and Research Questions
The purpose of the study was to explore campus safety perspectives of faculty and staff members on community college campuses. This was accomplished by interviewing the stakeholders on their respective campuses in a face-to-face setting. The following questions guided this study:

RQ1 – How do faculty and staff members at community colleges feel about their safety while on their respective campuses?

RQ2 – What programs or processes are in place on the campuses that faculty and staff members at community colleges can utilize to enhance their safety?

RQ3 – How have campus safety issues changed for faculty and staff members at their community colleges?
Interviewing

Mertens (2010) suggested that researchers use three main methods for collecting data: participant observation, interviews, and a document and records review. For this research the data collection was obtained through face-to-face interviews. On different dates, I traveled to two community colleges located in a large metropolitan city in the Midwest. One of the community colleges (CC1) can be described as suburban while the other is best described as urban (CC2). The interviews were conducted on the campuses of both community colleges and the locations of the interviews on each campus differed slightly.

Prior to starting the interviews at both sites, I was able to observe the daily actions of students, faculty, and staff at both locations while I was sitting in public places. These public places consisted of study areas where I could observe, without interrupting, those in the area while also taking notes. I followed the advice of Creswell (2016) who did not see an issue with observing in a public space “as long as the space is truly public and my observations would not disrupt the activities going on” (p.123). I paid particular attention to any safety-related issues I observed as well as looking for any campus police personnel walking through any of the public spaces.

The interviews I conducted at CC1 were all conducted in a small conference room where the participants came to my location. This allowed the interviews to be conducted in a private and quiet setting without any interruptions. The interviews conducted at CC2 were in the participants’ offices, with the exception of two interviews that were conducted in a room inside the school library. This allowed for a primarily private
setting, but there were a few occasions where normal business operations caused brief interruptions.

The interviews were conducted with the goal of obtaining general information about the participants including some basic biographic information, years of service at the school, and their roles on their respective campuses, questions relating to campus safety issues, and their thoughts/experiences on campus safety that included both a local and national perspective.

Face-to-face interviews were conducted for the study. The purpose of the interviews was “to create a conversation that invites the telling of narrative accounts (i.e., stories) that will inform the research question” (Josselson, 2013, p. 4). Although the interviews were conducted in a professional setting, they were not overly rigid and this allowed for the participants to share their perspectives on campus safety. I used a semi-structured interview and was “open to following leads from the respondent to determine the ordering of questions and the use of probes to further explore relevant points” (Mertens, 2010, p. 371). According to Boeije (2010) qualitative researchers look for a true understanding of what is happening and the interviews that I conducted were “not entirely pre-structured with respect to content, formulation, sequence and answers” (Boeije, 2010, p.62).

A goal that I strove to achieve was that “the experience of being interviewed in our research project will be a good experience for our participants – and certainly not a harmful one” (Josselson, 2013, p. 13). Ensuring that the participants were comfortable during the interview should have allowed for them to freely share their perspectives and experiences with me. There was a possibility that my professional role as a university
police officer could have unforeseen influence on how the participants answered certain questions. This was a main reason why I chose to conduct a study outside of the state I work in.

I was able to present myself as a PhD candidate without my professional role having an influence on the participants. That way there “could be a feeling of greater safety with a stranger in that the respondent can say what he or she thinks and not see the interviewer again” (Mertens, 2010, p. 246). There was still a chance that a participant could do their own research, such as an internet search of my name would show my profession to find out my current occupation. Burkard, Knox, and Hill (2012) suggested that “interviewers offer minimal self-disclosure during the interview process because excessive interviewer self-disclosure may bias participant responses and divert the focus of the interview to the researcher rather than to the participant” (p. 93). I took all necessary precautions not to disclose information about myself prior to the interview, however, after the interviews concluded, if participants asked for more information about me I would give more personal information to them. I do not have any plans to return to the community colleges in the study for future research, so this may also limit any outside influence I could have unwillingly brought to the interviews.

The interviews that were conducted with the participants varied in length. The shortest interview lasted 10 minutes and forty-nine seconds while the longest interview took 32 minutes and 11 seconds.

**Participants**

My goal was to obtain a diverse sample of employees from different races, genders, socio-economic backgrounds and job functions. It would not be beneficial to
the study if all of the participants were all from the same group, i.e., white males, or all had the same job functions, such as maintenance workers. My goal was to interview a total of ten faculty or staff members from each community college to help diversify my participant pool. I was able to interview 11 faculty and staff members from CC1, 9 females and 2 males, and 9 faculty and staff members from CC2, 4 females and 5 males, for a total of 20 participants. The participants had varying levels of experience as faculty members; and the staff members worked in various areas of campus. There was no specific department or unit that had more than two representatives as participants in the interviews.

The participants were recruited with the assistance of points of contact from each institution. I created a flyer (Appendix A) to be distributed to all faculty and staff members and the points of contact sent the flyer via email at both of their campuses. My contact at CC1 assisted with scheduling the interviews there and participants reached out to me individually from CC2 to schedule an interview time. I initially had a very minimal response from CC2, only two participants, but was able to ask my point of contact, and those that volunteered to participate, for assistance. We were able to recruit more individuals to participate during my time on the campus. This included me walking into two offices and asking if the employee in the room was interested in being interviewed for the study. I spent a full day at CC1 observing the college and conducting interviews while I was able to spend a day and a half at CC2 observing the college and conducting interviews.

Prior to interviewing the participants, I provided a brief description of the research and let them know that I would be asking questions relating to campus safety.
The participants were allowed to choose their own pseudonym prior to the interview and this confidentiality measure was put in place to ensure that the participant could not be identified. Mertens (2010) advised that researchers “must arrange to respect privacy and confidentiality of the individuals in the research study” (p. 344). This was something that I took seriously and took every measure to make sure that this occurred both during the interview process and during the writing of the dissertation.

**Interview Questions**

1. Would you tell me what your role (faculty or staff) is on this campus and how long you have been employed by the college?

2. Over your years of service to the college, what changes have you observed in regards to campus safety?

3. Has national attention to campus safety issues had any influence on your campus?

4. What do you think are the main safety issues on your campus?

5. Have you ever experienced a time on your campus when you felt unsafe? If so, what occurred to make you feel unsafe?

6. Are there certain times of the day that make you feel unsafe? If so, why?

7. Are there any areas of your campus that make you feel unsafe? If so, why?

8. What is the process for reporting safety issues on your campus?

9. Have you utilized any safety related services offered on your campus?

10. Have you ever used the services of the campus police force and if so what was the reason?

11. What training or workshops for faculty/staff have been offered on your campus relating to campus safety issues and procedures?

12. How can safety be improved on your campus?
Confidentiality

Information about the study was kept on a University of Nebraska-Lincoln (UNL) Box folder and I am the only one who knows the password. Hard copies of interview transcripts and my notes were kept in a safe, at my residence), that I am the only one with knowledge of the combination. Hard copies of any materials will be destroyed after the dissertation is accepted.

Interview participants signed a consent form prior to the interview (Appendix B). This information is also kept in the same safe mentioned above. Any information participants gave to me during interviews that could reveal their true identity was not used for the dissertation. An interview protocol was created and used for the study (Appendix C). The participants did not receive any direct benefit for participating in the research study.

The interviews were recorded using an application on my personal iPhone. This iPhone is password protected. A back-up digital recorder was also used during the interviews. Once the interviews were completed they were uploaded to the Box folder. Once this was confirmed, the interviews on the digital recorder were permanently deleted. After the interviews were transcribed, all audio recordings were also deleted from the Box file.

Approval Process

The principal investigators completed the Collaborative Institutional Training Initiative (CITI) certification as require by UNL. The research project was approved by the UNL Institutional Review Board (IRB) on August 9, 2018. The project ID number is 18535 and the form ID number is 50868. It is certified as exempt, category 2. A copy of
the IRB approval letter is included as Appendix D. IRB approval was received from both of the community colleges that agreed to participate in the study.

Summary

This chapter includes the methodology used for the qualitative research study. In the chapter, I discussed the purpose and research questions, interview procedures, participants, interview questions, confidentiality, and the approval process.
CHAPTER 4
RESEARCH FINDINGS

The research focused on community college faculty and staff members and their perspectives on campus safety. I was able to interview 20 faculty and staff members on their respective community college campuses. There were a total of 10 faculty members (3 female and 7 males) and 10 staff members (10 females and 0 males) that made up the interview participants for the study. The three research questions for the dissertation focused on their perceptions of safety on their campuses, the programs and processes in place to enhance safety, and how campus safety issues have changed. During the interviews, they shared their thoughts on these questions as well as other topics relating to campus safety and how it relates to their respective campuses.

At the beginning of the interviews, I asked the subjects about their roles on their campus and how long they have been employed by their community colleges. I also asked if they had any previous experience in higher education. What follows is a brief description and employment background of the participants at the time of the interview, keeping in mind that I have edited these descriptions in a way to ensure their confidentiality is kept, as well as using the pseudonym that they chose prior to the interview. There were a total of 10 white females, 3 non-white females, 4 white males, and 3 non-white males.

Community College 1 Participants

Natalie is a female staff member who has been at the college for approximately 3 ½ years. Marie is a female staff member who has been at the community college for 3
years and has previous experience in K-12 education. Julie is a female staff member who has been at the college for 13 years. Holly is a female who has been with the college for 12 years as a staff member and also has previous experience as an adjunct instructor. Terri is a female staff member who has more than 25 years of experience at the community college.

Anne is a female staff member with a total of 8 years of experience at the community college. Sue is a female staff member with 30 years of experience. Mary is a female and has more than 13 years of experience as a faculty member. Jane is a female with 10 years of experience as a faculty member and has previous experience as an adjunct. Patrick, a male, has been a faculty member with 15 years of experience and also has been an adjunct. Tristan is a male faculty member with more than 20 years of experience at the community college.

**Community College 2 Participants**

Tony is a male faculty member who has been employed by the community college for more than 26 years. Joe is a male faculty member who has been with the community college for 2 ½ years but has prior experience as an adjunct at a different community college. Johnny, a male, is a faculty member with 18 years of experience. Frieda is a female with 1 year of experience at the community college who also has previous teaching experience in higher education. Dee has been with the community college for 11 years and is a male faculty member.

Raheem is a male faculty member with a little more than one year of experience at the community college. He is an adjunct instructor with previous experience as an
adjunct instructor. Pam is a female staff member with 8 ½ years of experience at the college. Jem is a female staff member with approximately one year of experience. She did have previous experience in K-12 education. Barbara is female staff member with 11 years of experience. She has also been an adjunct instructor.

Table 1

**Participant Demographics and Experience**

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<th>Name</th>
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<th>Role</th>
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**Data Analysis**

After the interviews with the 20 participants were completed, the interview transcripts were transcribed. After the transcriptions were completed, I utilized MAXQDA software to analyze the data for codes (See Figure 1). I followed the guidance of Creswell (2016) to build themes from the data. This process involved reading through the data, dividing text into segments of information, labeling the
segments with codes, reducing the overlap and redundancy of codes, and collapsing the codes into themes. Creswell (2016) said that he has “about five to seven themes that become the major headings in my finding section of my qualitative report” (p.156).

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*Figure 1. Screenshot of code system.*
Themes

From the codes that emerged, I was able to develop a total of six themes that were discovered during the data analysis. The six themes that were developed are safety, violence, training, reporting, campus police, and concealed carry.

Safety

The first research question was: How do faculty and staff members at community colleges feel about their safety while on their respective campuses? During the interviews with the participants, it was evident that overall, they felt safe while on their campuses. While their perspectives on safety differed somewhat, no participant expressed genuine fear while on the campus. The perspectives of many participants were that their campus was safe, but they were also able to describe some areas or times when they felt unsafe.

Safe on Campus

In describing CC1, Tristan said that, “as far as I am aware, the place is no dangerous than it ever has been, and it has a pretty low crime rate. Pretty non-existent violent crime rate.” The general area that the college is located in is also, according to Tristan, “is a very safe community, and the college remains a relatively safe place.” Anne described that CC1 went on lockdown once for an incident that happened on campus and according to her “honestly, I don’t know that I’ve ever not felt safe on campus. I think probably the only weird thing was that, you know, when we had the lockdown, and even then I didn’t feel like I was unsafe.” She also said that, “I totally feel safe on this campus. I mean, I don’t think there’s ever been a time where I have not felt safe.” Mary
said that “I feel safe on my campus. I’ve always felt safe.” However, she only feels safe to a certain extent because in the back of her mind she always wonders if there will be a shooting.

The faculty and staff members on CC2 also expressed how they felt safe on their campus. Barbara said that “overall, I feel like our campus is pretty safe” and that “I’ve never felt unsafe here.” During the hours that Jem is on campus, she feels “perfectly safe” and had never felt a time where she felt unsafe on campus. She said “this college takes great strides in promoting safety.” Tony’s perspective was that “maybe it’s because I am a guy and I’ve been here a long time, but I feel like this campus is pretty safe.” Frida described CC2 as “this place is actually really chill and people are really pretty happy here from what I can tell.” Sue felt like her campus was safe and she is “pleased to be here in terms of the police force, the emergency management, the attention that’s given on campus…I believe it is a priority to keep our students safe.”

The participants also expressed safety due to the cameras that are located on their campuses. Barbara knew that there was a camera outside her door and in the past few years there has been more cameras installed throughout the campus while Tristan said “we’ve got brand new cameras everywhere.” Mary recalled that there were some questions if the cameras were even working but she believed “they’ve all been updated now and are working” and she has noticed them in the buildings. Jane wasn’t sure about cameras in certain areas of campus but that even if there are ones, “a camera can’t protect you.”
One participant did have an interesting perspective when it came to campus safety. Johnny is originally from another country and he described his thoughts on the issue:

I, originally I come from a different country where danger is a daily occurrence. So coming here I don't feel completely unsafe because perhaps I'm accustomed to, I was accustomed to danger from the beginning. So, where there's no police force. You were on your own but I have the sense of security here. That perhaps is part of my temperament.

Johnny continued to say that in all his year’s teaching, including in the evening and late evening, he never felt unsafe walking around on campus. He said, “I really don’t know much, thanks God, about these issues” when describing if he ever felt unsafe while he was on campus.

Unsafe on Campus

No participant expressed constant fear or unease while on their campus. Some described certain areas or times where they felt unsafe, or at least uneasy, and were generally aware of these situations. Jane said that on campus her “biggest concern would be night time. Again, that is definitely biased because of my gender.” She also described some stairwells in certain older buildings on campus and said they are “low-lit, just not necessarily the most comfortable areas on campus.” Anne felt like she was in a safe place but could feel unsafe “in the evenings and going into the parking garage that might be the only aspect that would make me feel unsafe.” Pam said that “it is weird at night and it’s a little spooky” and also described parking lots as being unsafe:
Sometimes in the parking lots. I would probably say parking lots because, if I try to come in early so I can get a front parking spot, but sometimes I don't, and so I get like, way back in the back, which, I don't know if you park way in the back. But, when you're walking out when it's dark, it's kind of weird sometimes. But what's really amazing is our campus police will, if we call them… -they'll escort us to the car.

Along with Pam, Marie and Mary also felt that the parking areas make them more aware when they leave their campus during the night time hours. The night time was generally expressed as a time of day where faculty and staff could generally feel unsafe. Tristan said he “can understand why someone might feel a little uneasy going back to a car late at night. I think that is just a normal response, but personally, I’ve never felt or feel unsafe.” According to Joe, “obviously I’m sure there are some areas of campus that are more isolated than others that might have more of an iffy feel to it, but not locations that I would frequent.” Patrick did offer a different point of view:

I will say, and maybe this is sexist, but I think if I was a female, I might feel differently. You know, I think I can walk through a parking garage at night, not even blink. But I know if my wife were, she probably would be a little, at least a little tentative, nervous.

The faculty and staff members who expressed concern about the night time also were able to point out how the lighting on campus has improved. Sue knew that she could report any lights that were out and that there is more attention to detail when it comes to making campus safe, including landscaping). Holly felt that her campus was
well-lit. Jane said “we do have a pretty well-lit campus…however it is still an issue on any campus."

In addition to parking lots and lighting issues, there was some concern when it came to disruptive students. Terri described an upset student who came into her office once and they had to call the police. She said that nothing happened but described how they were unable to resolve the issue with the student so they moved on. Patrick had a similar experience with a student who was really angry during a class once. The student was asked to leave and the student never returned to the class after the incident. Tony recalled having three similar incidents of students who were angry with him during his time at the community college.

Mary explained that she has had to deal with more behavioral issues and these mainly involve students being disruptive in the classroom. She described how:

In my role, I have to deal sometimes with very upset students. And so, I have asked a couple times when a male student has tried to intimidate me because they were upset with their professor, that I've asked them to step back or that I would call security. There was a situation even this semester, I didn't feel, I don't know. It's not unsafe in so much as I don't know that student. I can't predict what that student’s going to do.

We had a situation this semester. An instructor was having a student who was very disruptive to the learning environment. So I felt, after meeting with him the first time, I did not wish to meet with him again.
Mary described how she has to balance doing what is best for the student on top of maintaining a safe learning environment. Raheem also has dealt with some disruptive students and if they did not take his suggestions to calm down, or leave the class, he would call for a campus police officer who would deal with the situation. Frida felt that “there’s a huge lack of conversation about what to do with difficult students, what to do with students that are mad about their grade, what do you do with students who disrespect your authority in the classroom.”

It is not just disruptive students who can have an effect on how safe someone believes they are on campus. Frida described an issue she had with a fellow faculty member:

I was the new kid... I was next to this guy…and I think he's a little off. He's been here for like 25 years and so he's definitely got seniority and…he would like talk to himself…which was really bizarre. But I was like, whatever we're all just trying to make it in the world. But at one point he was mad at his computer…and he started smashing his fist on the desk and, ”You motherfucker this, fuck you”…I was like, for one, we're at work you can't act like that at work.

Frida was able to bring this to the attention of her superiors but advised them that she wanted to handle the issue herself, which she did. But she felt comfortable that if her intervention did not work, her superiors would have reacted appropriately to the situation with the other faculty member.
Violence

Although the interview questions did not ask the participants about active shooters, 14 of the 20 participants mentioned the issue. This term was mentioned in regards to the training that occurs on campus, but it also related to how campus safety issues have changed on their campus. The participants were cognizant of the impact an active shooter event would have on their college campuses.

Holly said that when the shootings started, at Virginia Tech, it became a bigger part of campus safety. She said these events led to more training on campus. Jane said that training was added after there was a school shooting on a different campus. This has had an effect on the way faculty and staff deal with potential problems. For Terri, active shooters were not something that she thought about when she started working. She said, “I’ve been here 25 years. Twenty-five years ago, that would have been a very rare thing, and now, unfortunately, you can hear about one every week or so.”

Mary went back farther when she said that “in terms of being a professional, it was the Columbine shootings that I really started to notice changes happening on campus with respect to security, and safety, and training.” Julie talked about what this has done in terms of changing how she handles things:

I think it was all the shootings that are out there. I think it's been huge, makes you a lot more aware, more sensitive to students when they're coming in or other people, and how they're acting. One of the people in my office, we have a thing, if it's a student coming in, now we usually use the conference room, whereas before we would have used his office, where he cannot get out if the student was irate for some reason.
She also said that “we just never know who has got a gun in their backpack...we had a lockdown a few years ago. They thought he had a rifle under a trench coat. I guess you just always have to be aware.” Anne furthered described this same incident and how the school went into lockdown “because a student identified someone, they were carrying an umbrella it turns out, they said it almost looked like a weapon.” She explained that everyone did what they were supposed to do bases on the training they received, and she feels great that someone is “taking initiative here and actually doing something about safety.”

There was a shooting that occurred on campus property in a housing unit. Pam said that they started to follow the protocol in place and information was shared about the incident with students, faculty, and staff so they knew “the progress of the situation.” Sue felt that “we are a safe campus. But I think right now, what’s in everyone’s mind are the active shooters or the active intruder coming to campus and doing harm on campus.” According to Jane, “we don't feel like this would be a campus that would be targeted. However, I'm sure every campus feels the same way before it happens.” Patrick seemed to have the perspective that “this is a different world. The school shootings are, they happen so often we forget about them almost any more.” Terri seemed to be aware of safety issues relating to active shooters:

Well, right now, our windows are big gaping holes and we worry about that. Someone could easily come over the window. We are going to be moving and hopefully having more of a lobby situation. So I'm not sure if that's going to be an improvement, or, there's a debate whether that's going to be an improvement or not for safety in our office. It'll certainly be more open-feeling for students, and
an opportunity to shut doors. But in a normal day-to-day business, I think it may be, creates a little bit more risk for someone that might be trying to rob us or being an active shooter. So that's just the nature of that business.

There are more than active shooters or threats that constitute violence on campuses. Barbara recalled calling the campus police department when there were two students fighting near her work area. Patrick said that, “we live in an angry time right now, which is sad.”

One topic that was rarely mentioned in regards to violence on campus was rape, or sexual assault. Joe mentioned that as far as he could recall there had been only one report of sexual assault since he has been on campus. Mary was not sure if there was ever a reported rape on her campus. Tony believed that there was a lot more national attention to rapes on campus.

Training

The second research question related to programs and processes in place to enhance safety on campus. The participants were asked questions relating to what kind of training is offered on their campuses. All participants were able to describe that they have been through some type of active shooter training that covers how they should respond to an active shooter/threat. Most of the participants were able to describe how this was something that is required of new employees and that it is part of a back to school in-service that is provided to all employees each year.

All but two of the participants were able to describe the active shooter training they received as ALICE training. The acronym ALICE means alert, lockdown, inform,
counter, and evacuate. It is a training program that is designed to teach individuals and organizations how to handle an active shooter or aggressive intruder incident (ALICE, 2018).

Holly said that all staff had gone through ALICE training face-to-face and now they have to do it online. Jane was not sure if it was required, but she thought that almost everyone has completed the training. Frida, who has been a faculty member for a little over a year, said that she has been given the ALICE training and that “I’ve seen it two times, the spring and fall semester” during a welcome back week. Dee described the training:

What I noticed in the training is that they tell us just don’t sit there being a sitting duck, to fight back, to knock out a window and get out if you can, and don’t just sit there, waiting to be shot but to fight back, throw books, throw any objects.

Patrick recalled that he could still remember some things that were taught during his training and that “in a lot of situations the best thing to do is get off campus and not huddle your class in a room in a corner but to disperse.” One aspect of the training that Johnny recalled was that “we need to lock our classrooms, our door from the inside so no one can get into the room.” Julie wished was that “they would encourage more for students to participate in” this type of training so that the students are “not overly fearful. I think they need to be aware, but not be scared…it’s a lifelong message to them that they’ll take with them wherever they go.”

Natalie recalled that she has been through ALICE training and that a training similar to ALICE was held specifically for her department that involved role-playing:
We're a large department. We have 18 people, so there's one specific to us. Our director asked our whole department to go, and I cannot remember, it was similar to ALICE, or maybe it was, maybe it was a branch of ALICE, but it was more specific and it was actual role-playing.

During this training specific to her department, they did not practice barricading doors, but they were “pretty educated as far as what we ought to do” during an active shooter or active threat scenario. Anne also described a more real life scenario that she participated in:

There was a whole group of us that took a course that we would watch a video. And then they had some people sign up to do this kind of a scenario. So basically we were all on the second floor of one of the buildings over here. And we're all in groups. We were in different rooms. So, we had somebody that was the shooter, with a big bull horn out in the area, and whenever you heard that you had to take cover.

So, it was an interesting exercise to me, to see how people react, because I've always wondered how would I react in a situation like that. So, I was in a group with three other people, and then there were several other groups in other classrooms. And so, when you hear the bull horn you're supposed to figure what you're going to do. So, of course, the doors don't lock from the inside, so you have to worry, how you're going to protect yourself. It was interesting for me to see how some people don't know what to do.
One group, I saw or I heard later, they had a little bit of a conflict because some of them wanted to run, and some of them wanted to stay in place. So, there's conflict. So, you have to deal with all these things of the conflict. You have to deal with how you're going to protect yourself; and essentially, it's your decision. Whatever happens, you make your own decision for yourself and you make it happen. So, it was very interesting to see all the different dynamics that played out with that.

And I would say that I took control.

Another area of training that some of the participants discussed was in regards to the Clery Act and Title IX. Joe said that on his campus, “they work to make sure they’re doing all the stuff that’s required from Clery and Title IX” and how they have training on it every year. Barbara shared that there is more training on Clery and how to report crimes because “we want people to report” and to report it “before something becomes a major issue.” Barbara also is involved with Clery issues on her campus, and said with Title IX “we’re trying to help shift culture.”

Jem said that when a new employee is hired there is always a Title IX training in the orientation process. Holly believed that it is important “to keep training new staff as they come on board at the college to be aware of the procedures.” Pam has noticed an increase of knowledge and visibility in reference to Title IX, Clery Act and VAWA training. Frida’s view on training was a little different than the others in that “we do get trained on Title IX pretty heavily because our fed dollars are racked up in that and we are terrified that our fed dollars are going to be taken away.”
There were other trainings that were discussed during the interviews. Tristan has noticed that they have been “having more fire drills, they do test the tornado siren.” Terri also discussed how they do more fire and tornado drills. Also, in her area the campus police come in once a year and offer them safety training specific to their office as well as for other campus safety issues. Patrick talked about how these drills have had an impact on safety:

I mean there's been more school shootings than there have been people killed in school fires. Sometimes people think it's a little silly but I'm like, ‘Well, you know, people don't think fire alarms are silly or sprinklers or fire drills.’ But, there's been nobody killed in a school fire for, oh, decades.

Mary discussed how the college has created Building Emergency Leaders (BELs); and, they go through regular trainings that can encompass different emergency situations. Holly received training through FEMA regarding emergency procedures and is on a building emergency team. She was not sure, but, she thought there was maybe “four staff who have gone through CERT training, which is Community Emergency Response Training.” At CC1 there is a full-time employee who is dedicated to emergency management. She is the one who is seen as the go-to person for safety issues and training. According to Jane, she is the one who “gives us a heads up on what’s happening with safety.”

Anne has also been trained “in an emergency, how to cater to people who might be bleeding out because of gunshots or whatever. Which is sad to say; but, it’s something
we need to know.” Anne was also the only participant to talk about receiving any type of CPR training while at the community college.

Some of the participants felt that there needed to be more training in the area of mental health. Barbara felt that there was “another improvement that we could do. I think we could have more training on how to deal with mental illness.” Barbara elaborated:

We are not trained psychologists, I'm not suggesting that. I'm just saying that we have students with various levels of needs, and oftentimes students who have some level of mental illness. People react with fear because they don't know what to do. They don't know how to recognize it. We now have a veteran's center which is great because we have students here with PTSD.

Even though Tristan felt safe on campus, he said that he knows “some people have a lot of concerns; and, we have more and more students who seem to have mental issues of one sort or another. And, sometimes that can lead to volatile situations.” Mary said that recently there was a suicidal student in a restroom. Natalie also said, “there is a huge uptick in mental illness situations.” Pam shared about a time she had to deal with a student who was mentally ill. This student did not want to follow a proper protocol and started to get loud with Barbara so she had to call the campus police. Barbara shared more about this issue and her dealing with the student who was mentally ill:

Because we have had students that are mentally ill and they just do weird things. And, sometimes those weird things can create an unsafe environment. They get upset easy, escalate easy. They triggered easily. They won't reason. And when
you call campus police and they, it just escalates them, when really it should
hopefully de-escalate and it just takes them to that level. So yeah, that's probably
another issue.

But this particular situation…the student came in. She was upset. She wouldn't
come down. She went, it triggered her somewhere, because she didn't want to
follow the protocol. And, I had to go make a police report, and that's it. So, that
was probably the only time. So, the hard part is, I'm way back here in my office.
In here. And, so, it's easy for me to take for granted my personal safety had she
had a gun.

Frida, who is a newer employee, believed people like her “need to be trained more
on what’s available and who to call when and where, what and why. So, first off, just
knowing the gamut of what’s available, who’s available, what’s an appropriate response
to certain threats.” Anne discussed her thoughts on the training that she has received at
her community college:

I feel pretty secure here on campus, so hopefully we never have to utilize, you
know, all those different techniques and things like that. But they train us, but, I
do feel comfortable knowing what they have. You know, showed us, and this and
that. But, you know, you never know how you're going to react until you're
actually in a particular situation. But I think, you know, they prepare us as much
as we possibly can be prepared.
Reporting

The participants were asked a question about how they report safety issues on their campuses. Many of them said that they would call the campus police to report any safety issues they have. This could be accomplished by calling the campus police phone number or sending an email to someone directly that deals with safety issues on the campus. Barbara and Johnny said that any issues they had they would report them to the campus police by calling them on the telephone. Tony said “there’s a number and they’re a building way. So I’ll usually go down the hall and talk if I’m really concerned about it.” Jane said that “the policy is if you see something, say something…I feel like as a faculty member, we are almost obligated to report anything suspicious but I do not know if that’s the procedure.”

In addition to alerting the campus police about any safety issues on campus, the faculty and staff members discussed other means that they would report issues. Some of the participants knew that there were emergency buttons, also called panic buttons, in certain offices that would alert the campus police that there is an issue that needs their response. Natalie, Pam and Terri said there is a button in their offices that can be activated for emergencies. Barbara was aware that they existed on her campus.

Other participants talked about emergency phones that were on their campus that can be utilized to alert campus police in an emergency. According to Marie, “we also have the opportunity, if we happen to be on campus, that there's those little blue lights that there’s a phone where you can report anything going on.” In Julie’s area they have
developed a code word if someone is having an issue that they need police assistance with. When staff hear the code word they know to call the campus police.

There were other people who could receive reports of safety issues on campus. Tristan said “for low urgency things, I would probably go through risk management.” On Mary’s campus there is a behavioral intervention team (BIT) that she could report issues to. Holly would contact her boss for some safety issues or report others to maintenance, a light being out was an example she shared. For Barbara, it would depend on the situation:

If there's something that is more systemic that I find concerning, I will probably talk to my dean. I mean, it just depends on the level of that. Sometimes, I will go straight and talk directly to maintenance of buildings and grounds, or, I might even escalate it up to the CFO.

Tony would report safety issues to campus police but, will also “talk to my colleagues and my dean just kind of informally.” In Jem’s office, there is a person who would handle a student who may be irate and if that did not work:

Depending on the severity of the situation, we would have to make, or he would have to make a decision to say, okay, this is getting past my area of expertise. Then they would probably be directed to the counseling office to speak with a counselor or someone of that nature.

A few of the faculty and staff members were also aware of the need to report
IX issues. Jem knew who the person to contact was on her campus for gender bias or similar issues. Barbara is involved with Title IX issues on her campus and is familiar with the process. Pam explained the Title IX process at her community college:

> With Title IX we have confidential reporting as well. We have places on the internet to go. We have reporting forms around campus for Title IX, where students can fill out and then turn in, you know, anonymously. We have confidential reporting in our Student Counseling Advocacy center and our nurse is, I think, a confidential person… I can fill out paperwork, or I can have one-on-one conversations.

Pam elaborated more on Title IX:

> I can go to my dean and I can tell my dean, immediately, "Hey this is going on" and then he can report out to the next level. Specifically for Title IX we have a Title IX coordinator. So if I feel like there's a safety issue regarding that, I can go directly to my Title IX coordinator and report it and then she can take it to the next level, to our dean and campus police and president and all that, attorneys…

A difference in reporting safety issues is that there is a difference between CC1 and CC2 in that CC1 has a person whose title is emergency preparedness manager. Some of the faculty and staff at CC1 were able to mention the name of this person or their job title. Sue informed me that they “didn’t have that position before. If we had it, it was someone who was doing that along with multiple other things.” She could also inform that person if she saw a problem with the emergency lighting on campus. Sue also informed me that this person has also helped to put protocols in place to respond to safety
Mary said that this person offers on-going training and that if “we need an evacuation plan, you know, I just pick up the phone and call” the emergency preparedness manager. Patrick described the person in this position as “very passionate and knowledgeable” about the job they do. In Holly’s area, “we’ve always been pretty safety conscious…so we were already doing fire drills once a month, 12 months out of the year. We were already doing tornado drills once a month for about six months out of the year.” But she has noticed that with the hiring of an emergency preparedness manager that these drills are now campus-wide.

There have also been improvements in the way that faculty and staff are able to report emergencies or other safety issues. Patrick said:

One thing that I was really adamant about they didn't have for a long time was the ability to text an emergency as opposed to a phone call. I think they finally have that because there are times that you may not want to draw attention by picking up a phone or making a phone call but you could shoot off a quick text that, “Hey, we need to have somebody at, you know, this classroom.” So they finally got that.

Natalie explained that faculty and staff are encouraged to have an application, app, on their phone where they can report issues. Dee said that there is “a form you’ll fill out online, go straight to security to tell them if you had any reportable incidents this semester.”

Some of the faculty and staff members discussed how those responsible for safety issues also report back information to them. In addition to an app, Jane explained that “they will take over the computers too now and they’ll start blinking if there is some sort
of emergency. Whether it’s fire, whether it’s a tornado, or whether it’s an intruder.”
Marie explained that they are notified during emergencies “via phone, via computer, text messaging.” In addition to phone, computer, and text message alerts, Holly added that “we’ve had a PA system installed campus-wide…we’ve also in the last, I don’t know, five to six years, TV monitors have been added.” These TV monitors could also display information during an emergency situation. Johnny wondered if there’s some other way to convey a message to the faculty when something happens on campus. “But it’s also our part. Sometimes we don’t just pay much attention.”

**Campus Police**

I asked the participants if they have ever used the services of the campus police force, and if they did, what caused this to occur. Other questions to the participants also led to the participants responses that included the campus police. During the interviews, I was also cognizant to not show bias because of my job as a campus police officer. I may have succeeded in this effort because after the interview with Joe he was surprised to learn that I was a police officer. He said he can usually tell who is and isn’t a cop. Unless the participants did prior research, I did not reveal my profession until after the participant interviews were concluded.

All of the faculty and staff members who were interviewed were aware that they had a campus police force. When Dee talked about how to report issues on campus, he said “you can just dial the operator and tell them you need security, or the police. They’re police.” This was the only time where anyone called them security. Dee corrected himself and continued to say, “They are police officers. They just have a
limited jurisdiction to this campus.” Tristan described the change he has seen in his more than 20 years at CC1:

Quite a bit actually. When I first started, we did not have an official police department. The security officers were not armed. So that has changed dramatically. We now have a pretty substantial police department and they’re uniformed. They are armed, and, they roam the halls. And so, that was, pretty big.

He also described the evolution of safety on campus as it has “gone from having very minimal security to having a full-fledged police force where you have uniformed, armed officers everywhere you turn.” Terri, with more than 25 years of employment as a staff member at CC1, described a similar change as “the police force has changed from not carrying guns to an actual police force with guns.” In Sue’s 30 years she noticed that her community college went from “a safety force when I first started here to a sworn police force on campus.”

Having actual police officers on the campuses was generally well-received by those who were interviewed. Pam shared her thoughts:

We have a really great campus police. We're privileged to have commissioned officers on our campus, where a lot of community colleges have securities. So they just kind of, you know, go through motions. Our campus police, I mean, they're legit officers. They can arrest you and all that. So they do really a good job in making sure we're safe.

Joe’s previous experiences at other institutions were that they only had security and with CC2:
I know the campus has a pretty, I would say there is ultimately a strong focus on campus safety, for the size of campus. For one, they have a full-fledged police department. So that will be more than the two colleges that I attended which were larger.

Barbara believed that there was a benefit to having a campus police because “they're real police, and so, I think that's one of the really good things about this campus. You know, in some campuses, they have hired security. So we've had people who've had a lot of training.” But she also did say:

In general, you know, there's a high reliance on campus police instead of people addressing situations, and, I mean, that's my perspective…if I see students arguing, I will go and intervene, but, many folks will not do that. They'll just call campus police to respond. And you know, they respond very quickly. But, you can nip things in the bud sometimes without allowing it to escalate.

Frida knew why the campus police were there and that they are “super friendly.” But she also shared that she is “actually terrified of cops…I study the data.” She did offer more on her thoughts of the campus police:

Everyone here is so nice. I've always like had great experiences, whenever I talked to the police in the police department about ID or my driver or car registration for the parking and, you know, during ALICE training, they're really nice and they're very respectful, and, I love that. Yeah. I love interacting with them. So, I know where they are if I needed to talk to them.
There are many ways that the campus police are utilized on their respective campuses. In addition to assisting with training, they also respond to various calls for service. Natalie called the campus police early one morning when she “walked by the business offices and the door was wide open.” The campus police came over to “check it out and we don’t know why the door was open.”

Mary shared her experience when she calls the campus police:

Yeah. I have always felt that they've responded in a timely manner and I've always felt that they've taken it serious. Like they never made you feel like, "oh you shouldn't have called." That's never been my experience. It is always, "you should call.” Better to be safe than sorry.

Patrick called the campus police one Halloween when “there was a kid hanging around in the stairwells with a big mask on, a real creepy mask, got a big black robe, and, I'm sure it was okay.” But, he felt it was suspicious so he called. Anne knows that “if somebody calls in with a threat, they're going to take a look at it, and make sure that, you know, everything is all taken care of.”

Campus police will respond to requests from faculty and staff members to show a police presence in certain situations. Terri has requested campus police officers to respond to her office to help be a presence during certain times or to help with people who stay later than they should. They also come to her office each year to go over safety issues specific to her office area. Julie requested their presence in her office once because they had a student, and, they weren’t sure how the student would react to a talk. During this encounter, “just to know that they were sitting outside the door” put her at
ease. Tony felt the campus police’s presence was “pretty helpful” when he asked them to be around the area of a class he had because of a concern about a student. Pam has utilized the campus police often:

Yeah. I've used campus police a lot. A lot of people are afraid, you know. A lot of people don't like to call campus police, but, I call for anything. If I notice, like, the game room's getting' a little rowdy, I'll ask campus police on purpose to come down and make a presence. Because I just want them to just walk through, and, I want my students to know that, one, I'm not your friend. I am staff who cares about everyone on this campus, and, if there's a safety issue that's posed, I will address it right away. And I'm not going to risk my livelihood for someone else's ignorance. And they all know I will call on them.

Providing escorts from a building to a vehicle is something that is provided by the campus police at both community colleges. Barbara would call campus police to walk her to her car. Pam talked about walking to her car; and how “when it's dark, it's kind of weird sometimes. But what's really amazing is our campus police will, if we call them and say ’Hey, can I get an escort to my car?’ they'll escort us to the car.” Anne knew that she could pick up the phone and call “and they can come escort me, or I can grab a co-worker and we can walk out together.”

There are various other types of calls for service that the campus police will respond to on their campuses. Anne called them when “there was one time that I had a little accident on campus… and they were very prompt and very, very professional, and very courteous and all that.” Frida would use the campus police if she needed to have her vehicle to be jumpstarted because “I’ve heard of that before.” Jem lost a personal item
once on her campus and reported it to the campus police. Even though they tried to find
the item, it was never located. Joe has utilized the services of the campus police when he
needed them to unlock doors for him, and, Marie had a similar experience as well on a
weekend. Tony called the police when he found someone was taking books from campus
and the police removed the person from campus. Natalie explained that maybe once a
month or so “somebody wanders off and leaves their backpack. But they do not like, as
in the police…do not like lonely backpacks sitting around.” Jane requested a paramedic
once, and, the campus police arrived as well. Mary described how, “if a student burns
themselves, or cut themselves, the police will come over and they’ll write up an incident
report.” Anne also detailed what happens if someone is hurt:

If it's something that is more serious than, like, you know, somebody is injured, or
something like that, we do have a protocol. So we will call, we will certainly
notify the dispatch and they will send someone over. And then, of course, there's
paperwork and all that stuff that needs to be dealt with.

Being visible on campus was something that was brought up during the
interviews. Jane said she feels “like they do a pretty good job. And we have a pretty
good police presence. I mean, you see them walking the halls daily. I've gotten to know
several of the police officers. So, I like that personal touch.” In discussing the visibility
of law enforcement, Joe stated that, “they’re very visible here.” During the semester the
interviews took place, Tony said that he taught a night class and he always sees “them
around, in the parking lot and occasionally in the hallway. But definitely in the parking
lot, which is a good thing. And they’re usually pretty sociable.” Pam believed that her
“campus police does a really great job in having a presence on campus.” Natalie said that “the police presence on our campus is very good. We see them a lot.”

Two participants did offer advice on how they would change the visibility of the campus police. Dee said:

The police, they're everywhere. I guess they can, you could have one in the main entrance maybe, maybe walking the building. You know, most of the time, they’re out driving their car round and round, but, I guess it would be good just to have one walking around in the building all the time, like a foot patrol.

The advice that Tony offered in regarding to changing the way that the campus police patrol:

I don't think there's too much. But I guess maybe if I had the person power, I'd make the campus police a little more visible in some of the hallways that aren't populated very much. They already do some of that. I mean I see them walking around; but at night, you know, there's a limited amount of police and there are a whole lot of hallways.

Two of the people who were interviewed, Anne and Raheem, have unique experiences in dealing with the campus police. Anne works in conjunction with the campus police when certain events happen on her campus. She said that the campus police:

Works very well and in conjunction with other, you know, area, local agencies. They make sure that the areas where we have events are, you know, they're swept,
they're safe, they're secure and all that. So, I think, you know, because of our relationship with all the other safety and security, you know, entities out there, I feel that we do a pretty good job with taking care of that.

She went into further detail about a political event that happened on campus and how her staff and campus police had to make sure that “we had all of the safety and security in place. So, of course, we have to arrange a meeting and get all of our ducks in a row, and just make sure that all the protocols are followed.” She said that she is in touch with the campus police department “on a regular basis.”

Raheem is unique because he works off of the main campus of CC2 in a satellite location. He knows the campus police officer assigned to his location by name and the officer “just does a good job about being seen.” Raheem thinks the community college is “smart about rotating officers out…he'll be there for a month and then they'll switch out.” He likes how they do this and how it allows for other officers to “see more of the campus, they can react a lot better.” The officer assigned to his building is good about sharing information as well as defusing situations:

I did have a student, one of those court mandated kind of students. Instead of them just getting pushed into the system and lost, they make them come to school, and make them do their GED, or make them finish school, or whatever. We had a couple that were kind of out of control, but… stepped in real quick and defused that kid and his mom.

Raheem described the officer’s presence and how “he has his car right out front every day; so, it's not like you don't know he's there.” The officer assigned to his building also
“does a good job of getting around and being seen. So he’ll walk around to all the classrooms.” In regards to the safety of his building, Raheem said, “I think they do a fine job on our campus…and the other officers do a great job over there.”

**Concealed Carry**

I did not ask any questions about concealed carry during the interviews. I was cognizant that campus concealed carry was an issue; but, I deliberately chose not to ask a question about it. I wanted to see if the participants would bring this topic up on their own. Many of the interviewees shared their opinion on the topic. Firearms are allowed on both of the community colleges where the faculty and staff members in this study work.

Barbara said that “most of the faculty and staff, of course, were opposed” to allowing concealed firearms on campus. She believes that this has increased some fear and concern about safety. Dee shared that he is “not a fan, but we can be armed on campus. However, I don’t know if anyone there is.” Prior to firearms being allowed on campus, Pam stated that “I know people carried all the time before that.” She is aware that they are now allowed on campus. She also described how the college has to make a decision if they want to keep their graduation ceremonies gun free, and if they do, that they have to take measures. They have metal detectors at the points of entry to ensure no guns enter the ceremony.

Raheem is “not a big fan of being able to carry a concealed weapon on campus…I get the numbers don’t bear my anxiety about it, but, I still don’t like the fact. But, it’s the law.” He further explained:
You know, I just, you get some of these students that they're young and, you know, your 21, 22 year olds that, you know, they all talk a big game. And I'm like, "man, I hope he doesn't have a gun in his bag," because you know? And I just, because it's a learning environment, it's a school you shouldn't have to have a gun, but I know the realities of the world, so.

Julie is concerned about concealed carry on campus because “we just never know who has a gun in their backpack. We had a lock down a few years ago. They thought he had a rifle under a trench coat. I guess you just always have to be aware.”

Tony does not “like that people could have concealed guns in class.” Marie shared that “there was a former faculty member here, who I worked with before in the K-12 system, who, she let that be her deciding factor to terminate teaching any longer.” She also said concealed carry on campus allows people to be “not feeling safe in a classroom if students could, or anybody, it's not just students, someone could carry a gun on campus.” Tristan talked about how the colleges now allow “concealed carry weapons on our campus. The rationale for that was often given being a safety concern. Personnel was opposed to that, like other people were, but the argument was that we’d be safer with people having guns here.” He laughed when he finished this statement about concealed weapons.

Pam said there are “a lot of unknowns when it comes to conceal and carry.” She shared how the protocol is to call campus police if they see someone with a firearm and wondered if those with a visible firearm are “intentionally open carry or are they using it
for intimidation? There’s just a lot of questions.” She elaborated more on her thoughts about concealed carry:

Yes. It keeps us on guard. And, it’s not that I walk through the campus and look for someone if they're carrying, if it's open carry, because it's they have to, it's carry and conceal. Or conceal and carry. But it does, you know, I wonder about the classrooms that talk about those hard topics that people get upset about. You know, if they're carrying, will they get kind of crazy? It's died down. That was a big issue. Would it take away the safety inside the classrooms?

But, it has died down. So, nothing's happened. We haven't had any issues. I haven't seen. I have a game room that they get pretty excited about these games and get upset about games, losing. And, I haven't seen anything in there yet. That would, that would be the first place that I would expect.

Mary admitted that she thought concealed carry “was going to create a lot of problems, but so far it has not.” She continued:

I haven't had to deal with any issues like that as of yet. And that just created a lot of anxiety for faculty. But we tried to tap into our resources here and we had the police department come and give presentations to faculty in our division to help alleviate some of that anxiety.

Patrick said that he is “not anti-gun” but feels that there needs to be something more than just allowing people to carry concealed firearms on campus. He talked about how you have to follow certain rules for automobiles and fireworks, but, there is no training when it comes to having a firearm. He said that “I’m not anti-Second Amendment, but, at the
same time, I just think that there are these common sense regulations that would be nice to have.”

**Summary**

In this chapter, I discussed the research findings. This chapter included a description of the participants and analysis of the interviews with the participants. The interviews yielded six themes that are relevant to campus safety. The six themes were safety, violence, training, reporting, campus police, and concealed carry. The next chapter is a summary of the themes and how they relate to the research questions.
CHAPTER FIVE

SUMMARY

When analyzing the data through the conceptual framework of campus safety issues, we can observe how the six themes that were developed: safety, violence, training, reporting, campus police, and concealed carry, in answering the research questions that were the focus of the study.

RQ1 – How do faculty and staff members at community colleges feel about their safety while on their respective campuses?

All of the faculty and staff members who were interviewed felt safe on their campuses (See Table 2). These responses varied. “We feel pretty safe,” “we never felt unsafe,” “I find myself pretty safe here,” “I feel like our campus is pretty safe,” and “when I come to work every day, I feel safe.” Even though they indicated they felt safe on their campus, nearly all of the faculty and staff did express concerns about certain areas or certain situations on their campuses that could cause them to have some issues in regards to their safety.

One area that was of concern for seven of the interviewees was parking lots or parking garages. Although no one shared any negative experiences that they or someone else had in regards to an incident happening in a parking lot, they talked about the uneasiness they had. The uneasiness was described by interview subjects as “I can understand why someone might feel a little uneasy going back to car late at night;” “I was on campus for an event the other night and walking to my car…I don’t think I necessarily felt unsafe but I think about it more;” “maybe the parking garage, because it
can be a little low-lit”; and “if I had to say that I felt unsafe, as far as like walking to my car.”

Table 2

Quotes Relating to Safety on Campus

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name</th>
<th>Safety Quote</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Natalie</td>
<td>“I wouldn’t say I feel unsafe”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Marie</td>
<td>“I have not and I’m thankful I have not <em>(felt unsafe)</em>”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Julie</td>
<td>“It’s probably not too bad”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Holly</td>
<td>“I have never really felt unsafe here”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Terri</td>
<td>“I find myself pretty safe here”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Anne</td>
<td>“I totally feel safe on this campus”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sue</td>
<td>“I feel like we are a safe campus”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mary</td>
<td>“I feel safe on my campus”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jane</td>
<td>“I feel like we have a pretty safe environment”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Patrick</td>
<td>“It’s a very safe campus”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tristan</td>
<td>“As far as I know, the college remains a pretty safe place”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tony</td>
<td>“I feel like this campus is pretty safe”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Joe</td>
<td>“Personally, no, I would say not really <em>(felt unsafe).</em>”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Johnny</td>
<td>“I never felt unsafe, to be honest”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dee</td>
<td>“No, not this campus <em>(felt unsafe)</em>”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Frida</td>
<td>“This place is actually really chill”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pam</td>
<td>“I’m pretty safe there walking in the building”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jem</td>
<td>“The hours that I am here I feel perfectly safe”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Barbara</td>
<td>“Overall, I feel like our campus is pretty safe”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Raheem</td>
<td>“Not really <em>(felt unsafe)</em>”</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

A situation that could cause faculty and staff members to feel unsafe on their campus related to the time of day. If they were on campus when it was dark, this could lead to some uneasiness when walking in a building or walking to a car. Thirteen individuals mentioned this issue. One individual said, “I’ve worked a few late evenings…it can be a little spooky depending on where you park.” Another person said, “I was on one side of the campus, my car was on the other, so you know, so I would say evening probably.” Another individual said, “So at night time…I don’t always feel as
safe as if it’s during the day.” One participant said, “at night maybe inside the buildings in the hallways it’s kind of deserted.”

Even though some of the faculty and staff members discussed issues with parking lots/garages and being on campus during the evening and night time, some individuals described these and other areas as generally well-lit. One said, “looking around at lighting on campus has improved, emergency lights on campus that used to never be here.” Another participant said, “we do have a pretty well-lit campus.” A third individual remarked, “I feel the campus is very well lighted.”

Another situation mentioned by 10 participants that can cause concern for safety was dealing with disruptive students. One respondent said, “I had one student get really angry in a class once.” A second person noted, “there’s just a lot more behavioral types of things that I deal with now, I’m thinking of right now three incidents with students where they were really angry with me.” A third individual stated, “I had a couple of…kids that were just acting stupid.” A fourth participant said, “we’ve had students that are mentally ill and they just do weird things.”

A safety issue that was of concern to faculty and staff members involved acts of violence. The main concern for active shooters was shared by the participants. They are now more aware of the issue.

Other forms of violence that were mentioned by the faculty and staff members included, “there was a girl that was taken recently (at a location near campus);” “there was a shooting in housing one year, that was unique;” and, “people shoving each other in parking lots.”
Concealed carry on campus was a topic that the faculty and staff members talked about during the interviews. I knew this had the potential to be an issue; but, I purposely did not ask any questions about it unless it was brought up first by the person I was interviewing. During the interviews 11 of the 20 faculty and staff members mentioned concealed carry. None of them divulged that they advocated for its implementation on campus. Of the 11, three indicated that concealed carry has not caused any issues on their campuses.

Even though all of the faculty and staff members who were interviewed said that they felt safe on their campus, they were able to explain situations that could make them feel unsafe or situations that could make others feel unsafe on campus. This indicates a basic awareness of the safety issues that occur on their respective campuses. RQ2 addressed the availability of resources on the campuses related to campus safety.

**RQ2 – What programs or processes are in place on their campuses that faculty and staff members at community colleges can utilize to enhance their safety?**

The 20 participants discussed the training programs that were in place that can enhance safety on campus. All 20 individuals stated that they received some type of training that covers active shooters and 18 individuals were able to name the training they received. Eleven individuals at CC1 stated they received ALICE training. This type of training was the most discussed. No one indicated that it was an ineffective type of training.

Other trainings that were cited by the participants included Clery and Title IX training. These were mentioned by 6 of the 20 faculty and staff members as trainings
they received. Only faculty and staff members at CC2 mentioned this training. Also, five of the 20 participants mentioned they had periodic tornado or fire drills to practice shelter and evacuation procedures.

Another process in place for faculty and staff members to enhance their safety related to reporting issues they observed on campuses. When reporting a safety issue on campus, 19 individuals said that they would call the campus police. At CC1, 8 of the 11 faculty and staff members interviewed were able to say what the direct campus number was that they would need to dial for the campus police. At CC2, the way they would report to police varied but none of them stated the direct campus number to summon the campus police.

Campus police can be used to enhance safety. All 20 of the faculty and staff members that were interviewed were aware that their campus had a campus police department. Seven faculty and staff members pointed out, in various ways, that the campus police were actual police officers instead of security. When it came to visibility and having a presence on campus, 11 interviewees mentioned their campus police force having this kind of effect on safety. The campus police force also are able to enhance safety by providing escorts, giving training to faculty and staff members, responding to calls for service, and assisting other departments on campus.

The availability and use of video cameras was mentioned by eight of the faculty and staff members as an enhancement to safety. Some of those interviewed knew exactly where the cameras were located. One commented, “there’s a camera right outside this door.” Others just had a general knowledge that cameras existed on their campus. One said, “I know we have cameras everywhere.”
There are multiple programs or processes in place that faculty and staff members at community colleges can utilize to enhance safety. This includes trainings offered by campus safety authorities, reporting issues to the proper authorities, utilizing the services offered by the campus police force, and installation of video cameras. Being familiar with these procedures should allow faculty and staff members to be safer while they are on their campuses.

*RQ3 – How have campus safety issues changed for faculty and staff members at their community colleges?*

Active shooters or active threats were mentioned in some form by 19 of the 20 faculty and staff members (See Table 3). Some interviewees talked about this issue in terms of safety issues that have changed at their community colleges. A few mentioned it in regards to training. It was an issue that was discussed by many of the faculty and staff members.

Another campus safety issue that changed for long time employees was the campus police force. Of the four faculty and staff members who have more than 20 years of service, three described how there was not a police department when they started. Tristan pointed out that, “when I first started, we did not have an official police department. The security officers were not armed.” Sue said there was a transition from a safety force to a sworn police force. Terri said, “the police force has changed from not carrying guns to an actual police force.”
Table 3

Responses that Mention Active Shooters/Threats

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name</th>
<th>Quote</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Natalie</td>
<td>“The threat of active shooter…is probably the biggest concern”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Marie</td>
<td>“You can’t always tell by looking at someone if they end up to be a threat”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Julie</td>
<td>“All the shootings that are out there…makes you a lot more aware”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Holly</td>
<td>“I think when the shootings started” <em>(referencing national influences)</em></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Terri</td>
<td>“Twenty-five years ago that would have been a very rare thing”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Anne</td>
<td>“Went into lockdown mode because…it almost looked like a weapon”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sue</td>
<td>“What’s in everyone’s mind are the active shooters”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mary</td>
<td>“It’s always a threat if there’s going to be a shooting on campus”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jane</td>
<td>“We added ALICE training…after there was a school shooting”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Patrick</td>
<td>“They happen so often we forget about them”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tristan</td>
<td>“I think it’s in response to the school shootings”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tony</td>
<td>“Once a year training on if there’s a shooting situation on campus”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Joe</td>
<td>“Maybe I should be more paranoid, but I’m not”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Johnny</td>
<td>“This violent attack and how to defend our self”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dee</td>
<td>“It’s going to happen here eventually”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Frida</td>
<td>“When I was at the university it was different…when you talk about school shootings”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pam</td>
<td>“Just be mentally ill and do something with guns on campus”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jem</td>
<td>None</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Barbara</td>
<td>“If there’s an active shooter situation…there’s going to be an assumption that you’re holding the gun, that you are the bad guy”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Raheem</td>
<td>“I’d hate to have it over here because of the multiple buildings”</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

While discussed under RQ2, Clery and Title IX training was something that was mentioned by six of the faculty and staff members as training they received. This training was mentioned by those employed at CC2. These trainings are usually required for employees and they complete them at least once during an academic year. This is a training that can change depending on who is a mandated reporter and who is required to receive this information.
Differences

There were no noticeable differences in the responses based on the gender of the interview subjects or whether they were faculty or staff members. An example of this was observed when discussing if there was a certain time of day or scenario when someone could feel unsafe on campus. Five of the seven males and nine of the thirteen females expressed concern, or could understand the concern, about parking lots and being on campus during the night.

When comparing the two campuses, there were two areas that were observed on one campus and not the other that can have an effect on the interviewees’ safety. CC1 is able to employ an emergency manager and six of the eleven mentioned this job or the person in this position by name. CC2 has a component of on-campus housing but there is no housing options available at CC1. Having on-campus housing was mentioned by three of the nine participants. One described an incident that previously occurred in the housing unit.

Another difference that was observed was between what the faculty and staff members reported as the main safety issue on their campuses; and, how safety could be improved on campus. Of the 20 faculty and staff members, 12 had issues and improvements that were connected (see Table 4).
Table 4

*Connected Issues and Improvements*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Participant</th>
<th>Main Safety Issues</th>
<th>How to Improve Safety</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Natalie</td>
<td>- Open campus</td>
<td>- Panic buttons in offices</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>- Mental Illness</td>
<td>- Continue police presence</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>- Threat of Active Shooter</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Marie</td>
<td>- Open campus</td>
<td>- Building relationships to make it more welcoming</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>- Response to threats</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Holly</td>
<td>- Staff Awareness</td>
<td>- Continue training</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Terri</td>
<td>- Active shooter</td>
<td>- Reconfiguring areas</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>- Open campus</td>
<td>- Locking down buildings</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>- Weather</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>- Robberies</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Anne</td>
<td>- Concealed carry</td>
<td>- Continued awareness</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>- Campus events</td>
<td>- Encouraging reporting</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sue</td>
<td>- Active shooter/intruder</td>
<td>- More police presence in evenings</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>- Open Campus</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mary</td>
<td>- Threat of Active Shooter</td>
<td>- Increase cameras</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>- Theft</td>
<td>- Limit ways to enter campus</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>- Continued training</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Patrick</td>
<td>- Communication</td>
<td>- Regulate concealed carry</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>- Increasing Awareness</td>
<td>- Connecting buildings with walkways</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tony</td>
<td>- Buildings deserted at night</td>
<td>- Police in halls at night</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>- No concealed carry</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dee</td>
<td>- Locking classroom doors more</td>
<td>- Classroom doors should be shut</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>- Safety information in syllabus</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>- Police presence in main entrance</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Raheem</td>
<td>- Too many points of entry</td>
<td>- Reconfigure main entrance</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pam</td>
<td>- Guns on campus (conceal carry)</td>
<td>- More training</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Summary

The findings of the study revealed how the six themes that were developed: safety, violence, training, reporting, campus police, and concealed carry, assisted in answering the research questions. No major differences were revealed when comparing these safety issues and the participants’ gender. Some participants connected their main safety issues with how campus safety could be improved on their campus.

There were two components, an emergency manager and on-campus housing, which were different on both of the community college campuses that could have an effect on campus safety. In the final chapter, relationships to previous research, implications for practice and recommendations for future research will be discussed.
CHAPTER 6
RECOMMENDATIONS FOR FUTURE RESEARCH

Introduction

The purpose of the study, its relationship to prior research, the implications for practice, and recommendations for future research are presented. Fong, Acee, and Weinstein (2018) described the roles of community colleges, “as open institutions, community colleges are considered postsecondary institutions that democratize higher education, representing the inclusive culture of learning and attracting students who are often underserved by other institutions” (p.370). This openness has the potential for allowing people on campus who may be problematic at some point.

While ensuring that students on our community college campuses are safe should be a main priority of campus safety professionals, generally these students are only on campus for two years. Faculty and staff members have the potential to spend many years at the same community college, so campus safety professionals must make sure that their safety needs are met as well.

Purpose of the Study

The purpose of the study was to understand the campus safety perspectives of community college faculty and staff members. Building on the literature review and conceptual framework of campus safety issues, I studied, analyzed, compared, and contrasted the similarities and differences in campus safety perspectives of community college faculty and staff members. The findings of the study fill in a gap in the knowledge regarding safety perspectives in community colleges, as they relate to faculty and staff. The findings of the study can lead to better education for faculty and staff as
as well as enhancing services that can be provided to these groups to make sure that they feel safe when they are on their campuses.

**Relationship to Prior Research**

For this study, only three female faculty and 10 female staff members were interviewed. The study by Fletcher and Bryden (2009) of 229 female staff and faculty reported that more female faculty members than staff members reported being victimized on campus. In this study of community college faculty and staff members, no individuals reported any type of victimization. The three female faculty members said the main safety issues on their campuses were points of entry/exit to the buildings, theft and the threat of a shooting, and theft and other crimes of opportunity. All three expressed that their campus was safe.

When compared with female staff members, three said a main safety issue was a potential active shooter/threat and four were worried about guns on campus, especially concealed carry. The remaining were concerned about knowing who is on campus, staff awareness of situations, and prevention of assaults. None of the female staff members mentioned theft as a safety issue on their campuses.

The seven male faculty members indicated the main safety concerns on their campuses were too many points of entry, locking classroom doors, minor accidents like slips and falls, crimes (robbery, car break-ins, and substance abuse), more communication/notifications, and deserted buildings at night. No male expressed the threat of an active shooter when asked about the main safety issues on their campuses. Their responses were similar to the findings of Jennings, Gover, and Pudrzynska (2007) who found males reported being safer and having lower levels of fear on campus.
Dahl, Bonham, and Reddington (2016) surveyed 1,889 community college faculty members in reference to firearms on campus and other safety perceptions. The outcome revealed that the majority of community college faculty felt safe on their campuses and they did not support concealed firearms on campus. This is similar to the findings of this research study, as all the participants expressed, to varying degrees, that their campus was safe. No faculty or staff member expressed support for concealed carry on their campuses.

Baker and Boland (2011) surveyed both faculty and students. The majority indicated their college was safe, with some minor differences between the two groups. The number who reported being victims of violence was low. For this study, no faculty or staff member reported being a victim of violence of any kind while they were on their campuses.

**Implications for Practice**

The findings of this study are consistent with the limited research that is available on faculty and staff perceptions of safety on community college campuses. Based on the information that was reported during this study, the following recommendations for community college faculty and staff safety on campus are presented.

Both of the community colleges had required training for faculty and staff members in regards to active shooter/threat response. The participants described aspects of the training that they received from campus safety professionals. Others also described how they received Clery and Title IX training. Community college leaders should place a high priority on ensuring that their employees are trained on how to react in an active shooter/threat situation. Jonson (2017) recommended that “it is imperative
that students, faculty, and staff are trained on how to react to and survive when a mass
shooting incident unfolds” (p.966). Training in this area does not assume that the campus
is unsafe. All faculty and staff members in this study described their overall perspective
that their campus was safe.

Also, faculty and staff members should be up to date on all Clery and Title IX
requirements. This could be accomplished during any type of in-service training days
that are offered. The training should be adjusted to make sure that the training is up to
date and relevant to the needs of the faculty and staff members. This should occur yearly.
If in-service training is not available, at a minimum some type of online training needs to
be developed to keep faculty and staff up to date on these issues. There are possible
financial consequences imposed on the community college, by the federal government, if
there are violations of Clery or Title IX. Faculty and staff members need to know their
responsibilities under these areas.

These trainings could be managed by a designated emergency management
person at each community college, with the recommendation that, if possible, this should
be that employee’s only role on campus. In addition to helping facilitate the training, an
emergency manager can help with designing fire and inclement weather
drills/procedures, disaster preparedness, and setting up the administrative response to
issues that could occur on campus.

Previous research has shown that there is not an exact way to reduce the fear of
crime on college campuses. King (2009) recommended that colleges and universities
consider adopting security policies and procedures that adopt a community-oriented
policing approach. This study showed that both campus police departments were known as an important campus safety resource. If they are not currently practicing it, campus police departments have to practice the concept of community oriented policing.

Campus police should take the lead on campus safety initiatives and should be the main organization responsible for training faculty, staff, and students on safety-related issues on their campus. If a community college employs an emergency manager, the individual should be housed within the campus police department. The training offered should include the response to an active shooter/threat.

Campus police departments should also offer some type of escort service for faculty, staff, and students who do not feel safe on campus during certain times of the day or in certain areas. Offering this service may enhance the perception that a campus is safe, if the campus police take an active role in ensuring safety by offering this service. They should also be responsible for reporting any type of safety issues to the responsible department on campus so that the issue can be fixed. One example of this would be if an officer notices a light out in a parking lot. They should report this issue to the responsible facilities personnel, or other department, so that it can be replaced/fixed as soon as possible.

A campus police department should also ensure that their officers are visible inside of campus buildings, in parking lots, and parking garages on campus, and other areas of campus including streets inside and around campus. This visibility should occur using both foot and vehicle patrols. Patrolling buildings at night, when certain faculty and staff members may be the only occupant of a building, can enhance the perception of campus safety. If a community college does not employ a campus police department, it
is recommended that the security department/officers be armed to deal with any active shooter scenario that could occur on campus. If the institution employs a private security firm to provide campus security, they should require that the security officers be armed and trained to respond to an active shooter/threat.

One area of training that community colleges need to offer their faculty and staff members relates to how they should deal with disruptive students. This should involve de-escalation techniques as well as making sure that faculty and staff members know how to report these incidents. Questions include: should they be reported to the campus police; should they be reported within the academic unit; or should they be reported to student judicial affairs, or similar departments? This reporting requirement should be adopted by each individual community college, as each institution should determine their own best practices. The reason why there should be reporting procedures is that someone should monitor the student to determine what the issues are with the specific student.

One area that was not discussed involves threat assessment. Threat assessment is an important component of campus safety as it can help to analyze and manage issues like the disruptive student. Is the student disruptive because of some type of behavioral issue; or, is there some type of mental illness involved? Mental illness was mentioned by faculty and staff members in this study as an issue. Having a threat assessment team in place is a way for professionals, who have more experience with these issues, to help remedy possible issues with students.

All community colleges should invest in the creation of a threat assessment team to help analyze and manage any individuals who have the potential to cause issues for the community college. A recommendation by Dibelka (2018) for threat assessment teams
was that “members of the group should remain consistent. If possible, a threat
assessment team should also consist of experts in the field of mental health and law
enforcement” (p.62). This team may not need a significant financial investment as there
may be faculty and staff members on each campus who have expertise in certain areas of
threat assessment.

The concealed carry of firearms on college campuses is an issue that will continue
to be discussed and debated. Although there is a general lack of desire by those in higher
education for firearms on campus, the issue is usually decided by legislators. For
community colleges in states where the laws go into effect, it is important that campus
safety professionals train faculty and staff members on how to address the issues related
to armed students in the classroom, including when they should contact campus police for
issues relating to concealed carry.

**Future Research**

Few research studies related to faculty and staff perceptions of safety on college
campuses exist. Continued study of campus safety perspectives is important as the issues
may be prominent on campuses at all levels of higher education. Also, the issues appear
to evolve over time.

Another area of research would be the comparison of safety perceptions of
community college faculty and staff of all ranks. This would include adjuncts, part-time
employees, full-time faculty, and staff members. These results would be interesting to
see what the differences and similarities are between the different groups.

An additional potential area of research worth exploring would be the
implementation of concealed carry on community college campuses. The perceptions of
faculty and staff on the topic would be important based on the responses of the individuals interviewed.
REFERENCES


Appendix A – Recruitment Flyer

Faculty and Staff Volunteers Needed For the Following Research Study:

Perspectives of Campus Safety: Viewpoints of Community College Faculty and Staff Members

A doctoral candidate from the University of Nebraska-Lincoln (College of Education and Human Sciences) is conducting research to identify perspectives of safety on your campus.

Looking for community college faculty and staff members to participate. Interviews will take place on your campus on XXXX.

You will be asked to answer a series of questions in a face-to-face interview that involves less than an hour of your time. Participation will take place on campus in an area of your choice. There are no risks involved in this research and your participation is confidential.

Please call Dave Dibelka at 402-968-xxxx or email ddibelka2@unl.edu with any questions and to set up an interview time and location.

Approved by XXXX and UNL IRB (#18535)

UNL does not discriminate based upon any protected status. Please see go.unl.edu/nondiscrimination
Appendix B – Consent Form

IRB #: 18535

Participant Study Title:
Perspectives of Campus Safety: Viewpoints of Community College Faculty and Staff Members

Formal Study Title:
Perspectives of Campus Safety: Viewpoints of Community College Faculty and Staff Members

Authorized Study Personnel

Principal Investigator: David E. Dibelka Jr., M.Ed.  Cell: (402) 968-xxxx
Secondary Investigator: Dr. Marilyn Grady  Cell: (402) 450-xxxx

Key Information:
If you agree to participate in this study, the project will involve:
- Males and females between the ages of 19 and 99
- Procedures will include one face-to-face interview with the researcher
- Only one interview with the researcher is required
- The interview will not exceed one hour
- There are no risks associated with this study
- You will be provided a copy of this consent form

Invitation

You are invited to take part in this research study. The information in this form is meant to help you decide whether or not to participate. If you have any questions, please ask.

Why are you being asked to be in this research study?

You are being asked to be in this study because you are either an employee or a faculty member at a community college. You must be 19 years of age or older to participate.

What is the reason for doing this research study?

The purpose of this research is to better understand the campus safety perspectives of community college faculty and staff members. The research will compare and contrast the
similarities and differences in campus safety perspectives of community college faculty and staff members. This study will fill in the gap of knowledge in safety perspectives in community colleges (as they relate to faculty and staff). The results of this study can lead to better education for faculty and staff as well as services that can be provided to these groups to make sure that they feel safe when they are on their respective campuses.

**What will be done during this research study?**

You will be asked ten questions that relate to your thoughts/experiences on campus safety.

**How will my [data/samples/images] be used?**

Your data will be analyzed by the researcher. No samples or images are needed for this study. Any personal information that could identify you will be removed before the data is shared.

**What are the possible risks of being in this research study?**

There are no known risks to you from being in this research study.

**What are the possible benefits to you?**

You are not expected to get any direct benefit from being in this study.

**What are the possible benefits to other people?**

The benefits to society may include better understanding of how to help make sure that employees feel safe when working on college campuses.

**What will being in this research study cost you?**

There is no cost to you to be in this research study.

**Will you be compensated for being in this research study?**

You will not be compensated for your participation in this study.

**What should you do if you have a problem during this research study?**

Your welfare is the major concern of the researcher. If you have a problem as a direct result of being in this study, you should immediately contact the researcher listed at the beginning of this consent form.

**How will information about you be protected?**
Reasonable steps will be taken to protect your privacy and the confidentiality of your study data. The data that is collected will be stored electronically through a secure server and will only be seen by the researcher and will be deleted/destroyed after the study is complete. Consent forms will be kept in a locked safe that the researcher will be the only one with knowledge of the combination. These documents will also be destroyed after the study is completed.

The only persons who will have access to your research records are the study personnel, the Institutional Review Board (IRB), and any other person, agency, or sponsor as required by law. The information from this study may be published in scientific journals or presented at scientific meetings but the data will be reported as group or summarized data and your identity will be kept strictly confidential.

**What are your rights as a research subject?**

You may ask any questions concerning this research and have those questions answered before agreeing to participate in or during the study.

For study related questions, please contact the investigator(s) listed at the beginning of this form.

For questions concerning your rights or complaints about the research contact the Institutional Review Board (IRB):
- Phone: 1(402)472-6965
- Email: irb@unl.edu

**What will happen if you decide not to be in this research study or decide to stop participating once you start?**

You can decide not to be in this research study, or you can stop being in this research study (“withdraw”) at any time before, during, or after the research begins for any reason. Deciding not to be in this research study or deciding to withdraw will not affect your relationship with the investigator or with the University of Nebraska-Lincoln. You will not lose any benefits to which you are entitled.

**Documentation of informed consent**

You are voluntarily making a decision whether or not to be in this research study. Signing this form means that (1) you have read and understood this consent form, (2) you have had the consent form explained to you, (3) you have had your questions answered and (4) you have decided to be in the research study. You will be given a copy of this consent form to keep.

**Participant Feedback Survey**
The University of Nebraska-Lincoln wants to know about your research experience. This 14 question, multiple-choice survey is anonymous. This survey should be completed after your participation in this research. Please complete this optional online survey at: http://bit.ly/UNLresearchfeedback.

Participant Name:

______________________________________
(Name of Participant: Please print)

Participant Signature:

______________________________________
Signature of Research Participant

Date

Investigator certification:

If applicable, include the following investigator certification clause. (Generally utilized for greater than minimal risk studies).

My signature certifies that all elements of informed consent described on this consent form have been explained fully to the subject. In my judgment, the participant possesses the capacity to give informed consent to participate in this research and is voluntarily and knowingly giving informed consent to participate.

______________________________________
Signature of Person Obtaining Consent

Date
Appendix C – Interview Protocol

COMMUNITY COLLEGE FACULTY & STAFF MEMBERS CAMPUS SAFETY

VIEWPOINTS

Interviewee:
Interviewer: David E. Dibelka Jr.
Date:
Location:

Thank you for your willingness to assist me in my doctoral research. The purpose of this interview today is to hear your perspectives on campus safety in your community. You were chosen for this interview because you are a faculty or staff member at a community college.

With your permission, I would like to record this conversation so that I can later transcribe our conversation. I’ll also be taking notes during the interview. Do I have your permission to record our conversation, and will you please sign this consent form?

Do you have any questions? Thank you. As I said, I’m interested in your perspectives on campus safety.

Interview Protocol

1. Would you tell me what your role (faculty or staff) is on this campus and how long you have been employed by the college?

2. Over your years of service to the college, what changes have you observed in regards to campus safety?

3. Has national attention to campus safety issues had any influence on your campus?

4. What do you think are the main safety issues on your campus?

5. Have you ever experienced a time on your campus when you felt unsafe? If so, what occurred to make you feel unsafe?
6. Are there certain times of the day that make you feel unsafe? If so, why?

7. Are there any areas of your campus that make you feel unsafe? If so, why?

8. What is the process for reporting safety issues on your campus?

9. Have you utilized any safety related services offered on your campus?

10. Have you ever used the services of the campus police force and if so what was the reason?

11. What training or workshops for faculty/staff have been offered on your campus relating to campus safety issues and procedures?

12. How can safety be improved on your campus?
Appendix D – IRB Approval Letter

Official Approval Letter for IRB project #18535 - New Project Form
August 9, 2018

David Dibelka
Department of Educational Administration
117C 113, UNL, 68580-0634

Marilyn Grady
Department of Educational Administration
110 TEAC, UNL, 68580-0360

IRB Number: 20180118535 EX
Project ID: 18535
Project Title: Perspectives of Campus Safety: Viewpoints of Community College Faculty and Staff Members

Dear David:

This letter is to officially notify you of the certification of exemption of your project for the Protection of Human Subjects. Your proposal is in compliance with this institution’s Federal Wide Assurance 0000225B and the DHHS Regulations for the Protection of Human Subjects (45 CFR 46) and has been classified as exempt. Exempt categories are listed within IRB Policy #4.001: Exempt Research available at:
http://research.unl.edu/researchcompliance/policies-procedures/

- Date of Final Exemption: 8/9/2018
- Review conducted using exempt category 2 at 45 CFR 46.101
- Funding (Grant congruency, OSP Project/Form ID and Funding Sponsor Award Number, if applicable): N/A

We wish to remind you that the principal investigator is responsible for reporting to this Board any of the following events within 48 hours of the event:
* Any serious event (including on-site and off-site adverse events, injuries, side effects, deaths, or other problems) which in the opinion of the local investigator was unanticipated, involved risk to subjects or others, and was possibly related to the research procedures;
* Any serious accidental or unintentional change to the IRB-approved protocol that involves risk or has the potential to recur;
* Any publication in the literature, safety monitoring report, interim result or other finding that indicates an unexpected change to the risk/benefit ratio of the research;
* Any breach in confidentiality or compromise in data privacy related to the subject or others;
* Any complaint of a subject that indicates an unanticipated risk or that cannot be resolved by the research staff.

This project should be conducted in full accordance with all applicable sections of the IRB Guidelines and you should notify the IRB immediately of any proposed changes that may affect the exempt status of your research project. You should report any unanticipated problems involving risks to the participants or others to the Board.

If you have any questions, please contact the IRB office at 402-472-6965.

Sincerely,

Becky R. Freeman
Becky R. Freeman, CIP
for the IRB