

Guns and Weapons on Campus

January 2000



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Purpose

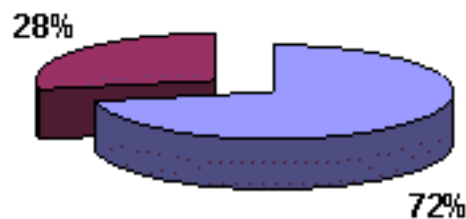
This survey explores the presence of weapons and the perception of being 'safe' on campus and in the local community.

Highlights

Most students feel they are 'safe' both on campus and in the local community. Few (4%) admit carrying a weapon or dangerous object while at school and most often, this was a knife or switchblade.

Participation Rate

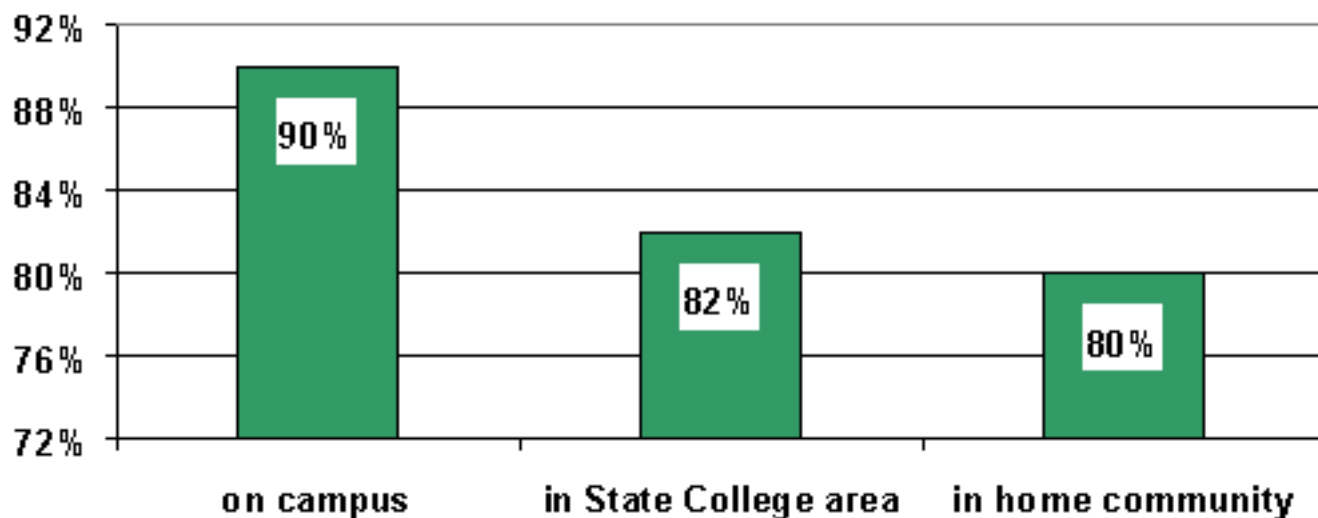
- N = 774 (72%) agreed to participate
- N = 307 (28%) did not agree to participate



Findings

- More students 'feel' safer on campus and in the local community than they did in their home community.

Feel 'Safe'



● There was a difference between groups of students in 'feeling safe' on campus and in the local community.

- Fewer women than men said they felt safe.*
- Fewer minority than non-minority students said they felt safe.*

on campus

94% men

85% women

90% non-minority

84% minority

in State College area

87% men

77% women

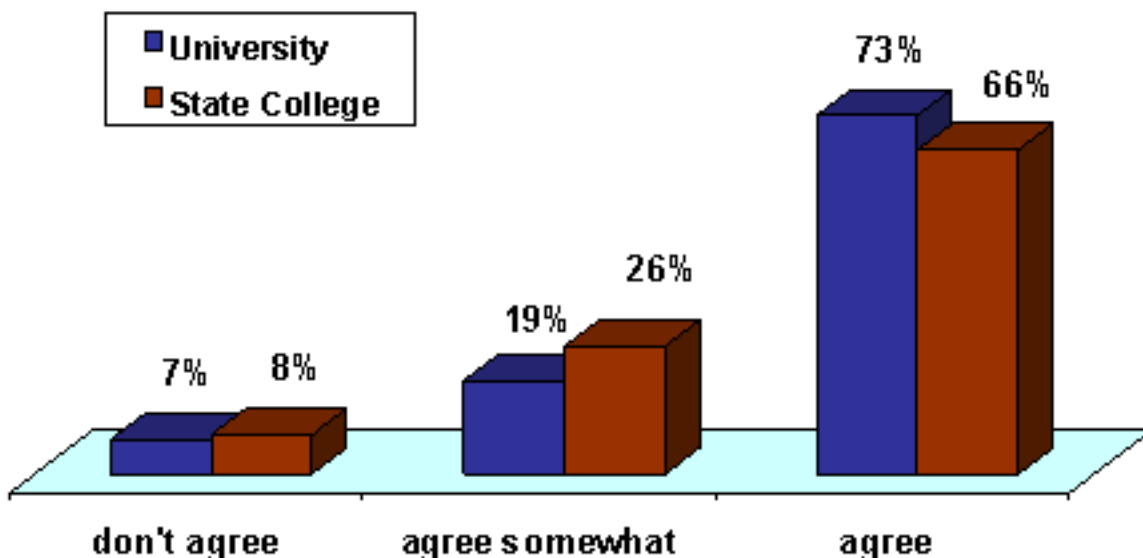
83% non-minority

75% minority

* Statistically significant at the .05 level

● A majority of students agreed that the University as well as the State College area provide a 'reasonable level of security.'

Reasonable Security Provided

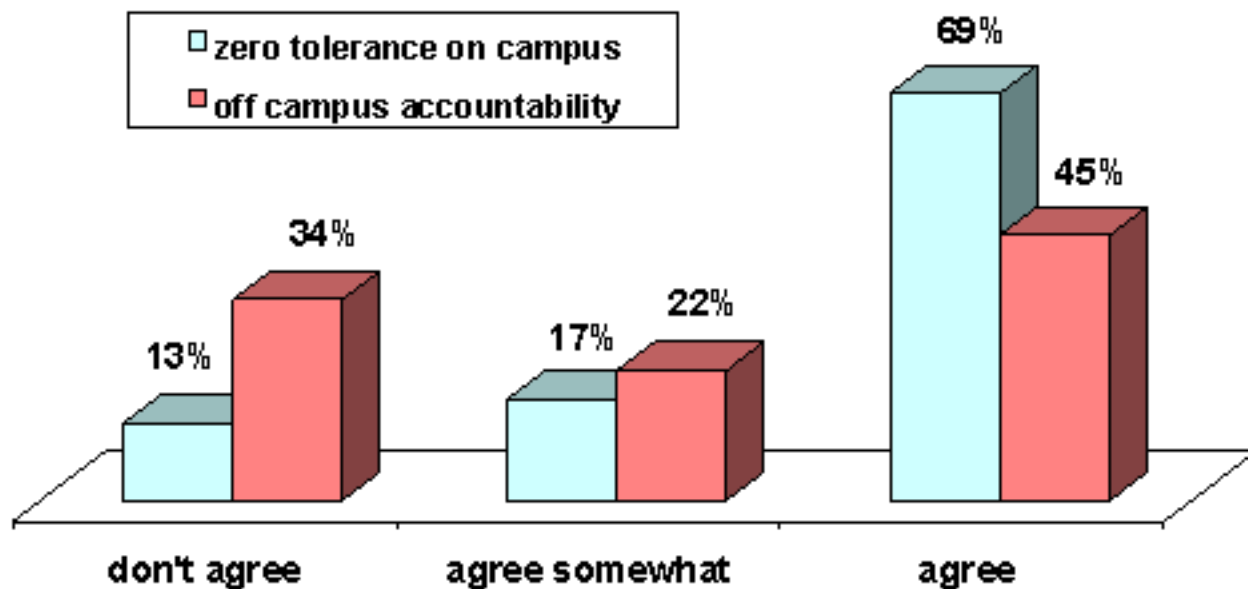


● Fewer women than men thought that a reasonable level of security is provided on campus (69% vs. 78%)* and in the local area (61% vs. 72%).*

● A majority of students felt that the University should have 'zero tolerance' when enforcing violations involving illegal, non-registered weapons on campus.

● Fewer students thought that the University should hold students accountable for off campus violations involving weapons.

Responsibility of University to Enforce Weapons Violations



● Women were more likely than men to expect zero tolerance for weapons violations on campus.*

* Statistically significant at the .05 level

● To most students, temporary suspension from the University and fines were appropriate sanctions for those proven to have illegal, non-registered weapons on campus.

Appropriate Sanctions

Sanctions	not appropriate	unsure	appropriate
permanent expulsion	20%	18%	63%
temporary suspension	14%	19%	69%
specified probation	20%	19%	61%
fines	22%	11%	66%
community service	21%	16%	63%
educational workshop	26%	18%	57%

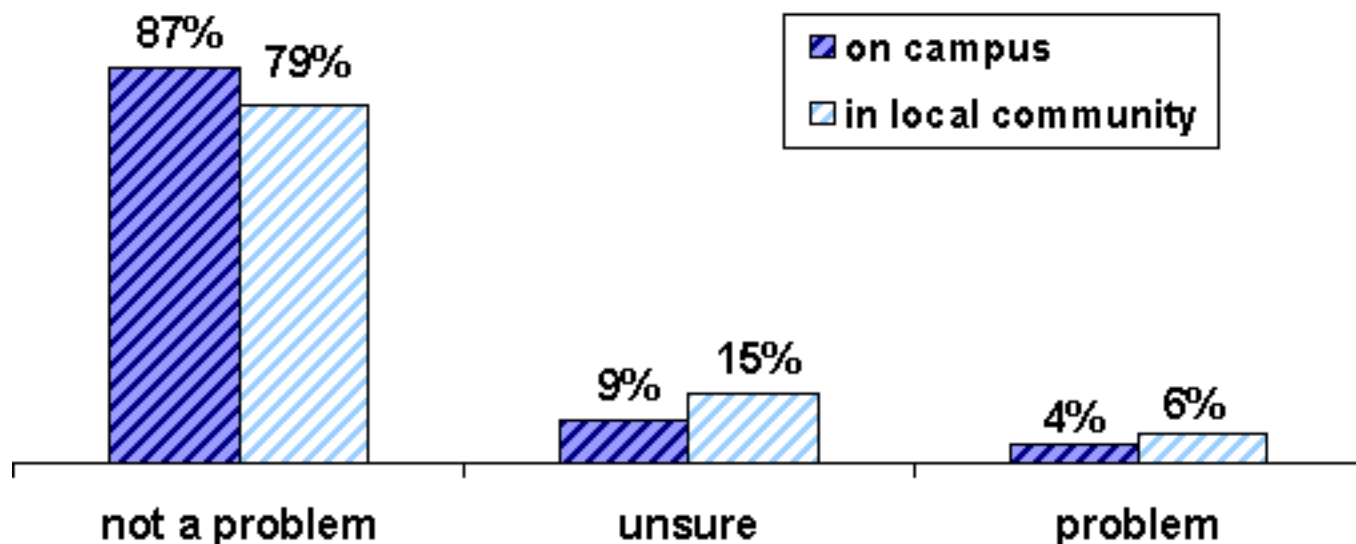
● More of those who belonged to a 'greek' fraternity or sorority thought required community service* and educational workshops* were appropriate sanctions.

● Very few students generally carried a weapon or dangerous object while at school. Of those who did, most carried knives or switchblades (n=25). Students were more likely to carry some other sort of protection device such as chemical mace/tear gas (n=28) or pepper spray (n=29).

- 4% (n=34) - carried dangerous object
- 8% (n=59) - carried protective device

● Few students believe that guns are a problem on campus (4%) or in the local community (6%).

Think Guns Are a Problem



- Looking back to last semester, most respondents had *not personally observed* another individual (besides a police officer) with a weapon. Freshmen and sophomores were more likely than juniors and seniors or graduate students to indicate observing weapons.*

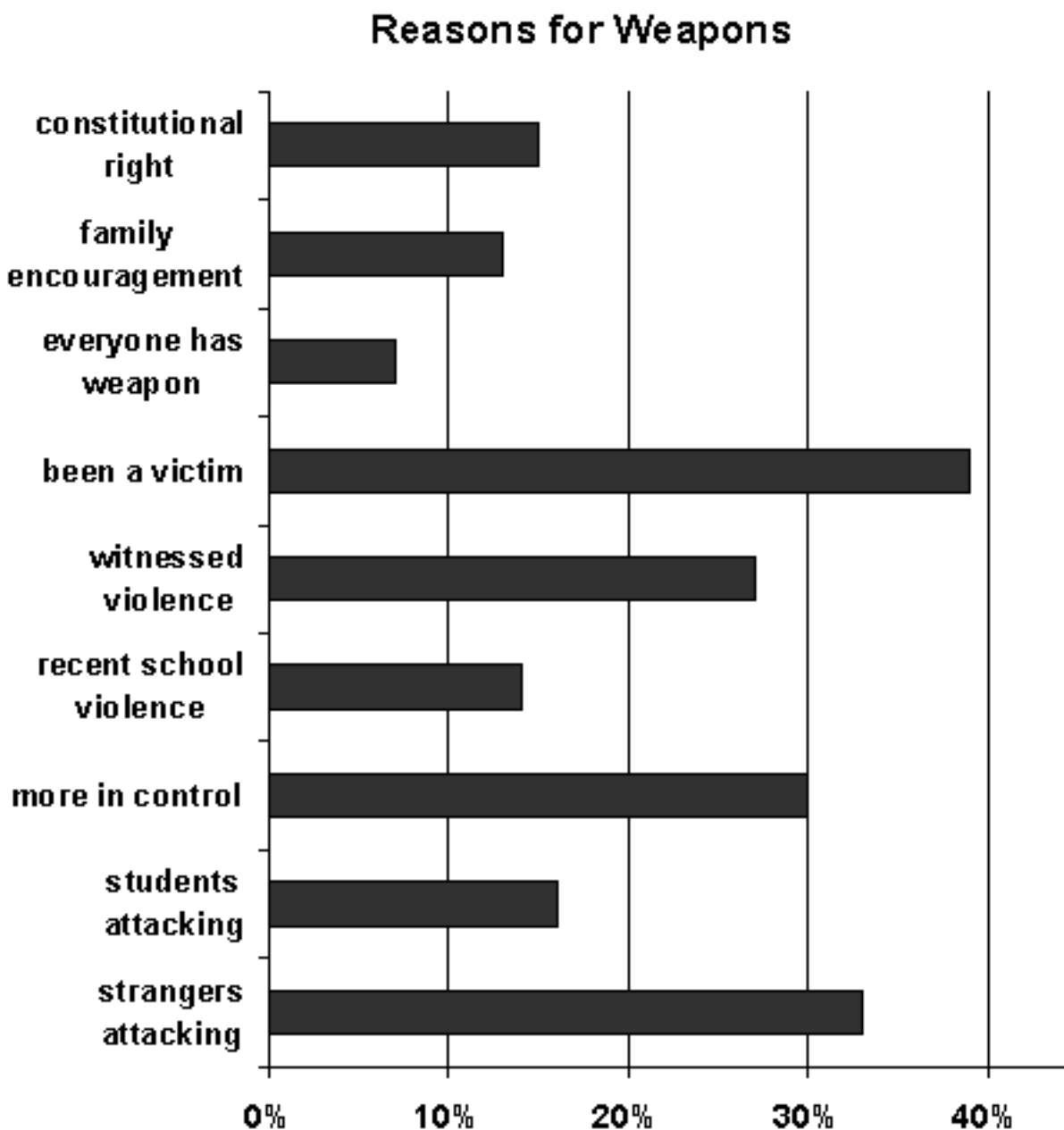
Number of Times Observed

	<u>Never</u>	<u>Once or More</u>
BB gun/Pellet gun	91%	9%
handgun	94%	6%
rifle/shotgun	93%	7%
box cutter/razor	94%	6%
knife/switchblade (used as a weapon)	88%	12%

- Other 'dangerous objects' noticed included: brass knuckles (n=4), num chuks (n=5), bottles (n=6), baseball bats (n=4), and crowbars (n=2).
- Students were asked why they thought individuals on campus or in the local community have guns or other weapons.
- The reasons they felt were most compelling included:

- having been a victim of violence
 - worries about strangers attacking
 - feeling more in control of situations
- and

- prior experience witnessing violence.



(Statistically significant at the .05, * .01** or .001*** level)

Revised on 07/17/00
U. Ed. STA 00-352