

THE BILL BLACKWOOD
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PERFORMANCE STANDARDS FOR UNIVERSITY POLICE DEPARTMENTS

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by

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ABSTRACT

The current political environment demands a significantly greater degree of accountability from all governmental entities, including publicly financed higher education. This quest for improved accountability often includes the functional performance comparison with either similar organizations or a generally accepted set of performance standards.

This research focused on a subset of Texas university law enforcement, those agencies serving academic Health Science Centers. It delineates several performance standards for Patrol, Criminal Investigations, Crime Prevention, Training and Community Relations.

The research was accomplished through a serialized set of mail surveys. Specifically, a three round Delphi was conducted between May - October 1995. The Delphi panelists were experienced police practitioners from seven Texas university police agencies.

The research findings provide Texas university police agencies the tools with which they can assess current operations or establish specific organizational goals, tasks vital to effective policy development. These research findings suggest an area rich for further research, especially the specification of functional performance measurement criteria.

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Introduction

Purpose

The purpose of this research is to clarify several organizational performance standards applicable to patrol administration, criminal investigation, crime prevention, training and community relations within university police agencies employed by academic health science centers in Texas.

Problem Statement

Dedicated public managers strive to achieve maximum organizational performance with the minimum expenditure of public funds. Today in Texas, university law enforcement managers face police organizations that provide multiple services that elude accurate and meaningful measurement. Lacking a readily available means of substantive measurement, a sensitive assessment of an agency's effectiveness is crippled.

Research Utility

This research generates some meaningful measurement tools - a set of organizational performance standards tailored to university police agencies. In this era of stagnant or declining state financial support for university administrations, the need for such organizational performance measures is critical. Best practices, captured as performance standards, can provide useful guideposts to university law enforcement managers and university administrators throughout Texas.

Research Relevance

This research serves the immediate needs of The University of Texas at Houston Police Department's command staff and Chief Executive during a period of profound organizational distress. However, the research may be particularly helpful to other university police agencies associated with academic health

science centers in Texas and the Southwest. On a more limited scale, this research may be of interest to those involved university policing in Texas and The United States.

Historical, Legal and Theoretical Context

The university police agency, as an element of the public university, is the context in which this research was conducted. To understand the significance of this research, we need to examine the organizational evolution of the university police. The roots of the university police are found at Yale University, where in 1894 two New Haven Police Officers were employed to patrol the campus. That practice, municipal officers in campus watchman capacities, remained largely unchanged for sixty years (Peak 228; McBride 268-275; Bordner 10-23).

Campus watchmen were replaced in the 1950s because of the change in the role of the university. The public university truly became a public institution with the unprecedented growth in postsecondary student enrollment and size. University administrators formed specialized campus security departments to meet the new demands of the changed campus. These security departments were composed primarily of retired municipal police officers and physical plant workers. This proved to be only an interim step in organizational development, for these security departments were generally unprepared to respond to the demands of the university community in the turbulent 1960s.

In the late 1960s civil unrest/protest rang out from campuses in Texas and throughout the nation. "As campus unrest grew, universities relied heavily on municipal police forces to handle crime and disorder on campus. But in case after case, the consequences of calling in city police to confront campus disorder were disastrous . . ." (Peak 229-230). In response to those unfortunate experiences, the public university established the modern university police agency. Initially, those police agencies would be under

strict operational control of the university administration.

Commentators (Peak 230; Fisher and Sloan 13) note that since the 1970s, university police agencies have become increasingly autonomous and now display very strong similarities to municipal police in their administration, structure and operations. However, the university community is very different from the municipality. The university has a distinctive purpose and that purpose - education, research and public service - is achieved through balancing multiple interests and maintaining a reasonably safe and secure campus. The courts determine if the campus is reasonably safe and secure, for they now hold universities liable for foreseeable crime on their campuses (Fisher 101).

A renewed interest in violent campus crime surfaced in the late 1980s. That interest was manifested in federal law, Crime Awareness and Campus Security Act of 1990, 20 USC 101. That act requires all postsecondary education institutions receiving federal funds to disclose selected crime statistics (primarily violent crimes) to their communities and the Department of Education. University police agencies can no longer opt out of maintaining crime statistics. Texas public university police agencies are participating primarily as the crime information clearinghouses on campus. That unfunded federal mandate came as public universities were entering a new age. In this era, funding for higher education is on the wane and the demands for greater public accountability increase. Mathesian (20) notes that intense scrutiny has become elemental to the budget process.

As administrators face external pressure to justify their budget requests and their university's performance, they demand greater detail and more specific information from university police managers on agency performance and program productivity. Often the managers are in a void and instinctively refer to UCR data, information of suspect utility in an environment where 85 - 90% of all

reported crime is theft.

Alternate performance measures must be considered, if for no other reason than responsible police management. Brasher (263) observed, "Effective Management of police services is directly linked to the ability of police administrators to measure performance and compare the measures against established objectives and standards." The evolution of police performance standards began in earnest in the 1930s. Arthur Bellman, in response to very virulent criticism of the police, outlined 685 performance standards that encompassed functions ranging from the Chief of Police selection procedures to the administration of pension funds. Bellman (75) suggested that the application of these standards would provide both an organization rating and improvement in service. In 1937, in response to flaws found in Bellman's work, Parratt proposed a Police Effectiveness Scale. That scale, a survey instrument with 126 organizational probes, was comprehensive in scope. Parratt (739) held that "Any attempt to determine the standard of citizen opinion in police administration runs into a particular difficulty that the law . . . is not an adequate guide to effective citizen approval."

In 1943, Simon and Ridley (19) designed a series of measurement units for use as objective bases for police administrative decisions. However, they readily admit ". . . there is no single index which will give a comprehensive picture of police effectiveness."

Research concerning police productivity was generally stagnant during the period 1950-1970. But the crime problem paralleled domestic civil unrest as matters of great public concern. The UCR dominated the discussion of the crime problem, if for no other reason that it was an available measure of performance. In 1973, The American Bar Association (277) weighed into the reawakened concern about police productivity by noting, "The effectiveness of the police should be measured generally in accordance with their ability to

achieve objectives and priorities selected for police service in individual communities."

Retrenchment budgeting within government and renewed concern with police productivity marked the late 1970s. Acceptable levels of police performance began to change rapidly, challenging the organization and the manager. Nees and Woodward (2) note in their comments on police assessment that "Law enforcement is an essential service . . . it is controversial and expensive and without a competent chief law enforcement officer it is difficult to manage."

Within a period of three years, 1977-1980, two complete sets of police performance standards became available to interested managers. Neither Hatry's 26 measures of police performance nor the 46 performance objectives found in O'Neill, Needle and Galvin's Police Program Performance Measurement generated interest among university police chiefs. The police accreditation effort administered by the Commission on Accreditation for Law Enforcement Agencies (CALEA) also met with little interest. The proposition that accreditation would " . . . upgrade police effectiveness and to advance the characteristics of professionalism within law enforcement." (Bizzack 93-94) was not widely believed within university police agencies.

Absent enthusiasm by Texas University Police Chief Executives for the numerous available performance standards and measures, unfunded research was undertaken to devise police performance standards applicable to the unique communities at academic health science centers. The university police agencies faced a stark choice in the mid-1990s, select performance standards themselves or have them imposed by university administrations. As Ammons (90) wrote, ". . . productivity measurement does not guarantee an advanced management system, but no such system can exist in the absence of performance measurement of some type."

Review of Literature or Practice

The University of Texas System Police is a dominant force within university policing in the Southwest, in no small part based on its size and diverse responsibilities. Facing the identified need for more specific performance standards in the era of increased accountability, Chief C. L. Price of The University of Texas at Houston directed this research into the topic.

A questionnaire was designed to elicit specific opinions on proposed police performance standards. Each of the twenty-one probes in the questionnaire was based upon information found during an intensive literature review (see bibliography). The questionnaire was formatted as a modern three page survey instrument and was submitted to the faculty advisors of the Bill Blackwood Law Enforcement Management Institute in March 1995. The instrument was approved without qualification in April 1995.

University police agencies in Texas provide comprehensive police services to diverse communities, ranging from Veterinary Science Parks to major Medical Centers at urban research universities. The survey sample structure would be critical to the utility of the research findings. The final survey structure, which includes respondents from three levels of each surveyed agency (Chief Executive, Command Officer and Sergeant), incorporates the guidance of Rosen (69), "The best way to ensure that a measurement system will be accepted and used appropriately is to include as many viewpoints as possible in its development." To achieve the research purpose and to have maximum utility, the survey sample structure was composed of practitioners at all Texas public university police departments serving academic health science centers (see Table 1).

The survey was unique because it was a Delphi Survey. A Delphi survey incorporates a survey technique that was developed by the RAND Corporation.

Table 1

The Survey Sample's Delphi Response Rate

Participants	Round One	Round Two	Round Three
Texas Tech HSC			
Chief of Police	x	x	x
Command Ofc.	x	x	
Sergeant	x	x	x
The University of North Texas HSC			
Chief of Police	x	x	x
Command Ofc.	x	x	x
Sergeant	x	x	x
The University of Texas San Antonio HSC			
Chief of Police	x	x	
Command Ofc.	x	x	
Sergeant	x	x	
The University of Texas Medical Branch			
Chief of Police	x	x	x
Command Ofc.	x	x	x
Sergeant	x	x	x
The University of Texas Tyler HSC			
Chief of Police			
Command Ofc.			
Sergeant			
The University of Texas Southwestern			
Chief of Police	x		
Command Ofc.	x		
Sergeant	x		
The University of Texas at Houston			
Chief of Police	x	x	x
Command Ofc.	x	x	x
Sergeant	x	x	x

Two preeminent researchers, Helmer and Rescher (47) have assessed the Delphi survey technique as ". . . <Delphi> replaces direct debate by a carefully designed program of sequential interrogations (best conducted by questionnaires) interspersed with information and opinion feedback derived from computed consensus from earlier parts of the program." The research remained faithful to that definition and the survey instrument was modified in each round to incorporate the previous round's anonymous responses. By using color coded instruments, mailed to the Chief of Police at each participating institution, a balance was struck between acceptable survey practice and proper command relationships with other university police professionals.

It is noted with some satisfaction that participants gave of their time selflessly to complete these survey instruments with accuracy and care. The five functional areas addressed with multiple probes are Patrol Administration, Criminal Investigation, Crime Prevention, Training and Community Relations. Fischer (108) notes, "From a practical standpoint it makes little or no difference how one aggregates the conflicting opinions of experts. Any reasonable approach is likely to be as good as any other." A sample of the resulting performance standards are listed in Table 2. Each of the twenty-one performance standards reflects the consensus of the Delphi survey panel and are listed in Appendix A of this document.

Table 2

Selected Performance Standards for University Police Departments

Standard Number	Topical Area	Text
1.3	Patrol	Beats/Districts should be redesigned on an annual basis.
2.2	Criminal Investigations	Staff Meetings, Chief of Police and supervisor of Criminal Investigations, should be held on a weekly basis.

Dating from the mid-1980s there has been a renewed public interest in police/security performance on the campus. In 1995, The International Association of Campus Law Enforcement Administrators (IACLEA), the leading university police professional association, could still only approximate the number of universities employing sworn law enforcement officers. As of November 1995, only eleven university police agencies were accredited by the Commission on Accreditation for Law Enforcement Agencies (CALEA). Of those eleven, only The University of Alabama at Birmingham and The University of Texas at Houston are agencies primarily serving academic health science centers. There is reason to believe that resistance to accreditation among universities may be diminishing. In June 1995, IACLEA adopted a Standards Manual (a CALEA approved derivative document), but no program or administrative elements were identified to support a certification or inspection system. An incalculable amount of professional interest in performance standards may be spurred by IACLEA, since the Standards Manual has been distributed to all institutional members of the association.

Any review of police practices must acknowledge the four classic measures of police performance. Alpert and Moore (110) observe that ". . . four generally accepted accounting practices became enshrined as the key measures to evaluate police performance. These include (1) reported crime rates (2) overall arrests (3) clearance rates (4) response times." These are, and have been, the organizational police performance measures used by university police departments in Texas.

The increased media interest in campus crime in the 1980s, may have prompted two organizations to address police performance standards. The American Council of Education (3) enumerated some steps institutions could use to minimize the likelihood of violent crime on campus. Their five suggested practices includes one section on campus law enforcement, in which they recommend eight standards. Three of the five practices were applicable to

modern university policing - training, intergovernmental relations and use of force (chemical restraints and 'guns').

The Association of Independent Colleges and Universities in Massachusetts (AICUM) published a study of security practices of the membership.

Forty-eight respondents (80% of membership) reported current practices and those responses form a set of thirty-five standards with commentaries, ranging from Student safety patrols to deadly force training (AICUM 9-31).

This research shows a level of interest in organizational performance measurements among university law enforcement practitioners at the supervisory, command and chief executive levels within Texas university policing. Yet inexplicably, such apparent interest has never manifested itself in a set of organizational performance measures. The most frequently used organizational performance measure remains the Uniform Crime Report, which due to the Campus Crime Awareness Act, has been installed as the major measure of organizational performance for university police agencies. The UCR, overall arrest rates, clearance rates and response times focus upon short-term law enforcement activities, arguably inappropriate sole performance measures for a university police agency. William Bratton (2) observes that ". . . the <UCR> should not be the only evaluation tool that police executives have in their repertoire, just as profit ratios are not the only gauge that successful businesses use to assess their operations. . . I . . . challenge . . . the field to develop new measuring tools so we can get credit where deserved."

Research has shown that university police departments lack sensitive organizational performance standards that approach the task of measuring the multiple activities of university police organizations. Without such standards, these organizations will flounder as agency productivity and performance becomes a topic of institutional concern.

The proposed organizational performance standards are not panaceas, but should be a significant improvement over current practices. These standards, unlike the recently released IACLEA standards, provide a degree of specificity as to operational requirements. This was possible because the survey respondents are similarly situated agencies serving very similar university communities in Texas. The degree of general consensus found across all probes by all respondent groups was encouraging.

Discussion of Relevant Issues

The need for accurate performance measurement at the organizational level is indisputable. However, how such a performance measurement system is designed, the standards' specificity levels and the system's continued relevance to the field of university policing are the dominant issues.

It is undeniable that a set of performance standards is available to Texas university police agencies. However, the CALEA program has not been well received by university police departments in Texas or nationally. The CALEA standards are very encompassing and require a revision of most agencies written directive systems. The effort necessary to achieve accreditation is intensive and the rewards are ephemeral in a university environment. The CALEA standards focus on administration, organization and management, less than operations. The CALEA foci are essential, but should be complemented with more operationally focused standards. This can be achieved if the subscribing agencies are similar in mission, composition and operational environment.

The specificity of the performance standards needed by the university police must reflect the needs of university law enforcement, "The mandate for campus police is varied and includes law enforcement, disciplinary action, ensuring campus order, preventing crime and reactive policing." (Fisher and Sloan 14).

The organizational performance standards outlined in this research initiates this process. All standards should be designed to support mission critical activities of the agency. "There is a tendency to focus on performance measures that are easier to collect and to leave out important aspects of performance because they are hard to measure . . ." (Shand, et al. 40). The standards should continue to have a community orientation, incorporating the expectations of the university community at large.

While a consensus was achieved on all these performance standards, it must be noted with some concern that the strength of that consensus varied appreciably in three instances - monetary compensation for officers' formal education, the annual review of complaints and the usefulness of citizen advisory councils. This is distressing in an era in which university police departments claim to be responsive to their communities. To ensure continued relevance, these and all of the other performance standards must be periodically evaluated for continued applicability and accuracy.

Even the most rudimentary performance measurement system cannot be realized without costs, but those costs must be weighed against the value derived from substantive multiple measures of critical agency activities. First, organizational resistance to change, internal and external to the agency, must be overcome by executive management at a cost dependent on the individual situation. The administrative labor necessary to monitor agency performance, data collection and analysis activities, will require the reallocation of labor within the subscribing agency. Some of the necessary data-collection procedures may be unfamiliar and may require specialized training or support, e.g. Community Surveys. Performance measurement is far from perfect. Unrealistic expectations may be produced despite any individual standard's sensitivity. University police agencies have only partial control over performance - uncontrollable external factors will directly affect agency performance. The specific costs for implementation will be dependent upon the

agency's current practice and scope of their subscription to these proposed standards.

The organizational benefits realized from an improved organizational performance measurement system are undeniable. Such a system, even in base form - the gross comparison of operational practice to a performance standard - will increase accountability regarding service quantity, quality and efficiency. Moreover, the information generated by the performance measurement system should be of substantial value in the preparation and justification of budgets and strategic planning documents.

Conclusions/Recommendations

The purpose of this research was to clarify several organizational performance standards applicable to patrol administration, criminal investigation, crime prevention, training and community relations within university police agencies employed by academic health science centers in Texas.

This research was conducted to primarily serve the immediate planning needs of The University of Texas at Houston Police Department's command staff and Chief Executive. However, the research should have immediate relevance to other university police agencies affiliated with academic health science centers in Texas, the Southwest and possibly throughout the United States. On a much more limited scale, this research may be of interest to university policing in Texas and The United States.

Dedicated public managers strive to achieve maximum organizational performance with the minimum expenditure of public funds. Today in Texas, university law enforcement managers face police organizations that provide multiple services that elude accurate and meaningful measurement. Lacking a readily available means of substantive measurement, a sensitive assessment of an agency's effectiveness is crippled.

The research has achieved its purposes, for a useful set of performance standards has been defined for agencies in five critical functions. While performance measurement is more of an art than a science, the demand for increased professionalism within university policing demands that this difficult task be continued with commitment.

Three recommendations stem from this research. First, The University of Texas at Houston Police Department should take those steps necessary to ensure full documented compliance with all these standards. Second, it is recommended that these research findings be considered as the benchmarked best practices of record and be distributed to Texas Health Science Center Police Departments. Finally, it is recommended that this research design be replicated biennially, by one of the subscribing agencies.

These recommendations address the heart of the problem of performance measurement in university policing. By adopting these standards, the agency will be able to measure with substantially greater specificity its performance in the functional areas of patrol, criminal investigations, crime prevention, training and community relations. The acceptance of these standards as best practices and their distribution to professional colleagues, provides other agencies with the opportunity to critically review and implement the findings as deemed appropriate. Finally, by adopting the biennial research requirement, the agency ensures that the link between professional best practice and organizational standards will not be broken.

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Appendix A

Performance Standards
for
University Police Departments
Serving Texas Academic Health Science Centers

I. PATROL

- 1.1 Police Officers should be on active patrol (directed or random) in their assigned beats for 60% of the shift.
- 1.2 Police Officers should rotate beats on a quarterly basis.
- 1.3 Beats/Districts should be redesigned on an annual basis.
- 1.4 The distribution of Police Officers on a patrol shift should reflect the activity and service demands of the community.
- 1.5 Patrol Beats/Districts should be configured to reflect the time of day and the community's demands for service.

II. CRIMINAL INVESTIGATIONS

- 2.1 As a general rule, a university police department should recover 20% of stolen state property.
- 2.2 Staff Meetings, Chief of Police and the supervisor of Criminal Investigations, should be held on a weekly basis.
- 2.3 A solvability factor scoring system (case screening) is a desirable means of managing criminal investigations in a university setting.

III. CRIME PREVENTION

- 3.1 Crime Prevention surveys should be conducted for all university buildings and leased spaces.
- 3.2 Each Crime Prevention presentation should be specifically targeted to the audience.
- 3.3 University police crime prevention specialists should be included in the university building planning process.

IV. TRAINING

- 4.1 Police Officers should receive specific training on the use of force, weapons and defensive techniques on an annual basis.
- 4.2 A university Police Officer should receive a minimum of forty hours of law enforcement in-service training per year.
- 4.3 A Security Guard or uniformed civilian employee of the police department, should receive sixteen hours of specialized in-service training per year.

4.4 Training should be based upon current job task analysis and be directly linked to the identified skills, knowledge and aptitude for job success.

4.5 A university Police Department should provide monetary compensation for an officer's advanced education.

V. COMMUNITY RELATIONS

5.1 Community Attitude surveys should be conducted on an annual basis.

5.2 A university Police Department should have an active outreach program to all elements of the community.

5.3 The university community should be periodically surveyed concerning their perception of campus security and effectiveness of the university police.

5.4 An annual statistical analysis of citizen complaints and the findings of such investigations should be occasionally published or made available for public inspection.

5.5 A citizen's advisory board, with routine contact with the Chief of Police, is useful in obtaining opinion from the university community.