Background
The Texas A&M University Police Department (UPD), through their Crime Prevention Unit, created a committee of local police representatives and students to address the issue of crime on and around campus. The committee decided to assess the student body to get a sense of students’ experiences and perceptions about safety and security. Because of the large international student population in the area, special attention was given to making sure they would be represented in the survey results. Although Student Life Studies sponsored a Campus Safety survey in 2002 through Aggie R-r-ring, most of the questions for this survey were different, so no comparisons will be made.

Literature Review
While the purpose of the survey was to assess students’ perceptions of safety and security on and around campus, the results yielded much more complex information. The information has to be examined through the eyes of a variety of people and topics, such as classification, gender, nationality, living arrangement, the physical campus environment, the community, legal issues, and the philosophy of the institution. This brief literature review only touches the surface of several areas regarding higher education law, student safety, and diversity related to the information provided from this study.

Institutions of higher education are governed by several federal laws and their amendments relating to campus crime, such as the 1990 Student Right-to-Know and Campus Security Act (which includes Title II: the Crime Awareness and Campus Security Act of 1990). One of those amendments, the Jeanne Clery Disclosure of Campus Security Policy and Campus Crime Statistics Act, has had a great impact on university police departments because it requires institutions to distribute annual crime statistics to current students and employees (Janosik, 2001). The purposes of the Act are to standardize how colleges and universities report crimes on their campus, force the publishing of this information so parents and students can make informed decisions, and reduce the criminal activity on campus (Janosik & Gregory, 2003). In a study of senior campus law enforcement officials by Janosik and Gregory (2003), the achievements of the Act were mixed. Most officials (90%) did not think that the requirements in the Clery Act could be credited with a change in the crime rates, although 57% of them thought it had been effective in improving crime reporting procedures.

According to research completed by Janosik (2001) with a comprehensive college, a community college, and a research university, 71% of students were unaware of the Campus Crime Awareness Act, three-quarters of them could not remember if they received information about it as a part of their admission packet, 79% did not read it, and 88% had not received or could not remember receiving the annual report. When asked if they had read other materials such as flyers and newspaper articles, over half (55%) had. In addition, 14% had attended a crime awareness or prevention program. As a result of these interventions, less than half of the students changed the way they protected their personal property (40% of women, 21% of men), protected themselves from physical harm (44% of women, 15% of men), or moved around campus (30% of women, 3% of men) (Janosik, 2001). In contrast, 10% of senior campus law enforcement officials thought the annual crime report helped change how students protected their property, and 24% thought it increased confidence in the department. In addition, 36% of law enforcement officials thought that informal information or programs changed the
ways students protected property, and 30% thought it changed the way students moved around campus (Janosik & Gregory, 2003). Positive effects of the more informal methods of written material and programs included an increased level of confidence in the campus police (20%) and an increased likelihood of reporting criminal activity (44%) (Janosik, 2001). In 2003, Janosik and Gregory found that 53% of law enforcement officials thought programs increased the confidence in the police, and 34% believed the Act was effective or very effective in likelihood of students reporting criminal activity.

In the Texas A&M University 2005 Annual Security Report, in compliance with the Jeanne Clery Act, Police Chief Elmer Schneider states “Our department’s highest priority is to provide professional law enforcement and security services in a receptive and collaborative manner. We place our emphasis on service and the promotion of community involvement to maintain a safe and secure environment. Together we are all keenly aware of our responsibilities in the prevention of crime” (Texas A&M University Police Department, 2006a, p. 1). On an annual basis, students, faculty, and staff receive an e-mail providing the website of the annual report.

Universities are required to report hate crimes as a part of their annual report. Hate crimes, defined by federal law, stem from prejudice based on race, religion, sexual orientation, or ethnicity, which are sometimes difficult to identify based on the actual incident (Lively, 1998). Nationally, the number of aggravated assaults reported as hate crimes dropped 73% (from 45 to 12), and the number of hate crimes that caused bodily injury rose 390% (from 10 to 49) (Hoover, 2005). From 2002 through 2004, Texas A&M reported no hate crimes on-campus, non-campus, public property, or dorm/residential facilities in the eight crime categories reported (Texas A&M University Police Department, 2006a).

In a recent study by Kotori and Malaney (2003), the researchers specifically looked at Asian American perceptions of racism, their reporting behavior, and their knowledge of legal rights at the University of Massachusetts-Amherst compared to White students. Previous literature indicated Asian American students were less likely than other minorities to report racial encounters due to lack of knowledge of the process, reluctance to complain, mistrust of the police, language barriers, and lack of confidence in legal resources (Kotori & Malaney, 2003). The researchers found Asian American students felt less safe, had been physically confronted or assaulted by other students because of their race or ethnicity three times more than White students, and were less familiar with their legal rights and campus procedures. On the other hand, there was no difference between the two groups when they were asked what they would do or what they did if/when they experienced harassment. Recommendations included informing the campus community that Asian Americans may be experiencing racism, creating educational programs specifically for Asian students, and involving community Asian leaders (Kotori & Malaney, 2003).

In a large national study by Rankin and Reason (2005), the researchers explored “how students in different racial groups experienced their campus climate” (p. 43). Over 7,000 undergraduate American students (72% Caucasian/White, 28% students of color, 69% female, 31% male) from ten campuses participated. Overall, 25% of the respondents had personally experienced harassment: 33% of the students of color had experienced harassment compared to 22% of the White students. “When further reviewing the data by gender, women students of color and male students of color report experiencing harassment significantly more often than their White counterparts, indicating that race may be more salient than gender with regard to experienced harassment” (p. 50). Most of the harassed students heard derogatory remarks (84%), although 7% had been threatened by physical violence and 6% had been physically assaulted. Most students, regardless of ethnicity, thought other students were the
instigators of harassment. One of the authors’ conclusions stated different experiences must lead to specific interventions targeted at individual student concerns (Rankin & Reason, 2005).

In a qualitative study (46 undergraduate and graduate students) addressing campus safety for women, Kelly and Torres (2006) found three main themes: socialization of safety (fears about safety, victim blaming), safety concerns realized (harassment on campus, home invasions, and campus attacks), and coping with fear for their safety (it’s inevitable, in harm’s way, seeking out help). They concluded women do not have the same educational opportunities as men, although many of them were involved in various aspects of the institution (student leaders, resident advisors, etc.). Women experienced victim blaming (why did they leave their door unlocked?), but they also saw student apathy (propping open residence hall exterior doors) and the myth that women are attacked only by strangers. Kelly and Torres (2006) argued while universities should address structural issues such as lighting, they also need to address the climate of victimization.

Texas A&M’s Vision 2020 (Bowen, & Hagler, 1999) sets forth a multitude of goals for the university to be accomplished by the year 2020. Some relate to a residential campus to enhance student learning and having 100% of all undergraduate have the opportunity to live on campus, while others address the diversity on campus. One goal is to “Reduce to zero the number of students, faculty, or staff who leave because of a perception of a less-than-welcoming environment” (p. 44). On the academic side, the university can “provide incentives to ensure that a global perspective is infused into all courses” (p. 46). Related to the community, one goal is to “work with campus and local communities to make Texas A&M University and the Brazos Valley places that embrace international scholars, students, and visitors” (p. 46). According to Vision 2020 (Bowen & Hagler, 1999) Texas A&M should also attract and retain high quality graduate students from around the nation and the world.

Method and Sample
The 24-question survey (which included two qualitative questions) was developed using Teleform®, survey design software that creates web-based forms and databases. The quantitative data was analyzed using SPSS®, a statistical software package. Because of the richness of the data, an in depth content analysis was performed on the qualitative questions to determine any themes or patterns. The content analysis included members from the Department of Student Life Studies, the Texas A&M University Police Department, the Office of the Vice President for Student Affairs, and the International Student Association.

Because of the interest in the international student population, those students were over sampled. Based on consultation with Texas A&M Measurement and Research Services, the total sample included 1200 domestic undergraduate students, 1200 domestic graduate students, 608 international undergraduates (the whole population), and 1500 international graduates. On February 6, 2006, these students were contacted through the university e-mail system and invited to participate in the survey. On February 13, a reminder was sent. The deadline was February 17, although responses came in through March 8, 2006 when data analysis began.

Of the 4,508 survey invitations distributed through the university e-mail system, 1,278 students completed the survey, yielding a 28% response rate overall, which may not be representative of the population. Looking at it within demographic categories, 31% of the graduate students, 24% of the undergraduates, 33% of the international students, and 24% of the domestic students responded.
Results
Results will be reported as means, standard deviations (sd), and frequency percentages for the number of people (n) who responded to the question. For ease of reading, frequency percentages have been rounded to the nearest whole percent, so totals may not add up to exactly 100%. Qualitative themes are reported here; the entire list can be found in a separate document. The survey was divided into three sections: Personal Safety, Campus Safety, and Demographics.

When looking at the data to make any group comparisons (gender, ethnicity, citizenship, classification, residence, etc.), many of the groups were interrelated. For example, most of the residents of the University Apartments are not only international students, they are graduate students. Most of the undergraduate students lived on campus (Northside, Southside, and the Corps) or off campus not in the Northgate area. Southside and the Corps were collapsed based on physical proximity and the small numbers who responded to the survey. Residence, rather than the other demographics, indicated group differences. Therefore, residence was used as the group comparison, although other statistical comparisons are available in other documents. A 10% difference from the total was used as the decision model for reporting significance.

Personal Safety

In this section, students were asked to describe their behaviors and perceptions about safety on and near campus. When asked if they generally walk after dark ON campus alone or with others, 67% said they walked alone, while 16% walk with others, and 16% do not walk after dark. When asked the same question about OFF campus, 38% walked alone, 29% walked with others, and 33% did not walk after dark. Over a quarter (27%) of the Northside students indicated they walked with others on campus at night when compared to the overall frequency percentage of 16%. Students who lived on campus were more likely to walk alone on campus (only 5% of Northside and 1% of Southside/Corps students said they did not walk after dark) than the other students (16% said they do not walk after dark).

Students were then asked if they ever experienced a concern for their personal safety in a variety of areas. The results are illustrated in Table 1, on the following page, in descending mean order. The scale was 3=Frequently, 2=Sometimes, 1=Rarely, and 0=Never. Students could also respond “Not Applicable”, and those responses were removed from the calculations. Students appear to be slightly more apprehensive about being in the Northgate area than on campus or their own residential areas. It should be noted that the standard deviations indicate a variability of responses.
Have you ever experienced a concern for your personal safety…  | Frequently | Sometimes | Rarely | Never | Mean (sd) | n   
--- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- 
3d. Walking in the Northgate business area after dark? | 15% | 22% | 23% | 41% | 1.10 (1.10) | 1081 
3e. Walking in the Northgate residential area after dark? | 14% | 22% | 19% | 45% | 1.06 (1.11) | 962 
3a. Walking to or from off campus locations after dark? | 9% | 23% | 25% | 43% | .97 (1.00) | 1201 
3b. Being in a student parking area after dark? | 10% | 17% | 22% | 52% | .85 (1.03) | 1177 
3c. Walking on campus after dark? | 8% | 19% | 22% | 51% | .85 (1.00) | 1229 
3f. Walking around your own residential area? | 8% | 16% | 27% | 48% | .84 (.97) | 1231 

Table 1—How Often Students Felt Concern for their Personal Safety

When looking at residence differences, students who live in the University Apartments and Northgate seemed less likely to respond “never” to some of the above questions. Table 2 indicates the responses that were at least 10% less than the total within residence (taking all responses together) shown in the last column.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Students who responded “never” to the following questions: Have you ever experienced a concern for your personal safety…</th>
<th>University Apartments</th>
<th>Off campus: Northgate</th>
<th>Total within Residence</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>3a. Walking to or from off campus locations after dark?</td>
<td>32%</td>
<td>29%</td>
<td>43%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3d. Walking in the Northgate business area after dark?</td>
<td>28%</td>
<td>29%</td>
<td>41%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3e. Walking in the Northgate residential area after dark?</td>
<td>29%</td>
<td>28%</td>
<td>43%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3f. Walking around your own residential area?</td>
<td>43%</td>
<td>32%</td>
<td>48%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 2—Differences between University Apartments and Northgate Residents Compared to Overall

As a follow up question, students were asked to explain any time they experienced a concern for their safety. After completing an in depth content analysis, several themes emerged. Out of the 1,278 total respondents, 940 gave no response, and 15 indicated they had not experienced any concern for their safety. Many of the 323 comments were interrelated because of location, behavior, and perception of international status or ethnic minority status. One of the largest categories addressed the Northgate area (both business and residential) adjacent to campus. Students made comments about the general lack of safety in the area, while others made more specific references to lighting, walking/biking, issues with alcohol, racism, and verbal abuse. Students provided examples of being targeted by drunken people because of their international status. International students warn new students to avoid the area at night and on weekends. One international student said, “The way non-whites are looked at Northgate business area after dark (especially when people are drunk) makes you think that you are not welcome in the area. This is mostly true of the Northgate area and not generally true for other areas of BCS. I guess it’s the perception of people that needs to be changed.” Another international student commented, “Drunken college kids extending out of their trucks yelling, cursing, shouting at
pedestrians walking around Northgate. They’re hunting for defenseless, weak internationals to humiliate.”

International and domestic students have had items thrown at them such as water balloons, liquids, food, bottles, and even marshmallows. Others have been physically attacked or robbed, and several students experienced being almost hit by cars while on their bicycles. A few students felt like they have been followed either by someone on foot or in a car.

While some students had not been a victim of an actual crime, they have developed a general sensitivity for their safety. They either came to campus with the idea of using caution, or they have been more alert since they were notified of recent attacks on international students. Some expressed caution because of their gender or international status. One international student commented, “Only after the recent attacks against international (students), sometimes I am a little concerned, but in general I feel safe.” Another international student was more specific: “I have a concern that I will be attacked by someone because I am an Asian student.” A domestic student reflected, “I’m from a large city, so anytime I am walking alone, especially at night, I am always a little edgy. This is especially true in parking lots or anywhere else that someone may be easily hiding.”

For some students, the physical environment on or around campus causes concern. Students mentioned parking lots (Reed Arena, Lot 24), parking garages (Northside Garage, West Campus Garage), lighting in specific areas on campus (parking lots/garages, on University Drive from Wehner to Northgate, Francis Hall, Ross Street, from Evans Library to the Southside residence halls, and from Biochemistry/Biophysics to Lot 74). Many students were not specific with locations but expressed a desire for more lighting, blue light/emergency phones, and a visible police presence.

Several students related their concern or sensitivity to the larger issue of the campus climate and the university response to issues of diversity and safety. One domestic student wrote, “Although I am not a member of a racial minority group, many of my friends are and I have found this campus and town to have a significant number of people hostile to people of color, and so, in general, the place feels threatening to me.” Another domestic student commented, “I have witnessed the seemingly lack of institutional concern and action with respect to the attacks that took place (as well as to the generally crappy racial environment…) and so that contributes further to this feeling. Seemingly this survey is an attempt to deal with the situation.” On the other hand, several students were appreciative of the police trying to curb crime in the area.

Students were asked if they knew what to do if they were a victim of a crime ON campus. About two-thirds (64%) said yes, 9% said no, and 27% said they were not sure. Alternatively, they were asked the same question about OFF campus, and 66% said yes, 10% said no, and 24% were not sure. For both questions, students who live in the University Apartments responded “not sure” with more frequency than the general respondent: 37% to 27% for crimes on campus, and 40% to 24% for crimes off campus.

Next, students were asked, “If you have been a victim of a crime while at Texas A&M, did you report it to the police?” About 88% of the students said they had never been a victim of a crime while at Texas A&M University. Of the 159 students who said they had been a victim, 62% reported it and 38% did not.

Respondents were then asked their perceptions of how often they thought students were victims of crime due to their perceived ethnicity or nationality in a variety of locations. The response scale ranged
from never (=0) to daily (=6), and included an “I have no idea” option, which was removed from the calculations. Table 3 indicates the responses in descending mean order. The people who responded thought campus was the safest place to be, while the Northgate business district seemed to be least safe. Off campus and the Northgate residential area rated about the same in terms of perceived crime based on ethnicity or nationality.

7. How frequently do you perceive that students are victims of crime due to their perceived ethnicity or nationality?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Daily</th>
<th>Weekly</th>
<th>Twice a week</th>
<th>Monthly</th>
<th>Twice a semester</th>
<th>Once a semester</th>
<th>Never</th>
<th>Mean (sd)</th>
<th>n</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>c. In the Northgate business area?</td>
<td>5%</td>
<td>15%</td>
<td>10%</td>
<td>24%</td>
<td>20%</td>
<td>15%</td>
<td>11%</td>
<td>2.74 (1.70)</td>
<td>979</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>b. Off campus in general?</td>
<td>5%</td>
<td>11%</td>
<td>9%</td>
<td>22%</td>
<td>21%</td>
<td>18%</td>
<td>14%</td>
<td>2.48 (1.70)</td>
<td>951</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>d. In the Northgate residential area?</td>
<td>5%</td>
<td>11%</td>
<td>9%</td>
<td>22%</td>
<td>22%</td>
<td>15%</td>
<td>17%</td>
<td>2.44 (1.72)</td>
<td>841</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>a. On campus?</td>
<td>3%</td>
<td>5%</td>
<td>4%</td>
<td>15%</td>
<td>18%</td>
<td>24%</td>
<td>31%</td>
<td>1.66 (1.63)</td>
<td>936</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 3—Perceived Frequency of Crime Based on Perceived Ethnicity

Looking at differences in Table 3 by residence, 40% of the students in the University Apartments and 21% of the Southside/Corps students said that students are never victims on campus (7a.), compared to the overall frequency of 31%. When looking at off campus in general (7b.), Northside students were more likely to say that students were crime victims based on perceived nationality or ethnicity daily (15% to 5% overall).

Bringing it to a personal level, students were asked how safe they feel in the Northgate business and residential areas. For those students who go to Northgate, Table 4 indicates the respondents feel slightly safer in the Northgate business area than in the residential area. The scale was 3=Very safe, 2=Somewhat safe, and 1=Not at all safe. Students could indicate that they did not frequent the areas: 26% did not frequent the business area, and 41% did not frequent the residential area.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Very safe</th>
<th>Somewhat safe</th>
<th>Not at all safe</th>
<th>Mean (sd)</th>
<th>n</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>8. How safe do you feel in the Northgate business area?</td>
<td>21%</td>
<td>57%</td>
<td>22%</td>
<td>1.99 (.66)</td>
<td>930</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9. How safe do you feel in the Northgate residential area?</td>
<td>15%</td>
<td>59%</td>
<td>26%</td>
<td>1.90 (.63)</td>
<td>742</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 4—Personal Safety in the Northgate Area

Looking at Table 4 in terms of residence, 49% of University Apartments residents and 7% of Southside/Corps students do not feel safe at all in the Northgate business areas compared to 21% of the total respondents. Only 3% of the University Apartments residents said they felt very safe in the business area, compared to 21% of the overall respondents. In the Northgate residential area, 46% of the University Apartments residents do not feel safe at all, compared to 12% of Northside students, 9% of Southside/Corps, and 25% overall. Only 5% of University Apartments residents feel very safe in the Northgate residential area, compared to 15% overall.

The final question about personal safety asked students to indicate what steps they have taken to improve their own safety. About 20% have taken a personal defense course (only 7% of University
Apartments residents have), 16% have carried a personal defense device (pepper spray, etc.) (only 5% of University Apartments residents have), 5% have used the blue emergency phones on campus, and 4% have used the Corps Escort Service. There are over 90 emergency blue light phones in addition to emergency phones outside of residence halls and in campus elevators (Texas A&M University Police Department, 2006a).

Campus Safety

This section asked for student opinion about programs and departments that address safety and crime. The first question in this section asked if respondents were aware of “Operation Safe Street”, and 7% of the students indicated they were aware of the program.

Respondents were asked how well Texas A&M educates students about crime prevention. About 15% of the students responded “very well”, while 65% said “somewhat”, and 21% indicated “not well at all.” The Texas A&M University Police Department has a full-time crime prevention unit with three officers who present programs to students, and represent the police department on numerous committees and event planning meetings (Texas A&M University Police Department, 2006b).

When asked about the best way to notify students about campus crime and crime prevention, 70% of the students indicated the Neo e-mail system, followed by The Battalion at 19%. The rest of the options had few responses: Texas A&M homepage 4%, television 2%, and radio 1%. Students were also allowed to choose an “other” option (4%) and write in ideas. Most of those responses indicated that they wanted all of the above. Several other ideas included working through International Student Services or individual student organizations, workshops, Facebook, posters around campus, computer lab screensavers, and The Eagle. The University Police Department currently uses the Neo e-mail system to alert students, faculty, and staff about on-going or continuing threats as a “timely warning” (called Campus Crime Alerts). In addition, they publish a “Significant Activity Summary” daily on their web page under “Police Blotter” (Texas A&M University Police Department, 2006a).

Students were asked several questions about the three police departments that serve the local area. The responses are in the following Tables 5-7 in descending mean order. The scale was 5=Excellent, 4=Above Average, 3=Average, 2=Below Average, 1=Poor. The “Not Applicable” responses were removed from the analysis, although it may be interesting to note that anywhere from 59 to 493 people responded with that option, depending on the question and the police department. For some of the responses, the standard deviations indicate a large variability in responses.

The University Police Department (Table 5, on the following page) scored above the average rating for all of the questions. Nearly half of the students think they are above average or excellent in providing a safe environment, although almost a quarter of the students do not think they are visible.
14. What are your perceptions about the University Police Department in the following areas?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Excellent</th>
<th>Above Average</th>
<th>Average</th>
<th>Below Average</th>
<th>Poor</th>
<th>Mean (sd)</th>
<th>n</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>b. Providing a safe environment</td>
<td>13%</td>
<td>32%</td>
<td>43%</td>
<td>8%</td>
<td>4%</td>
<td>3.41 (.96)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>d. Overall</td>
<td>10%</td>
<td>30%</td>
<td>47%</td>
<td>9%</td>
<td>4%</td>
<td>3.34 (.92)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>c. Caring</td>
<td>12%</td>
<td>25%</td>
<td>44%</td>
<td>11%</td>
<td>8%</td>
<td>3.23 (1.06)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>a. Officer visibility</td>
<td>13%</td>
<td>25%</td>
<td>38%</td>
<td>15%</td>
<td>9%</td>
<td>3.19 (1.11)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 5—Perceptions about University Police Department

The College Station Police Department (CSPD) (Table 6) rated at least average overall. Their highest rating came in terms of officer visibility: 49% of students though they rated in the excellent or above average range. A quarter of the respondents did not think officers were caring.

15. What are your perceptions about the College Station Police Department in the following areas?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Excellent</th>
<th>Above Average</th>
<th>Average</th>
<th>Below Average</th>
<th>Poor</th>
<th>Mean (sd)</th>
<th>n</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>a. Officer visibility</td>
<td>15%</td>
<td>34%</td>
<td>38%</td>
<td>9%</td>
<td>3%</td>
<td>3.49 (.97)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>b. Providing a safe environment</td>
<td>10%</td>
<td>32%</td>
<td>45%</td>
<td>9%</td>
<td>4%</td>
<td>3.34 (.93)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>d. Overall</td>
<td>8%</td>
<td>28%</td>
<td>49%</td>
<td>10%</td>
<td>5%</td>
<td>3.25 (1.02)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>c. Caring</td>
<td>9%</td>
<td>23%</td>
<td>43%</td>
<td>13%</td>
<td>12%</td>
<td>3.06 (1.09)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 6—Perceptions about College Station Police Department

The Bryan Police Department (BPD) (Table 7, on the following page) had the least number of students who thought they could rate their perception. Their ratings hovered right around the average range, but were lower than the other police departments’ ratings. For all of the questions, about 25% of the respondents rated the Bryan Police Department as below average or poor.
16. What are your perceptions about the Bryan Police Department in the following areas?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Excellent</th>
<th>Above Average</th>
<th>Average</th>
<th>Below Average</th>
<th>Poor</th>
<th>Mean (sd)</th>
<th>n</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>d. Overall</td>
<td>7%</td>
<td>17%</td>
<td>52%</td>
<td>17%</td>
<td>7%</td>
<td>3.00 (.96)</td>
<td>789</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>c. Caring</td>
<td>8%</td>
<td>20%</td>
<td>47%</td>
<td>16%</td>
<td>10%</td>
<td>3.00 (1.04)</td>
<td>744</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>a. Officer visibility</td>
<td>9%</td>
<td>19%</td>
<td>46%</td>
<td>18%</td>
<td>9%</td>
<td>3.00 (1.04)</td>
<td>810</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>b. Providing a safe environment</td>
<td>8%</td>
<td>17%</td>
<td>49%</td>
<td>18%</td>
<td>8%</td>
<td>2.98 (.99)</td>
<td>792</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 7—Perceptions about Bryan Police Department

According to the Texas A&M University Police Department’s 2005 Annual Security Report (2006a), the department had 57 state certified Police Officers, 50 Security Officers, 10 Communications Officers, and 7 administrative support personnel. Students were asked whether they thought the University Police Department is adequately staffed to address campus safety and security issues (although they were not given the current staffing numbers). A majority of the students (59%) did not know, but 27% said yes, and 15% said no.

The final qualitative question asked them to make comments about the University Police Department. Out of the 1,278 total respondents, 1,021 did not respond to the question, 16 wrote that they had no comment, and 241 made some comment. The responses indicated students have mixed feeling about UPD. A fair number of students indicated the officers are visible, professional, and helpful, even if they cannot always prevent or solve crimes. Students have felt comfortable approaching an officer or reporting a crime. As one international student put it, “I think the University is a safe place due to the excellent service provided by the University Police Department. I have not experienced any safety issue on campus. Thank you, Chief!” Some students specifically indicated that they do read the notices that come through the university e-mail system.

On the other hand, some students say they have not ever seen a police officer or police car, while others think that officers are there to write tickets for minor offenses. A few indicated they felt threatened or ignored by officers. A domestic student wrote, “Crime isn’t really a big problem here, but that’s because of the students not being criminals, not because the police are so effective.” Another domestic student said, “The UPD waste (sic) so much time on petty things like MIPs. Then when you have stuff stolen, they don’t do anything about it.”

Based on the descriptions, some students clearly confuse University Police with Texas A&M Transportation Services, the department who issues parking citations. Twenty-seven students made comments indicating that UPD wrote parking tickets. In addition, a few students may confuse College Station, Bryan, and University Police based on similar uniforms and cars and adjacent jurisdictions. Many of the students would like to see more officers on and around campus, especially in the Northgate area and at night. One domestic student commented that they “could be more visible at later times 10pm-1am, grad students work late and tend to walk or bike alone.” Alternatively, an international student said, “I have seen them many times on campus even at night, as such I assume they are doing their job very well.”
Demographics

Students were asked several questions to get a picture of their demographic profile. Students were asked their primary mode of transportation. Almost half (46%) indicated motor vehicle, while 26% walked, 14% took the bus, and 14% biked.

In terms of gender, 39% of the respondents were female. The spring 2006 Texas A&M total female population was 48% (Office of Institutional Studies and Planning, 2006). For classification, 66% of the respondents were graduate students, while 10% were seniors, 9% were juniors, 7% were sophomores, and 7% were freshmen. At Texas &AM in spring 2006, 18% of the total population was graduate students, 27% seniors, 19% juniors, 18% sophomore, and 14% freshmen (Office of Institutional Studies and Planning, 2006).

To understand where students lived, they were given several options about their residence. Almost two-thirds (63%) lived off campus in a non-Northgate area, and another 16% lived off campus in the Northgate area. Nine percent (9%) lived in the University Apartments (where most of the residents are international graduate students). The rest of the students lived on campus: 6% in the Northside Residence Halls, 4% in the Southside Residence Halls, and 1% in the Corps of Cadets area. Southside and Corps areas were combined for comparative analysis because of their close geographic proximity.

Respondents were asked to indicate their ethnicity. Table 8 indicates the ethnicity of respondents. Students who chose the “other” response had the opportunity to write in a description. Several students indicated Middle Eastern, while a few others specified countries/regions. In addition, 55% of the respondents indicated they were international students. The ethnicity categories used in this survey are different than what the university collects, so direct comparisons are not feasible. For example, international status was a separate question in the survey but is rolled into ethnicity for the official university demographics. The survey also allowed for “multiracial” and “prefer not to answer” options, which are not available in the university demographics.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Ethnicity</th>
<th>Survey Percent (n=1,252)</th>
<th>Spring 2006 Texas A&amp;M Population (n=41,591)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Caucasian/White</td>
<td>40%</td>
<td>48%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Asian American/Asian/Pacific Islander</td>
<td>34%</td>
<td>3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hispanic/Latino</td>
<td>12%</td>
<td>10%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other</td>
<td>5%</td>
<td>&lt;1%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Prefer not to answer</td>
<td>5%</td>
<td>--</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>African American/Black</td>
<td>3%</td>
<td>3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Multiracial</td>
<td>1%</td>
<td>--</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Native American/American Indian</td>
<td>1%</td>
<td>&lt;1%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>International</td>
<td>--</td>
<td>8%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 8—Ethnicity of Respondents

At Texas A&M, many international graduate students live in the University Apartments operated by the Department of Residence Life. The spring 2006 occupancy indicated that the population is heavily Asian: 47% of the 464 residents are Chinese, 14% are Korean, 9% are Indian, and 5% are Taiwanese. Domestic students comprise about 3% of the overall population, and 48 different countries are
represented (Kate Kiernat, personal communication, April 14, 2006). According to the Texas A&M Office of Institutional Studies and Planning (2006) the five countries other than the United States that are most represented in the study body are: India (1.7%), China (1.4%), Korea (1.2%), Taiwan (0.3%), and Mexico (0.3%).

Looking at nationality and classification, 43% were international graduate students, 23% were domestic graduate students, 12% were international undergraduates, and 22% were domestic undergraduates. According to the Office of Institutional Studies and Planning (2006), 35% of the graduate students and less than 2% of the undergraduate students have international status.

Limitations
There are some cautions about generalizing this information to the Texas A&M University population as a whole. The sample chosen was not completely random, the demographics of the respondents do not represent the actual population, and the response rate was probably not sufficient for complete confidence in applying this information to all.

In addition, because there is no baseline information available about student opinions, the recent publicity about crime on campus related to international students may have influenced student’s responses. Therefore, this information does not provide information about change in students’ behavior or attitude; rather it provides a snapshot of the current environment.

Conclusions and Recommendations
While the data cannot necessarily be generalized to the entire Texas A&M population, the responses do provide interesting feedback. Students seemed to be candid in their qualitative responses and provided interesting stories and experiences. Students who live in the Northgate area or University Apartments (many of whom are international graduate students) expressed much concern about their safety.

Students seem to confuse the University Police Department and Transportation Services. Students see a person in uniform writing a parking citation and assume it is the Police Department. In addition, some people seem to be confusing the College Station and Bryan Police Departments. UPD may want to initiate a public relations campaign that would help students understand the differences.

Although many of the students who responded to the survey have not been a victim of a crime, all students should know how to report a crime and feel comfortable talking to the authorities. On the other hand, some officers may need additional training, particularly when working with international students. Using a variety of methods, UPD can provide information and education about reporting crimes on campus. There may be opportunity to work with specific sub-populations, such as residents of the University Apartments.

Students would like the police to be more visible, although realistically the police cannot be everywhere all the time (and students may not always know an officer is around). Based on the comments from students, they identified specific locations and/or times they would like to see officers patrolling. This may be an opportunity for UPD, CSPD, and BPD to review their patrol schedule. Although some students do not appreciate police being visible in the Northgate area, many of the students who responded to this survey think a police presence may curb the incidents of racial slurs and items being thrown from cars. Many of the incidents described also seemed to have alcohol involved, which could be a further threat to the community if the driver is intoxicated.
University Police Department may want to be more visible in publishing crime statistics, either through *The Battalion* or the university e-mail system. Students seemed to have read the recent information about international students, but they may not know the other campus and local crimes that could impact their behavior. If crimes are solved, it is important to communicate that to students as well, so they know law enforcement is working.

While some students thought the perpetrators were Texas A&M students, they might also be local residents. This information points to larger educational opportunities for students as well as the community and a collaboration opportunity for University Police, College Station Police, and Bryan Police for training. There is always opportunity to teach the students and the local residents about the international community, their customs, and their culture. In addition, international students have the opportunity to learn more about the American culture, Texas, and Texas A&M students. A greater understanding of cultures may decrease the feelings of fear for both groups. Interestingly, several domestic ethnic minority students shared experiences not unlike the international students, so skin color may be just as important as nationality when looking at perceptions and behavior of perpetrators. The university must continue to make strong statements and take strong action when members of the community are discriminated against for who they are.

Students from different ethnic groups may have different perceptions of the purpose of police. For example, according to the literature, Asian American students may behave differently from White students. While not all domestic Asian students can be compared to International Asian students, and not all Asian students have the same cultural background, this may be an area that Texas A&M addresses in educational programs, not only for Asian students, but also for any ethnic groups whose interaction with the police is different than what UPD has seen in the past with a relatively homogenous student population.

In order for all students to feel safe, more than a change in the physical environment or police presence is needed. One study of addressing racial prejudice attitudes changing through classroom education suggested that “race/gender courses may further reduce prejudice by increasing the likelihood of favorable interpersonal experiences with racial minorities in ecological contexts external to the setting where the positive attitude was originally acquired” (Hogan & Mallott, 2005). While the authors did call for more research in the area, perhaps this is additional impetus to infuse a global perspective into all courses (Bowen & Hagler, 1999), as well student organizations, employment settings, etc., to bring about positive interpersonal interactions that can change attitudes and behavior.

This survey, or a similar one, should be completed every three to four years, to see if there are changes in behaviors or perceptions, particularly if there are significant changes in police programs, educational opportunities, laws, or other interventions/events. Ideally, a larger response rate would solidify the information provided as a clearer picture of students’ perceptions and attitudes.
References


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Prepared on: June 1, 2006
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