Introduction

Insecurity in the ivory tower: Understanding and responding to students' victimization and fear of crime

This special issue focuses on security on college and university campuses worldwide. The six papers presented in this issue are timely in their foci, results and discussions of student victimization, fear of crime and security. The safety and security of college and university students and their property remain persistent social and policy concerns of current and prospective students and their parents.

Massive shootings at institutions of higher learning globally, including Finland, Canada, and the United States, have fuelled the perception that the ivory tower is no longer an idyllic and safe haven where students pursue intellectual discourse but rather a dangerous place rife with violence and theft. As a result of these (mis)perceptions, campus security departments have taken an even more prominent role on campuses. As Fox and her coauthors emphasize, 'Campus security has perhaps never occupied a more visible place in public discourse given recent, high-profile, tragedies' (this issue).

Women's safety and security, in particular, continue to garner researchers' and campus security administrators' attention. Researchers have consistently shown that a large proportion of college women routinely face risks of being sexually victimized and/or stalked by someone they know during their college tenure. For many of these women, sexual victimization is a repeated occurrence over the course of their higher education. Brubaker convincingly explains in her paper that regardless of differences in the characteristics of the respective campuses, students enrolled at 4-year traditional schools, as well as at military service academies, are not immune from the risks and realities of being sexual victimized.

A related concern that is often overshadowed by victimization, and therefore easily overlooked by campus security departments, is fear of crime. Fear of crime is a powerful emotional response to the threat of danger, in part, because it influences the perceptions of campus safety and security, which, in turn, can affect patterns of use. Three of the papers in this special issue examine different aspects of fear of crime on campuses. Although each provides a unique perspective on fear of crime, they all discuss the practical implications of their results for improving campus security, especially for women students. To illustrate, Woolnough's study of gender differences in students' use of self-protective behaviours suggests that even when fear of crime is taken into account, female students are still more likely to adopt these behaviours. Here is an example where campus security departments might want to work with both male and female students to promote effective use of self-protective behaviours to reduce fear of crime on their particular campus. The results of Fox and her colleagues also emphasize the need for security departments to address students' fear

of specific types of crimes as first steps to addressing the relationship between victimization and fear among male and female students on campus. In her review of the current state of the field of crime among female students, King lays the foundation for her discussion of new directions for campus security departments' practices, namely adopting community-oriented policing with its focus on community participation in the use of a problem-solving approach.

Campus crime and fear of victimization know no boundaries; they are worldwide issues that characterize college and university campuses. Two of the papers in this issue address campus security outside the United States. Questioning the effectiveness of security measures and crime prevention efforts, Barberet and Fisher examine fear of burglary among college students in England to better understand why some measures and efforts appear to increase students' fear. Cubbage and Smith offer a case study of the security response process at a university in Perth, Australia, after and before crime sprees involving women as targets. Detailing the types of responses considered and used, they offer valued insight into some methods and measures that may be usefully adopted on other campuses.

Knowledge about how to effectively secure college and university campuses is growing. Researchers and campus security administrators are keenly aware that there appears to be no single solution or 'one size fits all answer' to the related problems of campus crime and fear of crime. Social scientists search for regularities and unifying themes that will help security administrators who address these problems develop effective responses to their respective campus' crime and fear of crime concerns. This is one reason we think that presenting papers with wide-ranging perspectives on students' campus crime and fear of crime is important to aid security administrators and departments adopt an evidence-informed approach to addressing safety and security.

Each of these papers offers research and implications for security that will prove useful in college and university settings. We are confident as well that the better reporting of any campus crime that does occur, along with more information about student, faculty and staff perceptions of safety while on campus, will help other researchers and security personnel identify patterns and develop evidence-informed responses to addressing on-campus crime and fear of crime among students and the campus community.

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