

PUBLIC SAFETY COUNCIL ANNUAL REPORT – FY14

Council Members, 2013-2014

Faculty

Beck, Jules – *Asst. Prof., Rehab, Human Performance and Comm. Disorders*
Edwards, Findlay – *Assoc. Prof., Civil Engineering*
Rodney Engen (Chair) – *Assoc. Prof., Sociology & Criminal Justice*
Tess Gibson – *Head, Interlibrary Loan*
Jordan Nielsen – *Business Librarian*
Jennifer Webb – *Assoc. Prof., Interior Design*

Staff

Paul Bixby – *Director, Basis Development and Support*
Cosmo Denger – *Program Specialist, Director-Experiment Stations*
Brooke Moore – *Workers' Compensation*

Students

Michael Powers – *graduate student, History*
Nancy Purnell – *undergraduate, Accounting*

Ex-officio

Stephen Gahagans – *Director, UA Police Department*
Gary Smith – *Director, UA Transit & Parking*

The Public Safety Council met twice during the academic year, on November 18, 2013, and March 14, 2014. An end-of-year meeting, planned for May, was canceled as the chair was unavailable to attend due to family health-related issues.

At the November meeting, UAPD Director Steve Gahagans apprised the council of ongoing UAPD activities, and raised two main issues for the council's consideration. The bulk of the council's effort this year concerned these issues:

- A proposed change to University policy to allow UAPD officers to carry Conductive Electrical Devices (CED's), commonly known as "Tasers" or stun guns.
- Implementation of "Active shooter" training for faculty, staff, and students.

Re Taser Policy:

Director Gahagans requested that the PSC make an independent recommendation to the UA Executive Council re Taser policy. Dr. Engen and the PSC reviewed scholarly research on the use of Tasers (safety, effectiveness, etc) and discussed the relative benefits and risks at length at the March meeting (see attached outline of discussion points). However, Council did not reach a consensus on whether to support the UAPD's request, in part due to the lack of a specific proposal from the UAPD. *Thus, the Public Safety Council cannot, at this time, offer its recommendation for a change in policy regarding Tasers.*

On May 19, 2014, Dr. Engen briefed Director Gahagans regarding the Council's questions and concerns, and offered the following recommendations on behalf of the Council:

1. PSC commends director Gahagans on his performance, and respects his professional judgment, but cannot offer a recommendation re Tasers at this time.
2. PSC suggests developing a formal proposal, to include the following:
 - a. Describe the need; What currently unmet need would Tasers address?
 - b. Acknowledge potential risks & outline steps taken to minimize those risks.
 - c. Include an explicit policy re Taser deployment, as part of a comprehensive policy on the use of force, generally, by UAPD officers.
 - i. specify levels of force authorized per levels of resistance
 - ii. PSC discussions suggest stronger support for use of Tasers as an alternative to deadly force (i.e., firearms) than as an alternative to other less-lethal methods.
 - d. Include a training plan for officers. Research shows that many of the problems associated with Tasers (e.g., overuse, or abuse) stem from poor training and a lack clear policy governing their use.
3. Submit proposal to PSC for consideration. Council members felt that such a policy change warrants consideration by the wider campus community, and suggests submitting the proposal to the faculty and staff senates for their consideration as well.

Re Active Shooter Training

Director Gahagans and Lt. Aaron Mehan described their efforts to train campus members in how to respond in the event of an “active shooter” incident on campus. The UAPD feels it is important to expand training (currently limited to some on-campus residents and incoming freshmen during orientation). They also expressed concerns that faculty have not been supportive of these efforts, including reports of faculty declining to include the suggested information on their course syllabi (i.e., the CADD—Call, Avoid, Deny, Defend—strategy) or to review it in class.

The council agreed to examine the issue and provide feedback to the department re future action. The council has gathered information, including feedback from on-campus peers, as well as scholarly research on the problem of mass shootings in order to better-inform ourselves and the University regarding the risks and potential benefits of active shooter training. Attached is a brief summary of relevant information regarding mass shootings. This work will continue during FY15.

March 19, 2014 PSC discussion notes

Re: Issuance of Conductive Electrical Devices (“Tasers”) to UAPD officers

I. Purported benefits:

- considered a “less-lethal” weapon than firearms

- other less-lethal devices include pepper spray, batons, etc.
- reduced risk of injury to officers & suspects
- Avoid use of lethal or potentially lethal force

II. Issues and concerns:

A. Are Tasers “safe?” (NIJ Research in Brief, 2011)

1. Findings of National Institute of Justice (2011)
 - a. Deaths rare; other factors contribute
 - i. Unknown medical conditions
 - ii. Drug use
 - b. Minor injuries common
 - i. Suspects usually fall; some head injuries
 - ii. “darts” may cause burns, bruises, etc.
 - c. Reduced injuries to officers in use of force
 - i. Mainly by minimizing physical contact
 - d. Reduced injuries to suspects subjected to force
 - e. Potential risk, “lazy cop syndrome”
 - i. officers may become reliant; too quick to use
 - ii. anecdotal evidence of abuse
 - f. Explicit policy & training re deployment are essential
 - i. Specify level of resistance to justify deployment

B. Questions & Concerns raised by faculty, staff, administrators, criminologists

1. Is there a need?
 - a. Little violent crime on UA campus
 - b. UA officers rarely use force of any kind
 - i. Good training minimizes need to use force
 - c. FPD officers carry tasers; does UAPD need them too?
2. In practice, do Tasers function as an alternative to lethal force?
 - a. If situations justify use of deadly force/firearms, LE use them
 - b. Research finds Tasers used principally in non-lethal situations (NIJ)
 - i. gain control of non-compliant or fleeing suspects
 - c. Does having Tasers reduce use of force, generally, or increase it?
 - i. No quantitative evidence. Reports of overreliance (i.e., “lazy cop”) may indicate higher frequency of force being applied.
3. Liability – does possibility of misuse pose a risk to the University?
 - a. University lawsuits
 - b. Some police depts. are discontinuing use

What do we know about Mass Murders?

Rodney Engen

I. What constitutes mass murder?

A. The FBI defines Mass murder as: 4 or more victims in close proximity, not including the shooter

B. Fox & Levin's Typology of Mass Murder (Fox & Levin, 1998)

MOST COMMON

- *Revenge* – e.g., disgruntled individual (student, co-worker) seeks payback; target those “responsible”.
- *Loyalty/Familial* – distraught husband kills family & often self; murder-suicide
- *Terror* – political motives; Hate crimes (e.g., attack on Sikh mosque in WI)
- *Profit* – e.g., armed robber kills all witnesses in a store
- *Power/Rampage* – seemingly random, “senseless,” “pseudo-commando style” massacre (e.g., VTU; Columbine; Newtown; Aurora)

LEAST COMMON (but most feared)

II. How common are mass shootings on college campuses?

A. Mother Jones (2012) identified 62 total mass shootings in the US since 1982.

Four of these occurred on college campuses:

- 2012 Oikos U- Oakland, CA (10 killed)
- 2007 VA Tech (32 killed)
- 2008 Northern IL U (27 killed)
- 1991 U of Iowa (7 killed)

B. AP identified 14 fatal shootings (not limited to mass shootings) on college campuses, 2000-2008

- 4 “Rampage” incidents
- 2 “Familial” (or relationship centered)
- 5 “Revenge” (*includes the 2000 shooting on UA campus*)
- 3 “Crime” (2 robberies; 1 argument)

III. Are Mass Shootings on the rise?

No, mass shootings are *not* on the rise (Fox & DeLateur, 2014)

- Avg. 20/year since 1976

But PUBLIC PERCEPTION of mass shooting is on the rise...

- Media obsession with the most sensational shootings

- USA Today/Gallup Poll: ¼ said shooting like Sandy Hook “very likely” to occur in their own community; ½ said “somewhat likely”
- Most school shootings are not “mass murders” (and receive little coverage)

IV: Will most policy proposals reduce mass shootings?

No. (Fox & DeLateur, 2014)

- Most are based on myths and misunderstanding
- Classic example of “Moral Panic”
 - Exaggerated media coverage
 - Emphasis on extreme/unusual
 - Policies based on “atypical” cases, not “typical”

Sources:

Fox, James Alan. 2014. “Top 10 Myths about Mass Shootings,” *The Chronicle of Higher Education*, April 9, 2014.

Fox, James Alan and Monica J. DeLateur. 2014. “Mass Shootings in America: Moving Beyond Newtown,” *Homicide Studies*, 18:125-145.

Kaminski, Robert, Barbara Koons-Witt, Norma Steward Thompson, and Douglas Weiss. 2010. “The impacts of the Virginia Tech and Northern Illinois University shootings on fear of crime on campus,” *Journal of Criminal Justice*, 38:88-98.

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Dr. Rodney Engen, chair, Public Safety Council