The American University: Attitudes about Safety and the Impact of Gun Regulations on Campus

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THE AMERICAN UNIVERSITY: ATTITUDES ABOUT SAFETY AND THE IMPACT OF GUN REGULATIONS ON CAMPUS

BY

APRIL M. BIXLER

Submitted to the Faculty of the Graduate School of Eastern Kentucky University in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of

DOCTORATE OF EDUCATION
LEADERSHIP - POLICY
2023
DEDICATION

This study is inspired by and dedicated to my late Grandfather, Dr. Gene E. Burton. He was an avid lover of academia and the epitome of the great professor. His encouragement and coaching reached so many through his teachings and professional publications. To the world, he was a vastly successful author, business professor and Dean, but to me he will always be “Grandpa” and my best friend.
ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

I would like to recognize my committee chair, Dr. Ann Burns for her mentorship and continued guidance through this challenging time. I would also like to extend gratitude towards the rest of my committee members: Dr. Bill Sullivan and Dr. Scotty Dunlap who helped develop and encourage my passion for safety and security for the world around me.
ABSTRACT

An ultimate goal of American universities is to provide a safe and secure environment for all who attend and operate there, but what safety looks and feels like to the individual can vary to a great degree. There are many factors that campus safety departments consider when designing their campus safety policies and regulations. One way universities in the U.S. have chosen to regulate campus safety is by allowing concealed carry (CC) on their campuses. No evidence was found in the state of Kentucky that explains if a CC policy is warranted or being pursued by faculty, staff and students however a recent KY House Bill 542 (2023) would have made it unconstitutional to not allow CC on Kentucky college campuses. Without gauging the culture and opinions of all three populations on a college campus, research cannot improve upon current policy or affect change in a positive direction. Through a campus-wide anonymous survey instrument designed for this study and for a particular Kentucky university campus, results show that there are in fact strong opinions about personal safety, perceptions of campus safety and campus carry with variations among the three groups surveyed. The quantitative method of study was utilized and the instrument was uniquely designed in Qualtrics for accuracy.
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I. Introduction

Should firearms be allowed on university campuses for individual protection and how do residing faculty, staff and students feel about that? This sparks the debate over campus safety concerns and the right to self-protection in an academic environment. According to Cramer (2014), at the core of the current debate over whether institutions of higher learning may prohibit firearms on campus is the question of whether colleges are fundamentally different from larger society. Complicating this matter is that society’s view of gun possession is divisive and has evolved over the last several decades.

There was limited statistical data found specific to Kentucky universities that provide us with the reliable information needed to ascertain whether legal concealed carry of a handgun would benefit individuals on campus or not. Other universities in certain states do allow guns on campus, however those institutions have not produced scientific studies that give us an idea of policy success or lack thereof. Rather than piecing together bits of unreliable data from other universities outside of the state, it was best to design an instrument specific for one Kentucky college campus to gauge the overall culture on this topic.

As universities seek to adopt a concealed carry option for their own campuses, a reliable study greatly benefits the campus safety community of professionals who constantly seek ways to improve policy. Kentucky is a gun-friendly state with a long history of pro-conservative values and personal protection rights. According to Johnson & Zhang (2020), it isn’t out of the realm of possibility that a university in the state may one day have a concealed carry option. Prior to doing so, studies which survey the campus culture in advance of such a policy would contribute greatly to the assessment of
the overall need. This study surveyed faculty, staff and students on one campus in Kentucky to gauge their attitudes and the issues surrounding safety from their perspective. Because limited research was found to indicate what the three populations feel about concealed carry and personal safety on their campuses, the survey is designed to capture their differing or relatable viewpoints on the subject. Do faculty, staff and students have differing opinions on personal safety and CC or are all populations on the same page? Does one surveyed population feel very strongly about aspects of their safety compared to others? All three populations make up the entire college campus culture.

**Background**

Since the 1990s, there has been an increase in fatal campus shootings in the U.S. (Kaminski et al., 2010). In response to high profile campus shootings, there has been significant media attention that has sparked fear and divisive conversation about this significant social problem. The ultimate goal of any university is to provide a safe and secure environment for all who attend and operate there. There are many factors that campus safety departments consider when designing their campus safety policies and regulations.

One way in which universities have chosen to regulate campus safety is by allowing concealed carry (CC) on their campuses. Concealed Carry laws are located in Kentucky Statute § 237.109 (2019) and allow adults to legally carry a concealed firearm in their possession. The aim in allowing CC on campus is that it will improve safety, but there is limited data to prove that it does.

Although concealed carry is a relatively new topic of debate for college campuses, the issue regarding campus violence is not. Tragedies like the one at Virginia
Tech spur renewed discussion and debate about gun safety and weapons regulation, mental health counseling, and the often-difficult balance between student privacy and parental and community rights to know (Rasmussen et al., 2008). Limited research was found regarding the long-term effects mass shootings have on members of the campus community and how these acts of violence affect attitudes towards CC, especially from the perspective of the faculty and staff on campus. Limited research was found in which the faculty and staff responses were collected and compared to the student responses to gauge why they may or may not feel threatened on campus, however, none were found in Kentucky. Additional studies on incidents of violence between campuses with CC and those without will help clarify the issue. Reliable studies and data provide support for legislators making decisions on whether to pass or defeat bills relating to CC policies.

**Context**

Allowing concealed carry on campus includes a significant degree of responsibility. That may be where the tension lies in policy; can gun users be trusted? Some are more proficient in weapon use than others and even experienced gun owners can make mistakes. In Texas, a state which just legalized the carrying of concealed handguns on public college campuses, applicants are required to demonstrate their shooting proficiency by firing a series of shots from varying distances (Mascia, 2016).

In practice, the CC instructors who administer the training can let applicants keep firing until they record a passing score. But by subscribing to a live-fire requirement, Texas is aligning itself with a belief about gun safety: Concealed carriers who are not familiar with how to use their weapon pose a danger to themselves and the public
Each state has their own concealed carry and gun policies that are put in place by their representatives and it is difficult to compare gun policy across state lines. This Texas university is one example of how a CC policy can be carried out on a university campus. Each institution that allows CC developed their own policy unique to their environment and culture. Each university campus carries out their CC policies as they see fit and there is a lot of variation of what that policy may look like (Mascia, 2016). This study will survey students, faculty and staff from one American college campus in the state of Kentucky to gauge how they feel about personal safety, campus safety and concealed carry on their campus.

**Theoretical Framework**

In order to assess the campus population regarding their personal viewpoints on safety and CC, an anonymous survey method was used for this study. The survey was uniquely designed with a quantitative analysis for accurate results.

According to Scherer, et al., (2022) while research shows that those who perceive more negative impacts of guns on campus are more likely to oppose campus carry laws, there is very little empirical research available to support or refute the claims that campus carry laws will negatively impact students or faculty. To date, there are only a few published studies that examine how campus carry has impacted the educational community (Scherer, et al., 2022). These studies provide preliminary evidence that concealed guns on campus have led to some negative impacts by influencing students’ comfort level with guns in the classroom and the way that faculty communicate and meet with students. While these findings are valuable for establishing that some members of the campus population have experienced impacts as a result of a campus carry law, due to
methodological limitations (e.g., small panel studies and qualitative interviews), these studies are not able to establish whether the results would also be observed in the current setting of a Kentucky university (Scherer, et al., 2022).

**Problem Statement**

An educated analysis of how people feel about safety can only provide so much data about appropriate public policy when it comes to guns and reform. Further, studies have been conducted randomly throughout the U.S. with no goal in mind to advance the overall topic and find results that influence policy. One example of this is the controversy that surrounds the contentious concealed carry ban debate found among many American college and university campuses (Arrigo & Acheson, 2016).

In developing informed policy on this matter, consideration must be given to the rights of citizens as well as educational institutions, the perceptions and consequences a policy change could have on relevant stakeholders, and the human dynamics that drive the controversy as a whole (Arrigo et al., 2011).

A study published by Bouffard et al., (2012), attempted to predict what the effect would be on the prevalence of guns on campus if the concealed carry ban was removed. Although the authors’ study was limited to one public university in the state of Texas, the research findings nevertheless offer a glimpse into the effects of lifting the policy restriction. Opponents of the ban maintained that if it were removed the result would be an increase in armed, law-abiding citizens who could react reasonably and appropriately in case of a shooting incident (Bouffard et al., 2012). Proponents of the ban asserted that if it was lifted, more guns would be on campus, and there would be additional
opportunities for accidental shootings, suicides, and criminal activity involving guns (Bouffard et al., 2012).

According to Johnson & Zhang (2020) the states that allow CC on university campuses tend to have Republican legislatures in state government, conservative citizen ideology, and anti-gun-control interests, much like Kentucky. An additional 23 states have granted the right to individual colleges or universities to decide whether to ban or allow concealed carry on their campuses. Campus carry legislation continues to move forward nationally in spite of opposition by those in the higher education community including campus law enforcement.

While the effects of making a policy change are mostly unknown, except for the fact that more guns would likely be present on or near college and university settings, opposition to existing bans remains relatively strong (Kopel, 2009). If the concealed carry policy on campus has opposition, then it is important to consider why the debate continues to culturally fuel the controversy. These macro-, mezzo-, and micro-level influences include societal (i.e., political and economic), institutional (i.e., governmental and educational), and individual (i.e., social–psychological) dynamics.

**Purpose of the Study**

The purpose of this study is to assess the safety concerns, attitudes and concealed carry viewpoints of a significant sample population (faculty, staff and students) of those operating on a Kentucky college campus in 2023. The quantitative method of research is utilized via a campus-wide survey through Qualtrics which is a highly accurate and reliable program for analysis.
The surveyed population was given total anonymity, and freedom to take the survey at home or through their phone or computer. It’s possible to conduct interviews and use strictly open questions for the participant to fill out based upon their own experiences and apprehensions, but this would have been an extensive qualitative or mixed methods approach that would require multiple hours of in-person interviews which is currently being discouraged due to the recent COVID-19 pandemic. The survey was administered with a statistically accurate scaled approach and responses calculated to be used to develop reliable data in the area of college campus safety.

The appropriate survey questions and method was crucial to obtaining credible data. Because of the vast diversity on college campuses, gun policies can be seen as political in nature, therefore it was best to allow the participant to conduct the survey on their own, anonymously as to foster a more non-political outlook and a less biased answer set.

The goal of this study was to seek out personal viewpoints on safety with an analysis of variance with the groups being: students, faculty, and staff. The survey is divided in four parts: 1. Demographics 2. Personal Safety 3. Perception of Campus Safety and 4. Campus Carry. The study tests three null hypotheses (Charters, 1992), one for each section (2,3,4), that there is not a difference between the three groups. The demographic section does not require a hypothesis. The results were found using descriptive statistics to determine differences of attitudes. The 5-point Likert Scale with equal intervals was used as a measurement tool because it is one of the most common and reliable scales when measuring beliefs, opinions and attitudes (DeVellis, 2012).
Research Questions and Hypotheses

Regardless of where it’s discussed, guns on campus remain a sensitive topic. The campus safety headquarters of the university studied was contacted prior to the survey, but declined to contribute to the study. The CC policy continues to be divisive and difficult to discuss in academic environments. Although carrying firearms on most college campuses seems foreign, not addressing the topic is counterproductive when the policy is clearly viable and unprepared for. Simply, more research in the state of Kentucky is needed in order to ascertain the potential effect of such a policy. The results of this unique study when complete, should be a beneficial asset to the campus safety office and academic safety community. The benefits of conducting the study at the chosen location is due to proximity to the campus being surveyed and the researcher being currently enrolled as a student and a faculty member. The following research questions guide this quantitative study:

RQ1: Personal Safety

This section of the survey contains five specific questions that reflect the individuals’ perceptions of personal safety, if they feel threatened and to what extent. All responses in this section are given the same 5-pt Likert Scale: Strongly Disagree – Disagree – Neutral – Agree – Strongly Agree. Null Hypothesis: There is no difference between the groups students, faculty and staff on this measure of personal safety.

RQ2: Perceptions of Campus Safety

This section contains seven specific questions that reveal how participants feel about campus security and safety guidelines. All responses in this section are given the same 5-pt Likert Scale: Strongly Disagree – Disagree – Neutral – Agree – Strongly Agree.
Agree. Null Hypothesis: There is no difference between the groups students, faculty and staff on this measure of perceptions of campus safety.

**RQ3: Campus Carry**

This section contains fourteen specific questions that reflect the individuals’ opinions on concealed carry on campus. All responses in this section are given the same 5-pt Likert Scale: *Strongly Disagree – Disagree – Neutral – Agree – Strongly Agree*. Null Hypothesis: There is no difference between the groups students, faculty and staff on this measure of campus carry.

**Rationale for the Study**

Researchers have reported that gun possession is more common among students in regions of the U.S. where gun ownership is more common, suggesting that college campuses in these geographical areas might consist of a more gun-friendly population (Cramer, 2014). Students who kept a gun at college reported that they were more than four times likely to have been threatened with a firearm than the non-gun-owning students.

It’s important to begin with Kentucky gun laws and gun-ownership to gauge the viability of such a policy. Kentucky used to require CC safety training prior to issuing a CC license. Recently, Kentucky made this process even easier by no longer requiring safety training or CC certification in order to carry. Gun ownership remains an essential part of life in the state and lawmakers and representatives show no signs of becoming more constricting on the matter. Potentially, Kentucky could be one of the next states to allow their universities to adopt the CC policies that work for them (Cramer, 2014).
Allowing CC on college campuses is still a relatively new concept and unknown if it has been successful enough for other universities to want to adopt it. Prior to adopting a CC policy on campus, research to assess the culture in advance of the policy would be a great benefit to those who aim to enforce it. Only a few of the universities outside Kentucky that allow CC have been researched in some way, mostly by surveys, and others have produced no significant information at all.

Existing research on CC on campus is sparse and unreliable as a predictor, mostly due to the lack of research in the state of Kentucky. Studying the success or failure of the CC policy on university campuses can be a reliable predictor for future institutions that adopt various aspects of the policy, with the understanding that one size does not fit all (Cramer, 2014). Existing research reveals that some populations on campus were surveyed and some were not. Various universities wanted to capture strictly what students felt about personal safety and CC while others only surveyed faculty. Surveying the entire campus community (students, staff and faculty) and comparing those responses to one another could provide very valuable information for the campus safety community as well as the safety office on campus who may have to oversee a CC policy in the future.

**Significance of the Study**

Kentucky is currently at 54.6% rate of gun ownership which equates to 81,958 guns in the state that are traceable (World Population Review, 2022). Concealed carry permits and fire range training are no longer required to carry a gun in the state, making them easy to obtain. Some states give universities the authority to allow firearms on their campuses, however no statistical data was found to explain how that policy would affect Kentucky university campuses if they were to do the same. To assess this overall topic of
self-protection and safety while on their college campus, the survey for this study was uniquely designed and conducted at one Kentucky university campus.

The few states that allow concealed carry on their campuses are still in the beginning stages of data collection and analysis. In other words, it is early and unclear whether those policies are working. Until those statistics become available for research purposes, it is very difficult to proclaim valid success or lack-thereof with campus gun policies. A commonly accepted goal of the American college campus is to provide a safe learning environment, but how that looks and feels differs for each student, faculty, and staff member.

**Nature of the Study**

This study examines the relationship between current campus gun laws and the students/faculty/staff perceptions of safety through a series of meticulously chosen questions. Surveys can provide usable data that enhances this research. The method used for this study is a unique Qualtrics survey through campus-wide voluntary participation at a university in Kentucky. One advantage of the survey method is that it covers larger groups more efficiently than other descriptive methods (Jackson, 2012). To ensure the participants engage honestly, they will remain anonymous.

This study includes faculty and staff as well as students, to ensure the campus culture is reflected by all who operate there. The survey was taken via QR code on campus and also sent and shared via email directly to students, staff, and faculty. A statement to the respondents explained why the survey is being conducted and ensures them their responses remain anonymous.
II. Literature Review

According to Cramer (2014), as of 2011, at least eight million concealed carry permits were active in the United States and increasing every day. This large expansion of licensing (beginning in 1987) has been accompanied by a dramatic decline in national murder rates. Whether this decline in murder rates is simply coincidence is arguable. As of today, the U.S. has over twenty-two million CC permits on record. The first state that permitted individuals to carry concealed weapons on campus was Colorado in 2003. Following the mass shootings at Virginia Tech in 2007 and Northern Illinois University in 2008, legislation was drafted surrounding the legalization of allowing individuals to carry a concealed weapon on college campuses (Hayes, et al., 2021).

There is circumstantial evidence that the historical policy of banning concealed firearms on campuses has helped limit violence on campuses. For example, it has been estimated that there are over 30,000 violent crimes on campuses against students each year (Thompson et al., 2013). However, the number of homicides on U.S. college campuses is less than 25 deaths annually. Additionally, the U.S. Department of Education has reported the homicide rate on college campuses is .07 per 100,000 people. In comparison, the homicide rate in the U.S. for people aged 17 to 29 is 14.1 per 100,000 people, a rate that is 200 times that in the university population (Thompson et al., 2013).

Concealed Carry per State

According to the Villalobos (2018), regulations for campus carry are governed by state law and all 50 states allow citizens to carry concealed weapons if they meet certain state requirements. Consequently, the regulatory mechanisms and policies differ by region, and are applied differently. In 2019, Kentucky repealed its requirement that
people obtain a license and background check to carry concealed firearms in public. The state now authorizes anyone 21 and over to possess and carry a concealed weapon in public. According to the United States Concealed Carry webpage (2021), there are currently eleven states that expressly permit concealed carry on campus including Arkansas, Colorado, Georgia, Idaho, Kansas, Mississippi, Oregon, Tennessee, Texas, Utah, and Wisconsin.

Sixteen states prohibit concealed carry on campus by law. This means that persons knowingly carrying a concealed deadly weapon, even with a permit, are subject to fines and imprisonment. These states are: California, Florida, Illinois, Louisiana, Massachusetts, Michigan, Missouri, Nebraska, Nevada, New Jersey, New Mexico, New York, North Carolina, North Dakota, South Carolina and Wyoming. Twenty-three states permit colleges to make their own rules when it comes to campus carry, but refrain from criminal penalties. Consequently, penalties are limited to academic sanctions such as suspension or expulsion (for students) or termination (for staff and faculty). These states are: Alabama, Alaska, Arizona, Connecticut, Delaware, Hawaii, Indiana, Iowa, Kentucky, Maine, Maryland, Minnesota, Montana, New Hampshire, Ohio, Oklahoma, Pennsylvania, Rhode Island, South Dakota, Vermont, Virginia, Washington and West Virginia. As mentioned, some colleges have voluntarily opted to allow CC, including Cedarville University in Ohio and Liberty University in Virginia (United States Concealed Carry, 2021).

Some colleges have taken action to reduce concealed carry on campus even in states which allow it. For example, despite a court ruling in Oregon revoking statutory bans on campus carry, the education board voted to exclude campus carry from buildings
by policy (United States Concealed Carry, 2021). Most, if not all, Wisconsin colleges exercise their legal authority to ban concealed carry inside of buildings.

Tennessee campus carry is confined to faculty and staff only (Tennessee General Assembly, 2021). Tennessee law permits full-time employees of state public colleges or universities who possess handgun carry permits to carry their weapon while on property owned, operated, or controlled by the employing college or university if certain requirements are met. Conversely, some states including Michigan, Ohio and Virginia allow open carry on college campus property outside of buildings. Furthermore, there is legal analysis which suggests CC may not be prohibited on campus grounds in Virginia. Some states require “enhanced permits” which entail additional training before carrying on campus, such as Idaho, Arkansas, and Mississippi. Some states allow guns to be locked in cars on campus, including Florida, Georgia, Kentucky, Nebraska, North Carolina, North Dakota, Ohio, South Carolina, and Tennessee. Finally, Utah remains the only state to have statute specifically naming public colleges and universities as public entities that do not have the authority to ban CC (Villalobos, 2018).

**Previous Campus Shootings**

In the wake of the Virginia Tech tragedy, various task forces were organized throughout the country to identify the steps higher education institutions should take to prevent such a significant event and how to respond effectively should it occur (Fox & Savage, 2009). The Virginia Tech incident was the impetus for these task forces and became the model for a response to university shootings, the assailant in that case was quite different from most other shooters at college campuses. These gunmen are often overworked, overstressed graduate students confronting academic failure or
disappointment, not troubled undergrads with violent fantasies (Fox & Savage, 2009). By hyper-focusing on the Virginia Tech case, colleges and universities may overlook important steps that can be taken for preventing campus violence. In addition, many strategies that sound good on the surface are, upon closer scrutiny, neither good nor effective.

Furthermore, the issues that motivate campus shooters and their younger counterparts are vastly different. Shootings at high schools are often precipitated when students feel bullied or persecuted by their classmates or teachers (Vossekuiil et al., 2001). However, the perpetrators of mass shootings at colleges and universities are often graduate students, older individuals who turn to violence in response to what they perceive to be unbearable pressure to succeed or the unacceptable prospect of failure. The most interesting pattern among campus shootings is the disproportionate involvement of graduate students as perpetrators. Of the 14 fatal multiple shootings in the U.S. since 1990 (Fox & Savage, 2009), eight were committed by current or former graduate, law, medical, or nursing students, compared to three by more traditional undergraduates and three by outsiders. Students who had been at the top of their class in high school and college may come to find themselves struggling to get by with just passing grades. No longer supported financially by parents, they experience great pressure to juggle assistantship activities or outside employment with coursework and thesis research. At some point, their entire lifestyle and sense of worth may revolve around academic achievement. Moreover, their personal investment in reaching a successful outcome can be viewed as a virtual life-or-death matter (Fox & Savage, 2009). The fear of repercussion from disgruntled students may be a factor in why college professors and
staff might oppose CC on their campus. It could also be the reason they prefer to arm themselves. No adequate research was found to suggest either way.

**Previous Research via Survey**

Bennett et al., (2012), explains through their research that those surveyed who were more in favor or carrying weapons on campus were more likely to be conservative or republican, current gun-owners, and in many cases, hunters. Those that are more oppositional to guns on campus are found to be politically opposite in their beliefs and values. According to Kyle et al., (2017), unlike most of the other proposed initiatives and normative safety practices, student and faculty attitudes and opinions regarding CC on campus have been the subject of recent research. At least four studies, which together have surveyed more than 8500 students at 23 colleges and universities, have found that while levels of support differ somewhat according to geographic setting, the majority of students do not support CC on their college campus (Kyle et al., 2017; Thompson et al., 2013). Two studies that examined the attitudes of faculty at a variety of 4-year colleges and universities found that an overwhelming majority of the surveyed faculty were not supportive of concealed-carry of firearms on campus (Bennett et al., 2012; Thompson et al., 2013).

In a 2015 study at a midwestern university, over half of the students surveyed agree that professors should be allowed to carry handguns on campus. Those in agreement were predominantly female students, but there was no other information as to why the students felt this way (Lewis et al., 2016). It was suggested in the conclusion that further research should include answers from that of faculty and staff as well as students to get the broader perspective.
The article by Butters (2020) examines the significance of fear of concealed handguns in the classroom at a public university in Texas, analyzing perceived changes in shared social space and the collective learning environment in terms of affect. The multi-method study provides an understanding of the factors behind fear, which may be seen as personal, societal, or a dynamic combination of those manifested in local relationships. Furthermore, it explores disruptions of instruction and discussion, the profiling of other students as potential gun carriers, and the introduction of situational awareness in class. Based on ethnography conducted at The University of Texas at Austin, where campus carry was implemented in 2016, this article did a good job providing context for those in the discipline of education, as well as instructors and administrators at other institutions of higher learning in the United States, to consider the complex nature of fear of guns and its impact on the classroom atmosphere.

Another research study done at the University of Florida (Shepperd, et al., 2020) explains that all people share a fundamental need for safety but differ in their view of the role of guns in satisfying that need. This survey revealed that the majority of students, faculty, and staff oppose campus carry. On one side of the gun debate are protection owners: people who view guns as a means to safety and favor legislation that supports gun rights. The research reveals that people on this side of the debate perceive that gun crimes on their college campus would decrease if campus carry were legal and believe that all would feel safer if the respondent carried a concealed gun. Although protection owners reported they would feel less safe having a heated interaction if campus carry were legal, they nevertheless voiced strong support for legalizing campus carry on college campuses.
On the other side of the gun debate are non-protection and non-owners: people who view guns as a threat to safety and favor legislation that restricts gun rights. The research revealed that they believe gun crimes on their college campus would decrease if concealed carry were legal, and believe that they and others would feel less safe if the respondent carried a concealed gun on campus (Shepperd et al., 2020). Finally, non-protection gun owners and non-owners reported that they would feel much less safe having a heated interaction if campus carry were legal and voiced strong opposition to legalizing concealed carry on college campuses.

A limited body of research considers the perceptions of students and other members of the campus community about CC laws and their success. A study done at a university in New York sought to offer a new perspective, assessing student opinions about the recently passed legislation in Texas and whether they would support such a law in a state with strict gun control measures in place. The results indicate that while students collectively did not support concealed carry on their campus, males, Republicans and gun owners were significantly more likely to express attitudes favorable of the law (Schildkraut, 2018).

Only a few studies have set out to examine and compare predictors of support for campus carry and concealed carrying behaviors on a campus where faculty, staff, and students can legally carry a weapon (Hayes et al., 2021). This article discusses the exploration of the relationship between attitudes and behaviors as it relates to concealed weapons on campuses. Whereas attitudinal correlates conformed to prior literature, these correlates were not equally predictive of behavior. Respondents' gender and if they voted for the 2016 Republican nominee predicted support for campus carry and concealed
carrying behavior. When controlling for attitudes toward campus carry, voting behavior no longer predicted the outcome. However, perceptions of police effectiveness were inversely related to carrying behavior. These findings suggest that improving perceptions of the campus ability to ensure student safety may influence carrying behavior (Hayes et al., 2021).

The authors (Shepperd et al., 2020) suspect that part of what contributes to the inability of Americans to unite in developing policies to reduce gun violence is a failure to recognize that people have different approaches to achieving the shared need for safety. It would appear that focusing exclusively on satisfying the safety needs of one group threatens the safety needs of the other group.

The Right to Self-Defense

Concerns about crime and safety can lead individuals to engage in a number of behaviors to protect themselves and their property, or to otherwise mitigate or limit their risk of victimization. At a subjective level, taking protective measures, or self-help, might be considered healthy behavior and a functional adaptation to one’s environment and circumstances (Kyle et al., 2017). Our self-help culture encourages one to take it upon oneself to provide a sense of security or a safe space.

The attitudes of the faculty and staff on campus often have an effect on the students’ perceptions of political issues and current policies. Some professors support concealed carry and admit to doing so regardless of policy at their universities. Those who support concealed carry practices argue that U.S. citizens have a right to self-arm and to self-defend, and that campus bans violate their Second Amendment guarantees (Langhauser, 2009). Those who oppose concealed carry practices argue that colleges and
universities have an obligation to cultivate a learning climate absent suspicion, fear, and danger, and that by allowing more guns on campus the incidents of violence will escalate rather than diminish.

**Gun Laws and Policy**

In a national survey conducted in 2017, 30% of Americans reported that they currently owned a gun, while altogether 42% lived in a household with a gun (Pew Research Center, [36]). The second amendment about bearing arms was ratified in 1791 and states:

"A well-regulated Militia, being necessary to the security of a free State, the right of the people to keep and bear Arms, shall not be infringed." (U.S. Const. amend. II). As gun regulations on campus become either more constrained or more liberal, they may have an impact on the nation as whole on how people view guns in public areas (KRS 237.110 handgunlaw.us).

Even though U.S. citizens have explicit “rights,” it is ultimately the perceived safety of the student that drives most campuses across the nation to enforce a no-gun policy. The number of licenses issued to civilians to carry a handgun in public has seen a steep rise (Lott & Wang, 2020).

University campuses feel it is their primary duty to not only provide a safe learning environment for their students, but one where students thrive and can operate without fear. It is legal to purchase and own a long-gun such as a hunting rifle at the age of 18, but most states require you to be at least 21 years of age to purchase a handgun (KRS 237.110 handgunlaw.us).
Kentucky Gun Laws

KRS 237.110 Places Off-Limits Even With a Permit/License: No license issued pursuant to this section shall authorize any person to carry a concealed firearm into: any elementary or secondary school facility without the consent of school authorities as provided in KRS 527.070 (handgunlaw.us).

KRS 527.070 Unlawful possession of a weapon on school property --Posting of sign -- Exemptions. (1) A person is guilty of unlawful possession of a weapon on school property when he knowingly deposits, possesses, or carries, whether openly or concealed, for purposes other than instructional or school-sanctioned ceremonial purposes, or the purposes permitted in subsection (3) of this section, any firearm or other deadly weapon, destructive device, or booby trap device in any public or private school building or bus, on any public or private school campus, grounds, recreation area, athletic field, or any other property owned, used, or operated by any board of education, school, board of trustees, regents, or directors for the administration of any public or private educational institution. The provisions of this section shall not apply to institutions of postsecondary or higher education (handgunlaw.us).

KRS 527.100 Kentucky 18 Y/O Title L KY Penal Code: Eighteen (18) is the minimum age for possessing and transporting a handgun unloaded and secured in a vehicle without any type of permit/license to carry firearms (handgunlaw.us).

Effective June 27, 2019, Kentucky Statute § 237.109 states that persons twenty-one (21) or older, and otherwise able to lawfully possess a firearm, may carry concealed firearms or other concealed deadly weapons without a license in the same locations as
persons with valid licenses issued under KRS 237.110 (handgunlaw.us). Unlawful possession of a weapon on school property is a Class D felony since 1996.

**Eastern Kentucky University (EKU) Campus Policy on Weapons**

Current policy dictates that no weapon including any type of gun, is allowed on or near the housing areas on campus. Chris Owen who works in the housing office at EKU, said that the student population is extremely diverse, but reflects much more of a conservative state (Owen, C. personal communication, 2020). The campus has many local students who grew up culturally more adept at the use of guns and there are also students from out of the area who have little exposure to them. The diversity on this particular campus makes for an interesting sample for research purposes.

**Influential Organizations**

Students for Concealed Carry on Campus (SCCC) claims 42,000 members nationwide with chapters in every state. The group includes students, faculty, staff, parents, and others who believe that holders of state-issued concealed handgun licenses should be allowed the same measure of personal protection on college campuses that they enjoy virtually everywhere else. Bouffard et al., (2012), explains that one of the often-posed arguments for lifting bans on the licensed carrying of concealed handguns on campuses has been the proposition that doing so would lead to an increased prevalence of legally carried handguns at universities, therefore, legally armed individuals would be able to intervene in the event of a campus shooting incident.

In order to understand the relationship between concealed carry laws and those that advocate for it on college campuses, we look at the National Rifle Association (NRA) stance on campus gun laws. The NRA opposes gun control measures that only
serve to punish law-abiding citizens. They believe that federal law is a floor rather than a ceiling that sets minimum standards so that states, if they choose, can go above and beyond those standards (NRA, 2021).

According to Lott (2018), crime prevention happens when citizens are able to protect and arm themselves. His case can be explained in Figure 1 above. Between 1998-2015, 96.2% of mass public shootings occurred in gun-free zones while 3.8% of these shootings occurred where guns were allowed to be concealed and carried. This figure is relatively simple and lacks some detail, but what is certain is that even though some areas are considered “gun-free” that does not equate to “free from gun violence.”

Figure 1: Percentage of Shootings in Gun-Free Zones (Jan 1998-Dec 2015)
Figure 2: Partisan gap in views of concealed carry

The chart (Figure 2) above indicates where the largest gap in agreement lies, which is their position on allowing concealed carry in more places, which would include college campuses. The results reveal how divided our nation is on the issue, and how important the issue is to both parties (Oliphant, 2017).
Figure 3: Public Opinion on Concealed Carry on Campus by Political Party Affiliation

See Figure 3 above which comes from BBC News (2019). It reveals the influences on the concealed carry policy in the U.S. The data shows how political affiliation affects attitudes and opinions, resulting in a stark contrast in support but also provides proof that both parties agree to have restrictions. Not allowing the mentally ill and world-wide criminals to purchase and operate a gun is agreeable to both sides and for solid safety reasons. Where the division occurs is at the concept of concealed carry itself which seems to be the most polarizing part of gun control laws and regulations. Republicans are on a path to make CC more acceptable especially for teachers and officials on school campuses. The NRA continues its mission to lessen concealed carry regulations on college campuses along with all public areas, and continues to be a vast influence politically.

Cramer (2014), argues that the state level Court of Appeals overturn the college bans on carrying guns, because “Only the Legislature can regulate the use, sale and
possession of firearms.” Recent court cases have also overturned some long-standing systemwide bans of concealed carry on state university campuses (Villalobos, 2018). In March 2012, the Colorado Supreme Court ruled that the University of Colorado’s policy banning guns from campus violates the state’s concealed carry law. In 2011, the Oregon Court of Appeals overturned the Oregon University System’s ban of guns on campuses, allowing those with permits to carry concealed guns on the grounds of these public colleges. In both cases, it was ruled that state law dictates only the legislature can regulate the use, sale, and possession of firearms, and therefore these systems had overstepped their authority in issuing the bans (Villalobos, 2018).

**Law Enforcement and Campus Safety**

College campuses are not immune from instances of crime and violence. The U.S. Department of Education (DOE) reports that, in 2009, university and college campuses across the country accounted for 17 murders, 2590 forcible sex offenses, 1865 robberies, and 2675 aggravated assaults (U.S. Department of Education, 2012).

Another way that public colleges and universities have tried to keep the learning environment safe is with campus police departments. The latest publication on campus law enforcement by the Bureau of Justice Statistics found that 74% of four-year institutions with at least 2500 students had a campus law enforcement agency. Although nearly all of the campuses reported having 24-hour patrols, three digit emergency numbers, and emergency blue-light phones, campuses using sworn officers averaged only 2.3 police personnel to every 1000 students (Reaves & U.S. Department of Justice, Bureau of Justice Statistics, 2008).
In her law review, ‘The second amendment goes to college’ (2011), Miller argued that colleges and universities must ban weapons possession because of a need to provide a safe and comfortable learning environment. She further explains that the academic freedom doctrine allows public higher education institutions autonomy in restricting weapons, that these institutions have a compelling reason to implement such policies.

Miller (2011) recognized the importance of lobbying forces such as Students for Concealed Carry on Campus (SCCC) and Students for Gun Free Schools (SGFS). She explains that academic institutions have great interest in protecting the campus population and in ensuring the free exchange of communication in the classroom. Displaying firearms can be distracting, negatively affects one’s ability to learn and to comprehend.

One university has chosen to allow CC, but not advertise it as such. The author (Ruoppila, 2022) talks about conversations among committee members that dealt with implementing CC on their campus in Austin, TX. They discussed a wide range of potential hazards and issues to ensure the utmost safety. They wanted information distributed while also trying to maintain a low-profile on the subject as to not cause any panic or unnecessary concerns referred to as “intentional invisibility.”

The intentional invisibility method was a deliberate choice and implies a wish to keep campus carry out of sight, distance non-carriers (the majority) from the issue, and direct the state-mandated communication to licensed carriers only, using a code language that they are supposed to recognize. The questions concerning implementation of such a policy remain important, and the Texas law has been even suggested as a best practice. Campus carry is nowhere seen in orientation for new students, training videos for armed
intruder attacks (obligatory for faculty and staff), and so forth. All the information can be located on the university website, but no one is openly invited to locate the information. The university leadership considers campus carry a "non-issue" that is better forgotten (Ruoppila, 2022).

Amidst a climate of panic and anxiety, notwithstanding the actual risks, there are new ways in which colleges and universities have tried to improve their security and preparedness in the event of an extreme act of violence such as an on-campus shooter. Campus safety has apparently become a significant factor in the college selection process for countless applicants and their parents (Fox & Savage, 2009). National media outlets began to publish material advising students and parents on how to tell whether a school is safe and began publishing articles that graded colleges for safety based on the availability of such measures as lockdown procedures and armed security officers.

Restrictions on possession of firearms on campus fall into two categories: prohibition in dorms and university-owned housing (on campus and off) and prohibition on carrying weapons on campus. The restriction on keeping firearms in university housing would seem obvious to most, but in many rural campus settings, hunting is a common student pastime (Cramer, 2014).

Evidence of Improvement

Although evidence leaning one way or the other is limited, numbers are beginning to surface to reveal the success of concealed carry on campus. The statistics from Kansas’ first six months of legal campus carry reveals that allowing law-abiding gun owners to carry on campus has the potential to reduce crime without creating an unsafe campus environment. In 2017, students were given the right to concealed carry on state university
campuses in Kansas (Patrick, 2018). A survey of more than 20,000 employees across all Kansas Board of Regents schools showed that 50 percent of faculty and administrators were vehemently opposed to the new law and expressed a belief that campus carry would increase crime on campus.

Despite these widespread beliefs, statistics from the University of Kansas (KU) police department show the number of crimes committed on campus decreased by 13 percent in 2017 compared to 2016 (Patrick, 2018). Furthermore, campus police did not record a single weapons violation on campus for the entire year. The overall number of criminal offenses committed on campus dropped to from 770 in 2016 to 671 incidents in 2017. While arrests for drug and alcohol offenses actually increased in 2017 compared to 2016, KU saw decreases in the number of violent crimes. For example, KU police reported more than a 50 percent decrease in assaults, with only 14 assaults in 2017 compared to 30 in 2016. Additionally, the campus saw significant decreases in both burglaries and thefts and experienced more than a 66 percent decrease in the number of car thefts on campus in 2017 compared to 2016 (Patrick, 2018).

After the new campus carry law was passed, a number of university faculty throughout Kansas publicly stated that they were trying to leave their university positions for new jobs because of the law. One distinguished professor in English at Kansas State University, Philip Nel, claimed he would be taking a leave of absence during the fall semester to look for new jobs. Additionally, Nel noted that if he were not able to find another job that was suitable, he would continue teaching at Kansas State this spring, but would limit his time on campus and cancel all office hour sessions (Patrick, 2018).
What is Lacking in Research

In conclusion, research reveals that CC on campus is a complicated issue and one of the most divisive of all aspects of gun policy. Little research has emerged that provides substantive evidence that it benefits or harms the campus community one way or the other. The issue proves to be subjective and remains a fairly unexplored concept in our society. Factors such as certain demographics can help predict an individual’s viewpoint on the matter, but each individual has their own reasons for their beliefs. This includes the viewpoints from not only the student, but also faculty and staff which have been predominantly left out of the current research. The prime example of Professor Nel above (Patrick, 2018), is definitely the tip of the iceberg when it comes to faculty-specific reasons and viewpoints that no one has studied. This study uses findings from current limited research to develop a unique instrument (survey) that provides accurate data benefitting the field of college campus safety and security. The study will compare and contrast viewpoints between students, faculty, and staff who make up the campus community. It is possible to survey one group without the others, but one would not capture the actual culture on the campus and would not have the most complete data.

Methodology

The method used for this study is a quantitative survey through campus-wide voluntary participation at a university in Kentucky. The survey includes all genders and grade levels to cover a wide range of participants. It also includes faculty and staff opinions as well as students, to ensure the campus culture is reflected by all who operate there. The survey was shared through QR code on campus and via email directly to students, staff, and faculty.
This study is designed to explain the relationship between current campus gun laws and the students/faculty/staff perceptions of safety through a series of meticulously chosen questions. Surveys can provide usable data that enhances this research. To ensure the participants engaged honestly and felt safe in their responses, they remained anonymous.

The few states that allow concealed carry on their campuses, are still in the beginning stages of data collection and analysis. In other words, it is early and unclear whether those policies are working. Until those statistics become more available for research purposes, it is very difficult to proclaim valid success or lack-thereof with campus gun policies. A commonly accepted goal of the American college campus is to provide a safe learning environment, but how that looks and feels differs for each student, faculty, and staff member.
III. Method

Hypotheses and Instrument

With gun control debates in the national spotlight, policy-makers and higher education administrators are being forced to re-evaluate campus-specific gun restrictions (Fox & Burnstein, 2010). Regrettably, little in the way of evidence-based guidance has been supplied, leaving state and elected officials to debate the appropriate course of action given conflicting liberty interests and societal demands. It is possible that allowing concealed carry on campus gives attendees and employees peace of mind in that they could legally defend themselves against threats and violent acts. It could also result in the opposite, causing increased tension and anxiety among the population. This is the purpose of the study, to explore the differing viewpoints of faculty, staff and students through a unique survey.

This study assesses the safety concerns and concealed carry viewpoints of a significant sample population of those operating on a Kentucky college campus during the 2023 school year. The quantitative method of research was utilized via a campus-wide survey through Qualtrics which is a highly accurate and reliable program. The surveyed population was given anonymity, and freedom to take the survey at home or through their phone or computer. The survey was conducted with a scaled approach so the numbers could be calculated to determine accurate feedback that can be used to develop reliable data in the area of college campus safety.

The appropriate survey questions were crucial to obtaining credible data. Because of the vast diversity on college campuses, gun policies can be seen as political in nature, therefore it was best to allow the participant to conduct the survey on their own,
anonymously as to foster a more non-political outlook and a less biased answer set. A face-to-face interview might yield inaccurate results or possible confrontation. The goal was to obtain reliable data, not seek out individual stories.

This study sought out personal viewpoints on college campus safety with an analysis of variance with the groups being: students, faculty, and staff. The survey is divided in four parts: 1. Demographics 2. Personal Safety 3. Perception of Campus Safety and 4. Campus Carry. The study tested three null hypotheses (Charters, 1992), one for each section (2,3,4), that there is not a difference between the three groups. The results were found using descriptive statistics to determine differences of attitudes. The 5-point Likert Scale with equal intervals was used as a measurement tool because it is one of the most common and reliable scales when measuring beliefs, opinions and attitudes (DeVellis, 2012). Cronbach’s alpha indicated whether the items measure the same construct and quantified reliability.

Studies have shown that although some research has been done to assess the students’ perspective on CC on campus, few cases included faculty and staff which limits data as to the contrasting views of the three populations and what is causing them to feel that way. The goal of this study is to obtain an adequate response rate of each surveyed; student, faculty, and staff on one university campus. The student population for academic year 2023 on the surveyed campus is 14,465 including 12,070 undergraduate and 2,395 graduate students. Student to faculty ratio is 15:1 which is about the national average. The campus employs 687 faculty and 1,554 administrative staff (EKU website). The goal was to receive at least the required minimum of 30 random participants of each sample to meet the central limit theory assumption. That minimum was far exceeded.
Personal Safety

This section contains five specific questions that reflect the individuals’ perceptions of personal safety, if they feel threatened and to what extent. All responses in this section will be given the same 5-pt Likert Scale: Strongly Disagree – Disagree – Neutral – Agree – Strongly Agree. Null Hypothesis: There is no difference between the groups students, faculty and staff on this measure of personal safety. Q8. “I am afraid of crime on my college campus” measures the level of fear of crime the participant feels in general on their campus. Q9. “It is likely that I may become a victim of a crime on my college campus” measures their fear of victimization on campus. Q10. “I would prefer the university courses be online/distance learning due to personal safety concerns” measures students’ desire to take their courses online due to safety concerns, and also measures faculty and staff opinions regarding online teaching due to safety. Q11. “I generally feel unsafe on my campus” measures the opinions of students, faculty and staff in regard to how they feel about their overall general safety on campus. Q12. “There was a threatening incident I experienced on campus that causes me to feel this way” measures if negative experiences on campus have influenced participants’ viewpoints on personal safety.

Perceptions of Campus Safety

This section contains seven specific questions that reveal how participants feel about campus security and safety guidelines. All responses in this section are given the same 5-pt Likert Scale: Strongly Disagree – Disagree – Neutral – Agree – Strongly Agree. Null Hypothesis: There is no difference between the groups students, faculty and staff on this measure of perceptions of campus safety. Q13. “I have no trust in the
security procedures on my campus” measures which participants in each of the three
groups have trust in their campus safety procedures which is information available to the
public. Q14. “I have confidence in the effectiveness of my university’s firearm policy”
measures whether or not the participants have confidence in the effectiveness of the
current policies regarding firearms on campus. Q15. “I am confident that the safety
measures on my college campus (e.g., cameras, emergency notification systems via
phone/text/email) will prevent crime” measures the participants’ confidence levels in the
campus safety policies. Q16. “I trust campus police to keep me safe” measures which
participants trust in the ability of campus police to keep them safe from harm. Q17. “In
the event of an active shooter, I have no confidence in the protocol on my campus”
measures which participants are confident in campus procedures during an active shooter
situation. Q18. “Violent/criminal-prone individuals on my campus are easy to identify”
measures whether or not participants can ascertain which individuals on their campus
may be prone to violence and crime, and to what extent. Q19. “I believe if an individual
plans to use a firearm on campus to commit a crime, the campus no-gun policy will
prevent it” measures which participants have confidence that the university policy will
prevent others on campus from using a firearm to commit a crime.

Campus Carry

This section contains fourteen specific questions that reflect the individuals’
opinions on concealed carry on campus. All responses in this section were given the same
5-pt Likert Scale: Strongly Disagree – Disagree – Neutral – Agree – Strongly Agree. Null
Hypothesis: There is no difference between the groups students, faculty and staff on this
measure of campus carry. Q20-Q23. “The following individuals should be permitted to
carry a concealed firearm on a college campus if they have a permit issued by their state: Students, Faculty, Staff, Visitors” measures which of the groups the participant feels should be permitted to carry a firearm on campus. Q24-Q28. “I would feel safe if the following individuals were permitted to carry a concealed firearm on a college campus if they have a permit issued by their state: Students, Faculty, Staff, Police, Visitors” measures whether or not participants believe that a state-issued license affects their opinion regarding which individuals should be allowed to carry a gun on campus. Q29. “If concealed carry were permitted on my campus, I would carry a gun on campus” measures the extent to which the participant would themselves carry a concealed weapon on campus if they were permitted. Q30. “If concealed carry were permitted on my campus, I would seek firearms training and concealed carry certification if I haven’t already” measures which participants would seek firearms training prior to concealed carrying on campus, and to what extent they believe they would do this. Q31. “I have previously, or currently carry an unauthorized weapon (e.g., knife, taser, pepper spray) on campus regardless of the policy” measures which participants disregard campus policy, and carry unauthorized weapons on campus anyway. Q32. “I have previously, or currently carry a gun on campus regardless of the policy” measures which participants choose to carry a gun on campus regardless of the current no-gun policy on campus. Q33. “Regardless of personal safety, I have a right to carry my firearm on campus” measures participants’ attitudes regarding their right to carry a gun on campus, with no regard for doing it as a personal protective measure, but as a basic human right.
Validity

According to (Gilbert & Prion, 2017) the Lawshe method is a reliable way to validate research instruments such as surveys. Lawshe’s Content Validity Ratio (CVR) is used to quantify validity of an assessment instrument or tool as evaluated by a panel with knowledge on the subject. In accordance with the Lawshe method, a panel of nine subject matter experts at various levels and degrees was sought out to critique the survey questions (those with experience in areas of law enforcement, safety/security, weapons handling and EKU campus culture and policies). Independent of the other panelists, each of the nine panelists was asked to rate each question as ‘‘essential, useful, or not necessary.’’ When all panelists agree an item is ‘‘essential,’’ the CVR is 1.00 (adjusted to 0.99 for ease of manipulation according to Lawshe, 1975). CVR of 0.78 or higher with three or more experts is considered evidence of good content validity. CVR can provide researchers with a quantitative measure of the validity of an evaluation instrument (Gilbert & Prion, 2016). Using the Lawshe formula to establish validity (Lawshe, 1975), the final survey was approved by the panel and passed the content validity test.

Reliability

In order to design a unique and reliable instrument, many factors were considered. Although similar survey instruments exist, they were not a fit for this study being conducted in a state that had no prior known research. Kentucky, as explained previously, has its own culture and attitudes when it comes to guns and safety. Every state in the U.S. has its own version of gun policy, where you can and cannot carry, the age in which it’s legal to own and fire, etc. The university campus is a reflection of its surrounding culture and is its own unique biodome of viewpoints.
It was also important to establish anonymity for a more honest answer set due to the nature and sensitivity of the subject matter. It was best to use a quantitative analysis to yield more accurate results, the 5-point Likert scale and also establishing reliability through the Cronbach’s alpha before proceeding. This is a measure used to assess the reliability and internal consistency of scaled items such as a survey. This test was used on the survey and showed a Cronbach’s alpha of .942 where only a minimum of .70 is required to prove reliability.
IV. Data Analysis and Results

Accuracy of data collection and statistical processing was vital in this research. Analysis for this study includes Qualtrics (2020) and Jamovi 2.3.16 (2023). This descriptive table explains the differences in the groups and gives demographic details.

**Study Characteristics and Descriptives**

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<td>1.03</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Non-binary / Other gender</td>
<td>160</td>
<td>1.43</td>
<td>1.23</td>
<td>1.03</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Female</td>
<td>90</td>
<td>1.42</td>
<td>1.22</td>
<td>1.02</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Male</td>
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<td>1.42</td>
<td>1.22</td>
<td>1.02</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Students</td>
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<td>2.93</td>
<td>2.68</td>
<td>2.43</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Female</td>
<td>160</td>
<td>2.93</td>
<td>2.68</td>
<td>2.43</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Asian</td>
<td>160</td>
<td>2.93</td>
<td>2.68</td>
<td>2.43</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Caucasian</td>
<td>160</td>
<td>2.93</td>
<td>2.68</td>
<td>2.43</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hispanic</td>
<td>100</td>
<td>2.93</td>
<td>2.68</td>
<td>2.43</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other</td>
<td>160</td>
<td>2.93</td>
<td>2.68</td>
<td>2.43</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Male</td>
<td>100</td>
<td>2.93</td>
<td>2.68</td>
<td>2.43</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>African American</td>
<td>160</td>
<td>2.93</td>
<td>2.68</td>
<td>2.43</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Caucasian</td>
<td>160</td>
<td>2.93</td>
<td>2.68</td>
<td>2.43</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hispanic</td>
<td>100</td>
<td>2.93</td>
<td>2.68</td>
<td>2.43</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other</td>
<td>160</td>
<td>2.93</td>
<td>2.68</td>
<td>2.43</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Male</td>
<td>100</td>
<td>2.93</td>
<td>2.68</td>
<td>2.43</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>African American</td>
<td>160</td>
<td>2.93</td>
<td>2.68</td>
<td>2.43</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Caucasian</td>
<td>160</td>
<td>2.93</td>
<td>2.68</td>
<td>2.43</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hispanic</td>
<td>100</td>
<td>2.93</td>
<td>2.68</td>
<td>2.43</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other</td>
<td>160</td>
<td>2.93</td>
<td>2.68</td>
<td>2.43</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Male</td>
<td>100</td>
<td>2.93</td>
<td>2.68</td>
<td>2.43</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Figure 4: Study Characteristics and Descriptives

Upon cleaning the data and eliminating incomplete surveys, the total participants in this study is 285: 124 Faculty, 77 Staff and 84 Students (all class levels). Genders include 148 female, 132 male and 5 non-binary/other. Ethnicities consist of 11 African-American, 3 Asian, 176 Caucasian, 3 Native-American, 2 Pacific Islander, 10 Other. Those who currently own a firearm include 94% Faculty, 92% Staff and 57% Students. Students residing on-campus report 30% gun ownership.
Confirmatory Analysis for Each Section

Personal Safety

This section contains five specific questions that reflect the individuals’ perceptions of personal safety, if they feel threatened and to what extent. Null Hypothesis: There is no difference between the groups students, faculty and staff on this measure of personal safety. I reject the Null.

The plot graph in Figure 5 shows the mean of each group. A One-Way Anova for personal safety was calculated and results indicate differences between the three groups. A post-hoc test was conducted to measure which group had the most significant difference. Faculty reported feeling better about personal safety on campus than students and staff. Students reported the most safety concern and staff were in between the faculty and students.

Figure 5: Personal Safety Plot
Personal Safety One-Way ANOVA (Welch’s)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>F</th>
<th>df1</th>
<th>df2</th>
<th>P</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Personal Safety</td>
<td>8.97</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>166</td>
<td>&lt; .001</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Figure 6: Personal Safety One-Way ANOVA

There is a significant difference found between the three groups. In order to determine which groups presented that significant difference, a post-hoc test was conducted in Figure 7 to determine that Faculty are the significant group with (<.001).

Tukey Post-Hoc Test – Personal Safety

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Faculty</th>
<th>Staff</th>
<th>Student</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Faculty</td>
<td>Mean difference</td>
<td>—</td>
<td>-0.255 *</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>p-value</td>
<td>—</td>
<td>0.045</td>
<td>&lt; .001</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Staff</td>
<td>Mean difference</td>
<td>—</td>
<td>-0.193</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>p-value</td>
<td>—</td>
<td>0.220</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Student</td>
<td>Mean difference</td>
<td>—</td>
<td>—</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>p-value</td>
<td>—</td>
<td>—</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note. * p < .05, ** p < .01, *** p < .001

Figure 7: Tukey Post-Hoc Test – Personal Safety
Perceptions of Campus Safety

This section contains seven specific questions that reveal how participants feel about campus security and safety guidelines. Null Hypothesis: There is no significant difference between the groups students, faculty and staff on this measure of perceptions of campus safety. I fail to reject the Null. All three surveyed groups feel about the same when it comes to campus safety policies and security protocols. A One-Way ANOVA of (.465) for the Perception of campus carry section did not display significant differences, therefore no post-hoc test is necessary. The Figure 9 plot shows the mean for each group.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>One-Way ANOVA (Welch's)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>F df1 df2 P</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Perceptions of Safety</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>0.770 2 165 0.465</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Figure 8: Perceptions of Safety One-Way Anova

Figure 9: Perceptions of Safety Plot
Campus Carry

This section contains fourteen specific questions that reflect the individuals’ opinions on concealed carry on campus. Null Hypothesis: There is no difference between the groups students, faculty and staff on this measure of campus carry. I reject the Null. There is a significant difference found by the One-Way ANOVA in Figure 10 of (<.001) and a post hoc test was conducted and found that students are more in favor of CC than the other groups. The Figure 11 plot graph shows the mean for each surveyed group.

One-Way ANOVA (Welch's)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>F</th>
<th>df1</th>
<th>df2</th>
<th>P</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Campus Carry</td>
<td>19.5</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>167</td>
<td>&lt;.001</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Figure 10: Campus Carry One-Way Anova

Figure 11: Campus Carry Plot
Exploratory Analysis

The exploratory analysis section is to evaluate statistically significant findings outside of the confirmatory results.

Differences Among Gender

Other than Male and Female, participants reported 1 “other” and 4 “third gender.” These participants were left out of gender analysis because they are not a large enough group for analysis. There are however significant results in the Campus Carry and Personal Safety sections but not Perceptions of Safety. Females report more safety concern, but males would rather carry. No significant differences were found between the

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Faculty</th>
<th>Staff</th>
<th>Student</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Faculty</td>
<td>Mean difference</td>
<td>—</td>
<td>-0.305</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>p-value</td>
<td>—</td>
<td>0.121</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Staff</td>
<td>Mean difference</td>
<td>—</td>
<td>—</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>p-value</td>
<td>—</td>
<td>—</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Student</td>
<td>Mean difference</td>
<td>—</td>
<td>—</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>p-value</td>
<td>—</td>
<td>—</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note. * p < .05, ** p < .01, *** p < .001

Figure 12: Tukey Post-Hoc Test – Campus Carry
two genders for campus safety protocols. The mean was higher for females than that of males as seen by the Figure 14 personal safety boxplot.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Statistic</th>
<th>Student's t</th>
<th>Df</th>
<th>P</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Personal Safety</td>
<td>4.24 (^a)</td>
<td>277</td>
<td>&lt; .001</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Perceptions of Camps Safety</td>
<td>1.30</td>
<td>278</td>
<td>0.194</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Campus Carry</td>
<td>-3.00 (^a)</td>
<td>278</td>
<td>0.003</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note. H\(_a\) \(\mu_{\text{Female}} \neq \mu_{\text{Male}}\)

\(^a\) Levene's test is significant (p < .05), suggesting a violation of the assumption of equal variances

Figure 13: Independent Samples T-Test

Figure 14: Personal Safety Boxplot - Gender
Perceptions of Campus Safety remain gender neutral as seen in Figure 15. When it comes to Campus Carry in Figure 16, males report being more likely to carry a firearm than females.
Admissions to Gun Carrying and Unauthorized Weapons

For the two questions regarding the carry of at least one unauthorized weapon on campus (other than a firearm) and question about carrying a firearm regardless of policy, a One-Way ANOVA test shows that there is a significant difference between the three groups, specifically students. A ‘p’ value of less than (.05) is considered significant and results here reveal a value less than (.001) for both questions. Students are much more likely to carry a gun or an unauthorized form of protection on campus such as a taser, knife, or pepper spray.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>F</th>
<th>df1</th>
<th>df2</th>
<th>P</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Gun Carry</td>
<td>8.13</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>137</td>
<td>&lt;.001</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Unauthorized Weapons</td>
<td>19.89</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>152</td>
<td>&lt;.001</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Figure 17: Gun Carry and Unauthorized Weapons - One-Way ANOVA
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>A</th>
<th>N</th>
<th>Mean</th>
<th>SD</th>
<th>SE</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Gun Carry</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Faculty</td>
<td>124</td>
<td>1.15</td>
<td>0.585</td>
<td>0.0525</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Staff</td>
<td>76</td>
<td>1.33</td>
<td>0.915</td>
<td>0.1049</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Student</td>
<td>83</td>
<td>1.75</td>
<td>1.286</td>
<td>0.1412</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Unauthorized Weapons</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Faculty</td>
<td>124</td>
<td>1.56</td>
<td>1.091</td>
<td>0.0980</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Staff</td>
<td>77</td>
<td>1.96</td>
<td>1.508</td>
<td>0.1719</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Student</td>
<td>84</td>
<td>2.83</td>
<td>1.612</td>
<td>0.1759</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Figure 18: Gun Carry and Unauthorized Weapons Group Descriptives

Figures 18, 19, and 20 reveal the mean of each group and show that students more so than the other groups, are more likely to carry unauthorized weapons on campus.
Figure 19: Gun Carry Plot

Figure 20: Unauthorized Weapons Plot
Data Analysis Procedures

Reverse Coding

When creating surveys or questionnaires, researchers sometimes rephrase “positive” questions in a “negative” way to make sure that individuals are giving consistent responses. Although this tactic has arguments for and against it, it is recommended to have reverse-coded items to crosscheck answer validity (Weijters & Baumgartner, 2012). Some researchers have attempted to reduce the potential effects of response pattern biases by incorporating negatively worded or reverse-coded items on their questionnaires.

The basic logic here is that reverse-coded items are like cognitive “speed bumps” that require respondents to engage in more controlled, as opposed to automatic, cognitive processing. Two questions in the Perceptions of Campus Safety section were reverse coded and that was calculated properly throughout data analysis. It is commonly recommended that multi-item Likert scales include both reversed and non-reversed items. One aim of using such a mix of items is to alert inattentive respondents that item content varies. Another is to reduce bias that may occur in scale scores because of acquiescent respondents (Weijters & Baumgartner, 2012).

Although the reverse wording had its own purpose, it did result in one participant out of several hundred, assuming the researcher had a bias. The survey has questions that begin with “I have confidence in…” and for two questions in the survey, they are reversely worded “I have no confidence in…” to break up the monotony, causing that “speed bump” and to avoid bias answers that only lean in one direction without a lot of contemplation for the question. For any research survey, most participants have limited
knowledge about survey design, reverse coding, scaled items and how to calculate them.
Participants are making their own inferences about the material and likely making
assumptions based upon inherent biases themselves. It’s important to understand the
sensitivity of certain topics, especially when discussing policy relating to personal safety
and guns. This is considered an unpopular topic to discuss, especially on an academic
campus, and yet stirs a large amount of controversy and hard-standing views when it
comes time to actually discuss the policy. In other words, although the conversation of
gun policy on campus and personal safety may be sensitive, divisive and political in
nature, it warrants an adult conversation regarding the policies surrounding it.

Summary
Evidence through research and knowledge shape policy and improve its
effectiveness. While policy makers fundamentally decide policies based on available
evidence, researchers strive to find ways to gain new knowledge and build the evidence
base. Policy makers can only make use of the research available to them, what is known
and unknown. Research is often undertaken to address specific issues such as college
campus safety, to evaluate the effectiveness of certain programs and procedures, and
suggest modifications (National Academies Press, 2008).
V. Conclusion

Summary of Findings

Upon completion of extensive reliability and validity tests and multiple statistical calculations, the study is complete and statistically significant results were obtained that will greatly add to the college campus safety field of study and policy. Significant differences among the groups (faculty, staff and students) are clear in the areas of personal safety and campus carry. The perceptions of campus safety section reveal consistent results among the three groups who generally feel safe on campus and have confidence in the security protocols, campus police and overall safety policies on their campus.

In regards to personal safety, the students report feeling more unsafe than staff, and even more so than faculty who have less apprehension about their personal safety on campus. Faculty are the most opposed to concealed carry on campus and report the fewest safety concerns. Students are more in favor to carry on campus and have the most safety concerns. Staff are right in between the other groups.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Unauthorized Weapons</th>
<th>Faculty</th>
<th>Staff</th>
<th>Student</th>
<th>Gun Carry</th>
<th>Faculty</th>
<th>Staff</th>
<th>Student</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>75.00%</td>
<td>66.23%</td>
<td>35.71%</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>91.94%</td>
<td>86.84%</td>
<td>69.88%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>7.26%</td>
<td>6.49%</td>
<td>8.33%</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3.23%</td>
<td>1.32%</td>
<td>4.82%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>5.65%</td>
<td>5.19%</td>
<td>15.48%</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>3.23%</td>
<td>6.58%</td>
<td>14.46%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>10.48%</td>
<td>9.09%</td>
<td>17.86%</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>0.81%</td>
<td>2.63%</td>
<td>2.41%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>1.61%</td>
<td>12.99%</td>
<td>22.62%</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>0.81%</td>
<td>2.63%</td>
<td>8.43%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Likert Scale: (1)Strongly Disagree (2)Disagree (3)Neutral (4)Agree (5)Strongly Agree

Figure 21: Gun Carry and Unauthorized Weapons Likert Scale
Also reported was that females are more likely than males to fear for their personal safety, but males are more likely to carry a firearm. Students are much more likely to carry a gun or an unauthorized form of protection on campus such as a taser, knife, or pepper spray.

**Implications**

Kentucky is a state that allows CC on its campuses at their discretion. No university in Kentucky currently utilizes that option, but it isn’t out of the realm of possibility. House Bill 542 which was put in motion March 16, 2023 would have prevented public higher education institutions in Kentucky from passing any policies that bar people 21 years and older from carrying a concealed weapon on its campuses (Kentucky General Assembly, 2023). As established in the literature review, currently universities in the state have the authority to set those policies and none currently allow weapons on campus. The Kentucky Council on Post-Secondary Education opposed the bill, and it was in the House’s orders, but was passed over.

If KY House Bill 542 had passed, universities who currently enjoy a gun-free campus would have to allow firearms on their campuses by anyone of legal age. It would then be unconstitutional to disallow them that right. The rigors of adapting a CC policy on a campus who enacts such a policy through surveying, lobbying and voting is one thing, but having it forced upon the campus without any regard to individual campus culture and policy would be extremely chaotic. House Bill 542 or one like it could return and pass, and Kentucky college campuses are not prepared for that (Kentucky General Assembly, 2023).
The vote stirred officials to speak (Castilla, 2023). Kentucky state representative Bill Wesley said, “I guarantee if you ask any woman that was raped on a campus, they would’ve preferred to have a gun to fight their attacker. I believe these students — responsible adults paying for their college education — that they have a right to defend themselves.” In opposition, Aaron Thompson, President of Kentucky Council for Post-Secondary Education states, “Considering the student mental health crisis we are now experiencing, we are concerned that an increased presence of guns could lead to higher rates of violence and suicide. When a gun is readily available, a suicide attempt can become significantly more lethal.”

**Limitations**

With sensitive topics such as personal safety and gun policy, biases can exist in many forms. It was vital to this study that no biases were presented either by the researcher or in the instrument used, however, this doesn’t account for the biases observed by those who came in contact with the survey. The subject matter may have dissuaded certain participants from contributing or completing the survey all the way through. It also could contribute to heavily one-sided answer sets, but the goal was to collect data and opinions, however extreme they may be. The academic approach and unbiased research of this particular study itself is a strength because this topic is very often taken up by lobbyists and those who might have an agenda that could affect research outcomes and policy. More research should be done by accredited academic institutions so the college campus safety pool of research has reliable data.

Research reveals that CC on campus is a complicated issue and one of the most divisive of all aspects of gun policy and little research has emerged that provides
evidence that it benefits or harms the campus community one way or the other (Scherer, et al., 2022). This topic is a fairly unexplored concept in Kentucky, and our society. Factors such as certain demographics can help predict viewpoints, but each individual has their own personal beliefs about safety and each state differs on how the laws of the region offer that safety. Gun laws and attitudes surrounding it vary so much from state to state, region to region that trying to compare and contrast or use that data from outside Kentucky is quite a stretch, and not a logical comparison for research.

**Recommendations for Future Research**

Designing and implementing a survey instrument from the ground up was no easy feat, but well worth the effort. Conducting research about sensitive policies involving race, religion, guns and the like require thick skin and an ability to defend your topic with facts and an unbiased mindset.

Kentucky came dangerously close to a state-wide scramble for college campus gun policies that don’t exist. A republican sponsored bill that would force public universities in the state to allow personnel the option to carry did not have enough votes to pass, but this is the closest Kentucky has been to such a policy. It would seem from the response from the state representatives that they are concerned about safety of women, in particular, rape. The education leader states his objections by pointing out the mental health crisis and suicide. Although two very different hypotheticals, they both seem to be concerned with student-related issues and violence and would be worth researching further.

This could be a potential jumping off point into a different research area when it comes to furthering the research on this topic which isn’t just about safety, but also ties to
issues surrounding mental health and what causes one to become violent. According to the American Psychological Association (APA) (2013), psychology can make important contributions to the policies that prevent gun violence on campus. Gun violence is an urgent and complex problem that requires evidence and research-based solutions that more studies such as this can provide. The APA (2013) states that “Prevention efforts guided by research on developmental risk can reduce the likelihood that firearms will be introduced into community and family conflicts or criminal activity. Prevention efforts can also reduce the relatively rare occasions when severe mental illness contributes to homicide or the more common circumstances when depression or other mental illness contributes to suicide.” Perhaps furthering knowledge and research in mental health on college campuses, especially among students, will result in advancing our understanding of campus safety concerns and how to mitigate them.

The results of this study reveal that Staff and especially Faculty, both feel safe on their campus and have confidence in the security protocols. The students surveyed feel more unsafe than the other two groups and are more likely to conceal a weapon including a firearm for self-protection. Students especially would benefit from a closer look into, and more campus research into, the mental health aspect of personal safety and security on campus. This is where the research forms a connection between the Safety Field and Mental Health Fields, because both areas are clearly affecting gun policy on college campuses.

Another aspect of policy is that of the university itself. Studies have shown that parents of college-attending students are becoming more and more concerned with the gun policies at their children’s college campuses. This is due to the increase of gun
violence on campuses. Part of the recruitment process for incoming freshman and new students is to highlight the safety and security of the campus including emergency response protocols and firearm policies, especially for the students residing on-campus (Claybourn, 2022). Parents want to be convinced that their son/daughter is attending a “safe” university that is actively doing all they can to prevent crime and minimize suffering that comes with personal safety concerns. Since the results showed that students are more likely to feel unsafe than the other two groups, this should be kept in mind when it comes to the recruitment of new students.

When considering the recruitment and retention of the college’s faculty and staff, the campus safety policies play a large role in retaining employees who feel safe in their work environment. Where once there were no guns authorized on campus, becomes a policy change that suddenly allows guns, might be enough to cause faculty and staff to resign or retire early after being used to feeling safe in a certain campus culture.

**Summary**

For a state widely known for its support for gun carrying and ownership (even doing away with concealed carry license and training in 2019), Kentucky could use more research when it comes to the need and support of concealed carry on its college campuses. This study is a first step towards a larger conversation that has been avoided too long by the campus safety research field. Ideally, prior to a possible KY House Bill 542 or instead of, the people residing in Kentucky and especially those who attend college there, will have gathered data in advance one way or the other and have the opportunity to lobby their interests in an organized manner. Utah is the only state to have a statute specifically naming public colleges and universities as public entities that do not
have the authority to ban concealed carry on campus, much like KY House Bill 542. This law basically strips the universities’ rights to enact their own gun carrying policy that aligns with their culture and support and forcing a CC option on them whether its warranted or not. This study shows that all populations on one particular college campus have strong opinions about their personal safety and differing attitudes about concealed carry. Research such as this drives policy to change for the better. Studies outside this one are limited in what reports as “success” with concealed carry on campus, therefore much more is needed in this field for the state of Kentucky and across the U.S.
APPENDICES
APPENDIX A: Survey
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Informed Consent

Project Title: Campus-wide safety survey of Students, Faculty and Staff for

Doctoral Research of Education: Leadership and Policy

The following information is provided to make you aware of issues related to the research for which you are being asked to participate.

- The purpose of this research is to understand and compare the factors that have contributed to opinions regarding safety while on campus.
- There will be no risks or foreseeable discomfort related to the research.
- The benefit to participants will be to self-analyze your own opinions and views on campus safety and what contributes to those answers.
- Confidentiality will be maintained within the limits allowed by law. Records related to this research will be maintained confidentially by the researcher via hard copy and electronic files. All participants will remain anonymous so you can give your most honest answers.
- Please only submit this survey one time.
- Participants may contact April Bixler (the researcher) with any questions throughout the process: E-mail: april_bixler1@mymail.eku.edu.
- Participation in this research is voluntary. Refusal to participate will not result in a penalty. Participants may discontinue participation at any time without penalty.
• The finished product of this research will likely be a journal article that will be submitted for publication and disbursed to academic and safety organizations that can benefit from the data collected.

Thank you for participating in this survey for doctoral research in the area of college campus safety. Our attitudes and perspectives on safety are deeply personal and vary with each individual. This survey aims to capture the most recent data on the subject. The survey is completely anonymous so please give your most honest answers and only complete one survey per person.

Demographics

1. You prefer to be surveyed as a: Student_____Faculty_____Staff_____(choose one)

2. You identify as: Male___ Female___ Non-binary / third gender___Other___ (choose one)

3. You identify most as: Caucasian____ African-American____ Hispanic____ Asian____ Native American___ Pacific Islander____ Other____ (choose one)

4. Your current academic level:
Freshman___Sophomore___Junior___Senior___Graduate____ N/A____

5. Place of Residence: On campus___Off campus____

6. Do you own a firearm? Yes_____ No_____

7. Have you ever operated a firearm? Yes_____ No_____

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Personal Safety

To what extent do you agree with the following statements (circle one):

8. I am afraid of crime on my college campus.
   Strongly Disagree – Disagree – Neutral – Agree – Strongly Agree

9. It is likely that I may become a victim of a crime on my college campus.
   Strongly Disagree – Disagree – Neutral – Agree – Strongly Agree

10. I would prefer the university courses be online/distance learning due to personal safety concerns.
    Strongly Disagree – Disagree – Neutral – Agree – Strongly Agree

11. I generally feel unsafe on my campus.
    Strongly Disagree – Disagree – Neutral – Agree – Strongly Agree

12. There was a threatening incident I experienced on campus that causes me to feel this way.
    Strongly Disagree – Disagree – Neutral – Agree – Strongly Agree

Perceptions of Campus Safety

To what extent do you agree with the following statements (circle one):

13. I have no trust in the security procedures on my campus.
    Strongly Disagree – Disagree – Neutral – Agree – Strongly Agree

14. I have confidence in the effectiveness of my university’s firearm policy.
    Strongly Disagree – Disagree – Neutral – Agree – Strongly Agree
15. I am confident that the safety measures on my college campus (e.g., cameras, emergency notification systems via phone/text/email) will prevent crime.

Strongly Disagree – Disagree – Neutral – Agree – Strongly Agree

16. I trust campus police to keep me safe.

Strongly Disagree – Disagree – Neutral – Agree – Strongly Agree

17. In the event of an active shooter, I have no confidence in the protocol on my campus.

Strongly Disagree – Disagree – Neutral – Agree – Strongly Agree

18. Violent/criminal-prone individuals on my campus are easy to identify.

Strongly Disagree – Disagree – Neutral – Agree – Strongly Agree

19. I believe if an individual plans to use a firearm on campus to commit a crime, the campus no-gun policy will prevent it.

Strongly Disagree – Disagree – Neutral – Agree – Strongly Agree

Campus Carry

To what extent do you agree with the following statements (circle one):

20. The following individuals should be permitted to carry a concealed firearm on a college campus if they have a permit issued by their state: Students

Strongly Disagree – Disagree – Neutral – Agree – Strongly Agree

21. The following individuals should be permitted to carry a concealed firearm on a college campus if they have a permit issued by their state: Faculty
22. The following individuals should be permitted to carry a concealed firearm on a college campus if they have a permit issued by their state: **Staff**

23. The following individuals should be permitted to carry a concealed firearm on a college campus if they have a permit issued by their state: **Visitors**

24. I would feel safe if the following individuals were permitted to carry a concealed firearm on a college campus if they have a permit issued by their state: **Students**

25. I would feel safe if the following individuals were permitted to carry a concealed firearm on a college campus if they have a permit issued by their state: **Faculty**

26. I would feel safe if the following individuals were permitted to carry a concealed firearm on a college campus if they have a permit issued by their state: **Staff**

27. I would feel safe if the following individuals were permitted to carry a concealed firearm on a college campus if they have a permit issued by their state: **Police**

28. I would feel safe if the following individuals were permitted to carry a concealed firearm on a college campus if they have a permit issued by their state: **Visitors**
29. If concealed carry were permitted on my campus, I would carry a gun on campus.  

Strongly Disagree – Disagree – Neutral – Agree – Strongly Agree

30. If concealed carry were permitted on my campus, I would seek firearms training and concealed carry certification if I haven’t already.  

Strongly Disagree – Disagree – Neutral – Agree – Strongly Agree

31. I have previously, or currently carry an unauthorized weapon (e.g., knife, taser, pepper spray) on campus regardless of the policy.  

Strongly Disagree – Disagree – Neutral – Agree – Strongly Agree

32. I have previously, or currently carry a gun on campus regardless of the policy.  

Strongly Disagree – Disagree – Neutral – Agree – Strongly Agree

33. Regardless of personal safety, I have a right to carry my firearm on campus.  

Strongly Disagree – Disagree – Neutral – Agree – Strongly Agree
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