

College campus crime data in Illinois

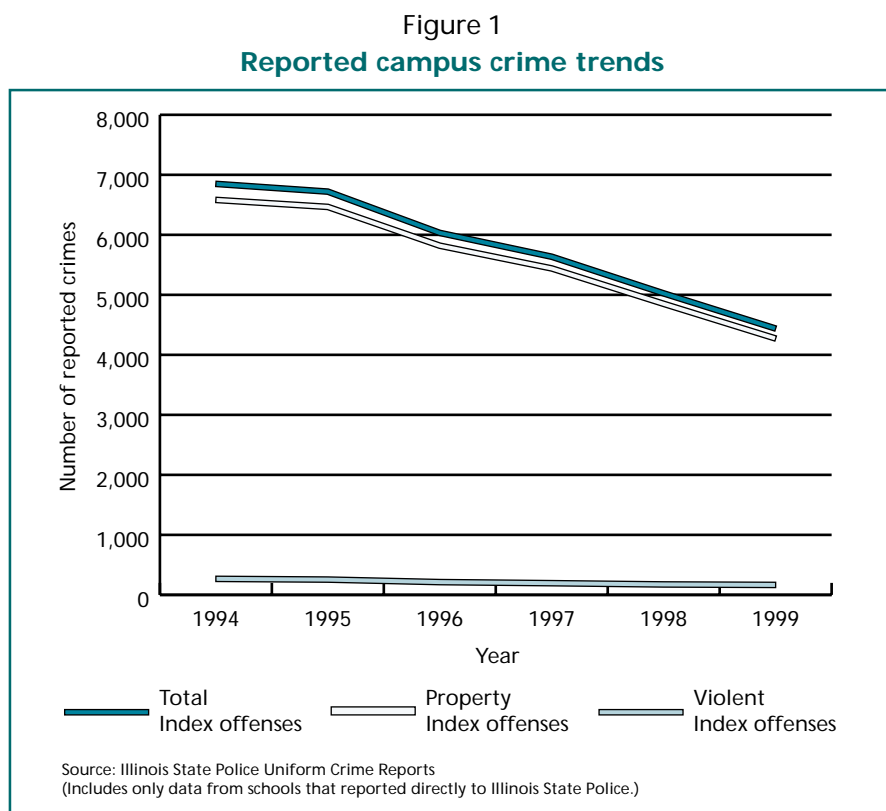
By Erica N. Morrow

Since 1992, the federal Campus Security Act (now known as the Jeanne Cleary Disclosure of Campus Security Policy and Campus Crime Statistics Act) has mandated the collection, dissemination, and public release of campus crime statistics. This act was in response to parents and students who were demanding more information about safety and security standards and practices on college campuses. Despite the legislative mandate and the expectations of students and their parents, the campus crime picture remains blurred.

Campus crime data problems

In 1998, less than 5 percent of 8,000 post-secondary institutions participating in federal student aid programs voluntarily provided crime statistics to the Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI). Other institutions reported data either indirectly or not at all to local or state police agencies. As a result, campus crime statistics are difficult to collate and examine. Many campus crimes reported and published by colleges indicate arrests made by the campus police department, rather than arrests made by local police on campus grounds, and may not accurately reflect the number of campus crimes that occur.

College and university sexual assault statistics also may be incomplete, as they may not include assaults reported only to campus housing officials or counselors. A significant number of sexual assaults are handled



by on-campus rape crisis centers, which are not required to report crimes to campus police departments.

Data sources

Some data can be obtained from the *Chronicle of Higher Education's* annual sampling of campus crime statistics, conducted by Critical Comparisons, Inc. The *Chronicle* collects statistics reported by hundreds of schools under the Cleary Act and attempts to make them readily available. It should be noted that in this database many schools only tally statistics known to campus police, although they are asked to include

crimes known by other campus officials. Furthermore, the *Chronicle* only includes data from colleges with 5,000 students or more. In addition, the data is limited in scope to schools who voluntarily responded to an inquiry. Some figures may include citations, which are considered arrests by campus police.

Many schools are including campus crime statistics on their Web sites, but the information is not consistently presented to the public. Some schools post only the Index crimes that occur on their campuses — ignoring drug, alcohol, and weapons violations, and hate crimes — while

Table 1
Comparison of reported Index offenses on college campuses and in Illinois

	College totals		State totals	
	Number of reported offenses	Percent of total*	Number of reported offenses	Percent of total*
Violent offenses				
Aggravated assault	113	68%	57,227	63%
Robbery	23	14%	26,644	29%
Criminal sexual assault	30	18%	6,062	7%
Murder	0	0	937	1%
Total violent offenses	166	100%	90,870	100%
Property offenses				
Arson	18	0.4%	3,293	0.7%
Motor vehicle theft	33	0.7%	52,561	11%
Theft	3,825	90%	327,422	70%
Burglary	396	9%	86,390	18%
Total property offenses	4,272	100%	469,666	100%

*Totals may not equal 100 percent due to rounding.
 Source: Illinois State Police Uniform Crime Reports

others include the full range of violations required by the Cleary Act. This makes it difficult to compare campus crime rates.

The Illinois State Police Uniform Crime Reporting (UCR) program has compiled some of the most comprehensive data on campus crime to date. Illinois colleges and universities that have a police, security, or public safety department are required to report their crime statistics to the Illinois State Police (ISP). In 1999, 44 colleges and universities, representing 69 percent of the Illinois student population, reported their crime statistics to ISP. However, 12 of those schools reported their numbers through other agencies. For example, City Colleges of Chicago report their crime statistics to the Chicago Police Department, which combines the data with crime statistics for the entire city before reporting it to ISP. The data analyzed in this *Trends and Issues Update* represents 76 percent of the student population attending universities or colleges with departments that report directly to ISP.

Campus crime analysis

The number of offenses occurring on college campuses is small when compared to statewide crime statistics (Table 1). Of all violent Index offenses reported in 1999, less than 1 percent were reported by colleges or universities. In addition, 1 percent of reported property Index offenses occurred on college or university campuses.

Since 1994, the number of reported incidents on campuses throughout the state have dropped 35 percent. Reports of violent Index offenses dropped nearly 38 percent and property Index offenses decreased 35 percent (Figure 1).

The violent Index crime rate in Illinois in 1999 was 749 per 100,000 residents. That number decreased to 34 per 100,000 students when looking at campus crime. The 1999 property Index crime rate in Illinois was 3,872 per 100,000 residents and 871 per 100,000 students on college or university campuses.

National studies indicate that substance abuse is a large problem on college campuses. According to a survey of college students conducted by the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services in 1998, 36 percent of students had used marijuana daily within the previous year and about 5 percent had used cocaine daily within the previous year. Several studies indicate substance abuse is involved in more than 90 percent of crimes that occur on college campuses.¹ In addition, alcohol abuse, especially binge drinking, is described as an epidemic on many campuses.²

Reporting laws

Campus crime statistics for some colleges are more readily available than others. For years, college administrators did not report campus crimes because they were seen as part of the student's academic record, which is confidential according to the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act of 1974 (Table 2). This act,

Table 2
Federal campus crime reporting laws

Title and effective date	Citation	Summary
Higher Education Act 1965, 1998	20 U.S.C. 1081	The original law requires colleges and universities receiving federal funding for financial aid to conduct and publish a yearly campus crime report. An amendment passed in 1998 requires colleges to provide the federal government with the names of students arrested for using illegal substances including alcohol, requires campus police logs to be updated within two days of an incident, and expands the definition of campus to include the sidewalks and streets adjacent to the university.
Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act 1974	20 U.S.C. 1232g	Act figured prominently in the national debate on campus crime and its reporting. Prior to 1992 the law was used to afford confidentiality to students transcripts and campus court proceedings. The Buckley Amendment Clarification was enacted in 1992 to open access to campus law enforcement records, but not to disciplinary proceedings involving criminal allegations.
Jeanne Cleary Disclosure of Campus Security Police and Campus Crime Statistics Act, formerly known as the Student Right to Know and Campus Security Act 1990, 1998	20 U.S.C. 1092f	The original law requires institutions of higher education that participate in federal funding programs to publish and provide security to students and campus staff. An amendment in 1997, the Accuracy in Campus Crime Reporting Act, provides for more accurate crime reporting information. The amendment expanded the categories of crime statistics reported annually under the Campus Security Act to more closely parallel those reported in the Uniform Crime Reporting Program. It also provided for the annual collection of these statistics by the U.S. Department of Education, so that a central source of statistics will exist for all colleges and universities. Another amendment in 1998 provides for even more inclusive crime categories, including manslaughter and arson, and crimes committed in off-campus areas, such as fraternity houses and adjacent streets, are included in year-end totals.
Campus Sexual Assault Victim's Bill of Rights 1992	20 U.S.C. 1092f(8)	Requires that the disclosed policies of campuses address campus sexual assault and state that survivors of campus sexual assault shall be provided certain rights. These rights include campus education and prevention plans as well as outlined procedures to follow in the event of an offense.

designed to ensure the privacy of grade transcripts, medical records, and financial aid records, was amended in 1992 and again in 1994 to clarify as illegal the deliberate suppression of campus crime statistics. According to the U.S. Department of Education, the act does not protect campus crime statistical information from investigation and campus officials are required to provide information for publication in the school's annual statistical report. Thus, schools must satisfy reporting requirements even when the institution does not refer the matter to a law enforcement agency.

The Jeanne Cleary Disclosure of Campus Security Policy and Campus Crime Statistics Act is the most significant legislation related to campus crime statistics. Signed into law in 1990 as the Campus Security Act and amended several times in subsequent years, this act requires

institutions participating in the student financial aid programs under Title IV of the Higher Education Act of 1965 to disclose information about campus crime and safety policies. Under this act, institutions must publish and distribute to current and prospective students an annual security report that includes certain campus crime statistics and statements about campus law enforcement policies, education, and prevention programs. The act also requires institutions to provide a timely warning to the campus community about crimes that are considered a continuing threat to students and employees. Failure to comply with the act can result in the loss of federal funding.

The most recent amendment to this act considers off-campus fraternity and sorority houses part of the campus as long as the organizations are officially

recognized by the institution. The amended act also requires schools with a security department to maintain a daily crime log that is readily accessible to the public. In 1999, reporting was required of criminal incidents on public property within college campuses and immediately adjacent to them, including streets and sidewalks. Amendments made in 1998 to the Cleary Act also require the federal government to compile and release statistics on nearly 4,000 schools beginning in 2000, with eventual disclosure of annual campus crime statistics for every American college or university.

Until recently, since the U.S. Department of Education had not enforced the Campus Security Act, there was no central repository for campus crime statistics. The department began collecting campus crime data nationally in August 2000.

Summary

A series of federal laws have been enacted to ensure that students and employees of colleges and universities are aware of crimes committed on campus, as well as policies and procedures in place to report and prevent crimes. However, educational institutions have not been in full compliance of the reporting requirements under these acts. In a 1997 report issued by the United States General Accounting Office (U.S. GAO/HEHS-97-52 – Campus Crime: Difficulties Meeting Federal Reporting Requirements) institutions cited a lack of knowledge about reporting requirements and standard crime category definitions used by police agencies across the nation. The differing characteristics of the colleges,

including their locations and the extent to which complaints are handled through campus governance rather than police channels, also hindered the ability to provide an accurate record of criminal incidents.

¹Campus Crime Information for College and University Students. Benjamin F. Clery and S. Daniel Carter. Security on Campus, Inc. 1997. (Web site article)

²Changes in Binge Drinking and Other Related Problems Among American College Students between 1993 and 1997. Results of the Harvard School of Public Health College Alcohol Study. H. Wechsler, PhD., G. W. Dowdall, PhD., G. Maenner, B.S., J. Gledhill-Hoyt, MPH, H. Lee, PhD. *College Health Vol. 47, Sept. 1998.*

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