

PERCEPTIONS OF CRIME ON THE YSU CAMPUS

Julie DeGalan  
Center for Urban Studies  
Youngstown State University

March 1986

## Executive Summary

The Youngstown State University campus community was surveyed during Spring Quarter 1985 to monitor opinions on the campus environment as it relates to crime. Faculty, staff, administrators, and students (current, graduated, and withdrawn) were contacted by mail, by telephone, and in class and asked to participate. The major findings of the study were:

1. The campus community has not limited their activities because they were afraid of crime on campus;
2. Over the past few years, people perceived their chances of being attacked or robbed as remaining the same;
3. YSU is not dangerous enough to think about dropping out or finding another job;
4. Most people on campus have not been victimized;
5. Many serious crimes are not reported to YSU Campus Security;
6. Parking decks and parking lots are believed to be unsafe at night;
7. The level of crime at YSU is thought to be about the same as it was a year or two ago;
8. Campus is believed to be reasonably-to-somewhat safe at night for people out alone;
9. YSU is perceived to be less dangerous than downtown Youngstown;
10. Crime on campus is perceived to be worse than crime in the suburbs; and
11. Differing views of non-university people on campus exist: employees feel threatened but don't want to restrict campus entrants, while female students feel less threatened but are more inclined to restrict entrance to campus.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

	<u>Page No.</u>
Executive Summary.....	i
List of Tables.....	iii
Introduction.....	1
Methodology.....	1
Findings.....	5
Recommendations.....	33

LIST OF TABLES

<u>Table</u>	<u>Page No.</u>
1 University Status of Respondents and Type of Survey Used.....	3
2 Student Demographics.....	4
3 Employee Demographics.....	6
4 Change in Crime at YSU.....	8
5 Kinds of Crime That Have Increased.....	9
6 Selected Crimes Reported to YSU Security Office.....	10
7 Feel About Being Alone At YSU At Night.....	12
8 Thought YSU Dangerous Enough To Drop Out Or Find A Job Elsewhere.....	13
9 Crime At YSU Compared To Downtown.....	15
10 Crime At YSU Compared To Suburbs.....	16
11 Afraid To Go To Areas On Campus At Night.....	18
12 Campus Areas Avoided.....	19
13 Chances of Being Attacked/Robbed.....	21
14 Assaults and Robberies Reported to Campus Security.....	22
15 Fear of Crime Limited Activites.....	24
16 How Activities Limited.....	25
17 Frequency of Victimization.....	26
18 Crime at YSU.....	28
19 Reported and Projected Crimes on Campus.....	30
20 People on Campus, Percent Agreeing With Each Statement..	32

## Introduction

In the Spring of 1985, administrators at Youngstown State University, as part of their continuing program to monitor opinion and preference in the university community, conducted a study of crime on campus. The study presented the opportunity to expand knowledge of the perceptions of and problems with crime and safety on campus. The study methodology employed a combination of survey methods so that biases in using some methods could be understood by using data from another. A combination of self-administered (in-class and mail) and telephone surveys were utilized; phone surveys targeted several populations more likely to be the victims of certain crimes.

## Methodology

During Spring Quarter 1985, the Center for Urban Studies at Youngstown State University contacted four groups in the university community, including: (1) currently enrolled students, (2) recent university graduates, (3) students who had withdrawn, and (4) faculty, staff, and administrators.

Currently enrolled students were contacted through selected classes and asked to participate; this group constituted the student base. In addition, three target groups of female students were surveyed by phone: currently enrolled, graduated, and withdrawn. Females in general may be targeted as victims more often than males, and studying these three groups makes it possible to provide additional information on the experiences and perceptions of females. Graduated and withdrawn female students were targeted to determine if there were differences in the way former, as compared to current, students answered questions.

Surveys were sent to all full-time faculty, staff, and administrators, and limited-service faculty (n=1,472) and 662 were returned, making the response rate for this group 45 percent. These surveys constituted the employee base. Eighty courses out of approximately 1,850 were chosen in a systematic random fashion[1] from the Spring 1985 Schedule of Classes and surveys from 46 classes were returned, including over 1,100 self-administered surveys, which made up the student base. In addition, three groups of women were targeted in the phone survey segment of the research: current, withdrawn, and graduated students. Names of female respondents were drawn from lists provided by the Registrar's Office. Some 200 current student, 98 graduate, and 145 withdrawn student surveys were completed.

(Place Table 1 Here.)

Initially, the demographics of the total student population and the sample student group were compared to determine the representativeness of the sample. Males were underrepresented by about 6 percent, and females overrepresented by approximately 4 percent. Two percent didn't indicate their sex. The racial makeup of the student sample was almost identical to the total population. Class rank subpopulations were different from the total population as follows: 7.9 percent fewer freshmen, 2.0 percent more sophomores, 5.8 percent more juniors, 0.7 more seniors, and 0.5 percent fewer graduate students.

(Place Table 2 Here.)

Employee total and sample populations were also compared. Males were overrepresented, and females were underrepresented by about 5 percent. Racially, there were 4 percent more whites, 2 percent fewer blacks, and 2 percent fewer "other" races in the survey population than in the total population.

Table 1

## University Status of Respondents and Type of Survey Used

Status Group	Type of Survey	Women		Men		Total	
		N	%	N	%	N	%
Currently enrolled students	Self-administered in class	612	51.8	544	46.0	1,182*	51.3
Currently enrolled students	Phone	200	100.0	0	0.0	200	8.7
Graduates	Phone	98	100.0	0	0.0	98	4.2
Withdrawn students	Phone	145	100.0	0	0.0	145	6.3
Administrators, Faculty, Staff	Self-administered, mailed	325	47.7	337	49.5	681*	29.5
Total		1,380	59.8	884	38.3	2,306*	100.0

\*Number of women and men do not equal total because some respondents on the self-administered survey did not indicate their sex.

Table 2  
Student Demographics

	Survey Population		University Population	
	N	%	N	%
<u>Sex</u>				
Male	544	46.0	7,324	52.3
Female	612	51.8	6,685	47.7
Undetermined	26	2.2	-----	-----
<u>Race</u>				
White	1,046	91.1	12,591	89.9
Black	73	6.4	1,032	7.4
Other	29	2.5	386	2.8
<u>Class Rank</u>				
Freshman	243	20.9	4,041	28.8
Sophomore	284	24.4	3,139	22.4
Junior	288	24.7	2,651	18.9
Senior	267	22.9	3,113	22.2
Graduate	82	7.1	1,065	7.6

For the purposes of this study, both the student and employee base were determined to be representative of the populations sampled.

(Place Table 3 Here.)

### Findings

In survey research, it is well-known that the act of asking questions with fixed (i.e., closed-end) responses oftentimes influences respondent's answers. Questions may stimulate the creation of attitudes or opinions which are not held or may cause interviewees to answer in a socially acceptable fashion rather than according to their own feelings. One way to avoid this problem is to ask respondents open-ended questions, the answers to which interviewees must supply from their own belief systems. Before any closed-ended questions about perceptions of, or problems with, crime on the YSU campus were asked of phone interviewees, they were asked to name the most important problem facing them at the university. Almost 400 answers were given and only 6 of them were related to crime. Five women said they were afraid to come to campus at night, and 1 female said crime was the biggest problem facing her at YSU. Because of time limitations, students surveyed in the classroom were not asked this question.

The level of crime at YSU is thought to be about the same as it was a year or two ago.

Interviewees indicated whether they thought that, within the past year or two, crime at YSU had increased, decreased, or remained the same. The majority of people in each group surveyed thought the level of crime at YSU had remained the same, but there were differences in the perceptions of the

Table 3  
Employee Demographics

	Survey Population		University Population	
	N	%	N	%
<u>Sex</u>				
Male	337	50.9	591	56.3
Female	325	49.1	458	43.7
<u>Race</u>				
White	608	93.4	935	89.1
Black	32	4.9	71	6.8
Other	11	1.7	43	4.1

different groups. Higher percentages of students, as opposed to employees, thought that crime at YSU had increased. Almost one-third (30.8%) of the student base group, 27 percent of the current female student target group, 41.2 percent of the female graduate target group, and 35.3 percent of the withdrawn female target group believed crime had increased, while about one-fifth (22.8%) of the employees felt that way.

(Place Table 4 Here.)

For both the student and employee base, females significantly more often than males believed that crime had increased. When the female phone respondents who thought crime had increased were asked what kinds of crimes were on the rise, the answer cited by the largest percentage was rape. Attacks, assaults, and theft were also commonly listed. Other crimes mentioned by smaller numbers of women included muggings, killing, and burglary.

(Place Table 5 Here.)

If incidences of certain crimes reported to the YSU Security Office are examined, some have increased (robbery, aggravated burglary, criminal mischief), but many have decreased (assault, voyeurism, petty theft, breaking and entering, burglary, grand theft, stolen autos, stolen bicycles). If the number of reported incidences can be taken to reflect the actual number of crimes occurring on campus, it appears that certain crime rates are decreasing. Given these changes, the prevalent belief that the crime level is about the same as it was a year or two ago is accurate.

(Place Table 6 Here.)

Table 4  
Change in Crime at YSU

	Increased		Decreased		Same	
	N	%	N	%	N	%
Students (class)*						
Males	128	24.2	56	10.6	346	65.3
Females	218	36.8	48	8.1	326	55.1
Total	346	30.8	104	9.3	672	59.9
Students (phone)						
Females	40	27.0	12	8.1	96	64.9
Graduates						
Females	33	41.2	6	7.5	41	51.2
Withdrawals						
Females	42	35.3	3	2.5	74	62.2
Employees*						
Males	60	18.5	48	14.8	216	66.7
Females	84	27.4	31	10.1	192	62.5
Total	144	22.8	79	12.5	408	64.7

\*There are significant differences, at the .10 level, between the way males and females responded to the question.

Table 5

## Kinds of Crime That Have Increased

	Phone Respondents					
	Current		Graduates		Withdrawn	
	N	%	N	%	N	%
Rape	14	7.0	11	11.2	10	6.9
Mugging	3	1.5	1	1.0	5	3.4
Assault	4	2.0	2	2.0	8	5.5
Attacks	12	6.0	10	10.2	9	6.2
Theft	10	5.0	4	4.1	8	5.5
Killing	0	0.0	1	1.0	0	0.0
Burglary	0	0.0	1	1.0	0	0.0
Other	16	8.0	2	2.0	2	1.4
	(200)		(98)		(145)	

Table 6

## Selected Crimes Reported to YSU Security Office

	July '81 Through May '82	July '82 Through June '83	July '83 Through June '84	July '84 Through June '85
<u>Crime Against Persons</u>				
Robbery (including aggravated)	1	1	1	2
Assault	1	5	6	5
Voyeurism,				
Public Indecency	2	1	7	1
Rape (unfounded)	0	0	1	0
Aggravated Burglary	0	0	0	1
<u>Crimes Against Property</u>				
Petty Theft	227	169	211	190
Breaking & Entering	4	6	4	3
Burglary	13	6	13	6
Criminal Mischief or Damage	62	63	71	85
Grand Theft	NA	65	51	24
Stolen Autos	3	7	7	4
Stolen Bicycles	7	9	10	1

The YSU campus is believed to be reasonably-to-somewhat safe at night for people out alone.

Interviewees described how they felt about being out alone at YSU at night. The majority of each group surveyed (69.7% to 82.8%) believed they were reasonably-to-somewhat safe when out alone on campus at night. More employees (46.3%), though, felt very safe or reasonably safe than any of the student groups: 35.9 percent, student base; 37.1 percent, current student targets; 41.1 percent, graduate targets; 38.7 percent, withdrawn targets. Approximately one-fourth of each of the student groups felt very unsafe, while only 11.2 percent of employees felt very unsafe being out alone at YSU at night.

(Place Table 7 Here.)

Female employees and female students felt significantly less safe being out alone at night at YSU than males did.

YSU is not dangerous enough to think about dropping out or finding another job.

Almost everyone, (91.7-97.9%) in each of the student groups, and in the employee base (97.3%) did not perceive the YSU environment to be dangerous enough to consider dropping out or finding another job. Two of the female target groups, though, reported slightly higher percentages of people who had thought about leaving YSU; these two groups were current and withdrawn students. More male employees thought about leaving YSU because of perceived danger than did female employees.

(Place Table 8 Here.)

Table 7

## Feel About Being Alone at YSU at Night

	Very Safe		Reasonably Safe		Somewhat Safe		Very Unsafe	
	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%
Students (class)*								
Males	64	11.9	252	46.7	195	36.1	29	5.4
Females	3	0.5	93	15.3	248	40.8	264	43.4
Total	67	5.8	345	30.1	443	38.6	293	25.5
Students (phone)								
Females	8	4.1	65	33.0	73	37.1	51	25.9
Graduates								
Females	7	7.4	32	33.7	36	37.9	20	21.1
Withdrawn								
Females	7	4.9	48	33.8	51	35.9	36	25.4
Employees*								
Males	27	8.6	175	55.9	100	31.9	11	3.5
Females	9	3.1	69	23.6	157	53.8	57	19.5
Total	36	6.0	244	40.3	257	42.5	68	11.2

\*There are significant differences, at the .10 level, between the way males and females responded to the question.

Table 8

Thought YSU Dangerous Enough To Drop Out Or Find A Job Elsewhere

	Yes		No	
	N	%	N	%
Students (class)				
Males	13	2.4	529	97.6
Females	14	2.3	596	97.7
Total	27	2.3	1,125	97.7
Students (phone)				
Females	14	7.0	185	93.0
Graduates				
Females	2	2.1	95	97.9
Withdrawn				
Females	12	8.3	133	91.7
Employees*				
Males	13	3.9	322	96.1
Females	5	1.6	317	98.4
Total	18	2.7	639	97.3

\*There are significant differences, at the .10 level, between the way males and females responded to the question.

**YSU is perceived to be less dangerous than downtown Youngstown.**

When respondents were asked to compare crime on the YSU campus with crime downtown, the majority of each group thought YSU was less dangerous or much less dangerous: student base, 74.6 percent; current female students, 74.5 percent; female graduates, 76.8 percent; withdrawn females, 59.4 percent; and employee base, 72.3 percent. More female students and female employees than males thought that YSU was more dangerous than downtown.

(Place Table 9 Here.)

**Crime on campus is perceived to be worse than crime in the suburbs.**

Students and employees compared YSU with suburbs like Boardman, Canfield, or Poland in terms of crime. The majority of each group thought YSU was more dangerous than, or about the same as, these three areas: student base, 76.7 percent; current female students, 81.9 percent; female graduates, 80.8 percent; withdrawn females, 76.9 percent; and employees, 73.1 percent. A higher percentage of females than males in both the student and employee base thought YSU was much more dangerous than Boardman, Canfield, or Poland.

(Place Table 10 Here.)

**Parking decks and parking lots are believed to be unsafe at night.**

Each interviewee was asked whether there were areas on campus where they wanted to go at night, but were afraid to because of fear of crime. The majority of students (62.2%) surveyed in class answered yes. A much higher percentage of females (82.5%) than males (39.3%) were afraid to go

Table 9

## Crime At YSU Compared To Downtown

	Much More Dangerous		More Dangerous		About the Same		Less Dangerous		Much Less Dangerous	
	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%
Student (class)*										
Males	3	0.6	7	1.3	98	18.4	301	56.4	125	23.4
Females	4	0.7	12	2.0	164	27.4	345	57.6	74	12.4
Total	7	0.6	19	1.7	262	23.1	646	57.0	199	17.6
Students (phone)										
Females	0	0.0	8	4.2	41	21.4	107	55.7	36	18.8
Graduates										
Females	0	0.0	1	1.2	19	22.1	47	54.7	19	22.1
Withdrawn										
Females	0	0.0	3	2.2	53	38.4	58	42.0	24	17.4
Employees*										
Males	1	0.3	6	1.8	66	20.1	179	54.4	77	23.4
Females	1	0.3	17	5.4	88	27.8	168	53.0	43	13.6
Total	2	0.3	23	3.6	154	23.8	347	53.7	120	18.6

\* There are significant differences, at the .10 level, between the way males and females responded to the question.

Table 10

## Crime At YSU Compared To Suburbs

	Much More Dangerous		More Dangerous		About the Same		Less Dangerous		Much Less Dangerous	
	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%
Student (class)*										
Males	40	7.6	188	35.8	187	35.6	93	17.7	17	3.2
Females	46	7.8	291	49.5	188	32.0	51	8.7	12	2.0
Total	86	7.7	479	43.0	375	33.7	144	12.9	29	2.6
Students (phone)										
Females	7	3.8	68	37.4	81	44.5	23	12.6	3	1.6
Graduates										
Females	3	3.6	32	38.6	35	42.2	10	12.0	3	3.6
Withdrawn										
Females	3	2.2	56	41.8	47	35.1	33	17.2	5	3.7
Employees*										
Males	25	7.7	117	36.0	112	34.5	52	16.0	19	5.8
Females	27	8.6	131	41.9	106	33.9	40	12.8	9	2.9
Total	52	8.2	248	38.9	218	34.2	92	14.4	28	4.4

\* There are significant differences, at the .10 level, between the way males and females responded to the question.

to certain areas. For the three targeted groups of females, the majority of current (53.0%) and withdrawn (51.7%) students said they were not afraid; but more graduates (53.1%) said they were afraid of some campus areas. More than half of the employees (55.7%), on the whole, avoided parts of campus, but more females (73.%) than males (41.2%) were afraid to go to some areas of campus.

(Place Table 11 Here.)

People who said they avoided certain areas were asked which areas applied. Approximately three-fourths of these groups--the student base (84.8%), the employee base (76.7%), targeted current students (70.5%), and graduates (79.6%) were afraid to go into parking decks or lots. Other areas being avoided by a large number of people included stairwells, alleyways, athletic fields, and main streets.

(Place Table 12 Here.)

Over the past few years, people perceived their chances of being attacked or robbed as remaining the same.

Each group of respondents was asked whether, at YSU over the past few years, they would say their chances of being attacked or robbed had increased, decreased, or remained the same. Most people (49% to 60%) in each of the groups thought their chances had remained the same. The majority of the student base (57.0%) thought their chances had remained the same, but more females (38.7%) than males (23.4%) thought the chances had increased. Of the three female target groups, more withdrawn interviewees (36.6%) than graduates (26.5%) or current students (25.9%) believed that their chances of being attacked or robbed had increased. The percentage of

Table 11

## Afraid to Go to Areas on Campus at Night

	Yes		No		No Answer	
	N	%	N	%	N	%
Students (class)*						
Males	214	39.3	320	58.8	10	1.8
Females	505	82.5	97	15.9	10	1.6
Total	719	62.2	417	36.1	20	1.7
Students (phone)						
Females	89	44.5	106	53.0	5	2.5
Graduates						
Females	52	53.1	43	43.9	3	3.1
Withdrawals						
Females	62	42.8	75	51.7	8	5.5
Employees*						
Males	139	41.2	191	56.7	7	2.1
Females	240	73.8	78	24.0	7	2.2
Total	379	55.7	269	39.5	14	2.1

\*There are significant differences, at the .10 level, between the way males and females responded to the question.

Table 12

## Campus Areas Avoided\*

	Self-Administered				Phone					
	Students		Employees		Current		Grads		Withdrawn	
	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%
Stairwells	454	38.4	254	37.3	63	31.5	41	41.8	32	22.1
Parking decks	582	49.2	320	47.0	85	42.5	49	50.0	55	37.9
Parking lots	421	35.6	202	29.7	60	30.0	29	29.6	26	17.9
Main streets	79	6.7	43	6.3	25	12.5	15	15.3	11	7.6
Classrooms	61	5.2	14	2.1	12	6.0	2	2.0	5	3.4
Campus Green	123	10.4	53	7.8	31	15.5	12	12.2	16	11.0
Alleyways	499	42.2	226	33.2	60	30.0	22	22.4	24	16.6
Tennis Courts/ Athletic Fields	153	12.9	64	9.4	37	18.5	11	11.2	11	7.6
Stambaugh										
Stadium	0	0	1	0.1	1	0.5	1	1.0	0	0
Library	0	0	2	0.3	3	1.5	2	2.0	1	0.7
Restrooms	0	0	4	0.6	2	1.0	0	0	0	0
Beeghly	0	0	1	0.1	1	0.5	0	0	1	0.7
Smokey Hollow	0	0	3	0.4	0	0	0	0	0	0
Wick Oval	0	0	2	0.3	0	0	0	0	0	0
Locker Room	0	0	1	0.1	0	0	0	0	0	0
Evening Events	0	0	2	0.3	0	0	0	0	0	0
Elevator	0	0	1	0.1	0	0	0	0	0	0
Non-Classroom Buildings	1	0.1	4	0.6	0	0	0	0	0	0
	(1182)		(681)		(200)		(98)		(145)	

\*Are(were) there areas on campus where you want(ed) to go at night but are(were) afraid to because of fear of crime?

employees believing the chances had remained the same (55.0%) was just slightly lower than that of the student base. More female employees (32.2%) than males (23.8%) thought chances had increased, but the difference was not significant.

(Place Table 13 Here.)

The actual numbers of assaults (including aggravated) and robberies reported to campus security were examined to see how campus community beliefs compared to reported incidences. One assault was reported in the 1981-82 school year, five were reported during 1982-83, six in 1983-84, and five reported in 1984-85. So, incidences reported over the last four years increased initially, then remained about the same for the next three years. For robberies, the same number was reported for 1981-82, 1982-83, and 1983-84; one in each year. The figure doubled to two reported incidences in 1984-85, so reported robberies have increased, but only by one incident. If it can be assumed that increases in the number of reported incidences match increases in actual offences, then the majority of the campus community is correct in believing that their chances of being attacked or robbed have remained about the same.

(Place Table 14 Here.)

**The campus community has not limited their activities because they were afraid of crime on campus.**

The majority of interviewees in each group said that they had not limited or changed their activities at YSU because they were afraid of crime on campus. Over three-fourths (79.2%) of the student base as a whole had not changed their activities, but more females (33.6%) than males

Table 13

## Chances of Being Attacked/Robbed

	Increased		Decreased		Same	
	N	%	N	%	N	%
Students (class)*						
Males	124	23.4	77	14.5	329	62.1
Females	231	38.7	53	8.9	313	52.4
Total	355	31.5	130	11.5	642	57.0
Students (phone)						
Females	48	25.9	26	14.1	111	60.0
Graduates						
Females	26	26.5	11	11.2	56	57.1
Withdrawn						
Females	53	36.6	15	10.3	71	49.0
Employees						
Males	78	23.8	69	21.0	181	55.2
Females	102	32.2	41	12.9	174	54.9
Total	180	27.9	110	17.1	355	55.0

\*There are significant differences, at the .10 level, between the way males and females responded to the question.

Table 14

Assaults and Robberies Reported to Campus Security

Time Period	Reported Assaults	Reported Robberies
July 1981-May 1982	1	1
July 1982-June 1983	5	1
July 1983-June 1984	6	1
July 1984-June 1985	5	2

(6.5%) had limited their actions. Female target groups reported higher percentages of people modifying their behavior because of fear: 37 percent of current students, 25.5 percent of recent graduates, and 26.9 percent of withdrawn women. About three-quarters (74.5)\* of the employees didn't believe there was enough crime on campus to make them alter their activities, but as with the students, a higher number of female employees (35.1%) than male employees (16.2%) did limit their activities.

(Place Table 15 Here.)

People who had limited their activities were asked what changes they had made. The vast majority said they stayed away from campus at night. Other people were careful about where they parked, did not go about campus alone, or were more careful about their personal safety (e.g., carry keys, walk quickly, observe environment). A few people said they carried a gun.

(Place Table 16 Here.)

#### **Most people on campus have not been victimized.**

Each group of interviewees was asked whether they had experienced any of the following crimes: had their pocket picked or purse snatched; had someone take anything from them using force, threats or violence; had someone steal anything from their car; had someone steal anything they left unattended; or had anyone attack or assault them. The majority of people in each group had not been the victim of any crime: almost 500 (73.9%) of the students surveyed in class, 84.2 percent of the targeted female students, and 461 (67.7%) of the employees.

(Place Table 17 Here.)

Table 15  
Fear of Crime Limited Activities

	Yes		No	
	N	%	N	%
Students (class)*				
Males	35	6.5	505	93.5
Females	202	33.6	399	66.4
Total	237	20.8	904	79.2
Students (phone)				
Females	74	37.0	123	61.5
Graduates				
Females	25	25.5	72	73.5
Withdrawn				
Females	39	26.9	104	71.7
Employees*				
Males	53	16.2	275	83.8
Females	112	35.1	207	64.9
Total	165	25.5	482	74.5

\*There are significant differences, at the .10 level, between the way males and females responded to the question.

Table 16

## How Activities Limited

	Self-Administered				Phone					
	Students		Employees		Current		Grads		Withdrawn	
	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%
1. Stay away at night	164	13.9	51	7.5	66	33.0	25	25.5	30	19.3
2. Careful about where car is parked	19	1.6	39	5.7	6	3.0	1	1.0	8	5.5
3. Use/provide escort service in P.M.	24	2.0	4	0.6	2	1.0	0	0	1	1.4
4. Don't hang around campus	0	0.0	3	0.4	1	0.5	1	1.0	2	0.7
5. Carry a gun	2	0.2	0	0.0	0	0.0	0	0	1	0.7
6. Avoid certain areas	2	0.2	8	1.2	2	1.0	0	0	0	0.0
7. Considered, or left YSU	0	0.0	0	0.0	1	0.5	0	0	0	0.0
8. More careful about personal safety (carry keys, walk quickly, etc.) carry mace	12 (1182)	1.0	42 (681)	6.2	0 (200)	0.0	0 (98)	0	0 (145)	0.0

\*Are(were) there areas on campus where you want(ed) to go at night but are(were) afraid to because of fear of crime?

Table 17

## Frequency of Victimization

Number of Times Victimized	Students-Class		Employees		Students-Phone	
	N	%	N	%	N	%
0	874	73.9	461	67.7	373	84.2
1	226	19.1	159	23.3	46	10.4
2+	82	7.0	61	9.0	24	5.4

Specifically, among the students surveyed in class, 37 (3.1%) had their pocket picked or purse snatched. About an equal proportion (3.8%) of employees had the same problem. Of the female target groups, 7 (3.5%) current, no graduates, and 3 (2.1%) withdrawn students had their pocket picked or purse snatched.

Fewer people reported experiencing aggravated robbery, or someone taking something by force, threats, or violence. The number of students reporting this was 16 (1.4%). About the same number of employees--15 (2.2%) had been the victim of aggravated robbery. In the target groups, only 1 (0.2%) person said she had experienced this.

More than one-tenth of the students (11.7%) and employees (12.8%) had something stolen from their car. Ten (5.0%) current students, 4 (4.1%) graduates, and 14 (9.7%) withdrawn students in the target groups experienced the same thing.

The majority of crimes reported involved theft of an unattended item: 16.2 percent of the student base, 22.5 percent of the employee base, 12.5 percent of targeted current female students, 7.1 percent of targeted female graduates, and 11 percent of targeted withdrawn students said this had happened to them.

Respondents were also asked whether they had anyone attack or assault them. Forty (3.4%) students, 16 (2.3%) employees, and 10 females in the target groups indicated that they had been attacked or assaulted.

(Place Table 18 Here.)

Table 18  
Crime at YSU

	Self-Administered				Phone					
	Students		Employees		Current		Grads		Withdrawn	
	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%
Had your pocket picked or purse snatched	37	3.1	26	3.8	7	3.5	0	0.0	3	2.1
Had someone take anything from you using force, threats or violence	16	1.4	15	2.2	1	0.5	0	0.0	0	0.0
Had someone steal anything from your car	138	11.7	87	12.8	10	5.0	4	4.1	14	9.7
Had someone steal anything you left unattended	191	16.2	153	22.5	25	12.5	7	7.1	16	11.0
Had any one attack or assault you	40 (1182)	3.4	16 (681)	2.3	6 (200)	3.0	3 (98)	3.1	1 (145)	0.7

**Many serious crimes are not reported to YSU Campus Security.**

Table 19 shows the number of people who reported, in the survey, being victims of certain crimes while at YSU. Because the survey sample was determined to be representative of the entire student and employee populations, the percentages of those affected by crime in the sample could be projected for the university community as a whole, but these projections must be qualified for several reasons.

Almost 5 percent (4.5%) of the students, and 6 percent of the employees in the sample reported being the victim of a robbery. If these figures are used to project the total number of students and employees who were robbed, then we can estimate that 693 people on campus were affected, yet only 5 robberies were reported to Campus Security during the July 1981 to June 1985 period.

(Place Table 19 Here.)

For crimes, including petty and grand theft, breaking and entering, burglary, stolen autos and bicycles, 27.9 percent of the students and 35.3 percent of the employees reported being victims. When projected, the number affected in the campus community was 4,278. About 1,000 of these kinds of crimes were reported to YSU Security during the four-year period.

Attacks and assaults were experienced by 3.4 percent of the students, and 2.3 percent of employees in the survey. This means that 500 people among all students and employees were affected, but only 18 were reported to Campus Security.

There are some factors that might explain some of the differences in the numbers of crimes reported in the survey and those officially reported to YSU Campus Security. These reasons include (1) estimates that only 50

Table 19

## Reported and Projected Crimes on Campus

Crime	Reported in Survey		Projected Number Affected[1]		Reported To Security[2]
	N	%	N	%	
Robbery (including aggravated)					
Students	53	4.5	630	4.5	
Employees	41	6.0	63	6.0	
Total	94		693		5
Petty & grand theft, breaking & entering, burglary, stolen autos and bicycles					
Students	329	27.9	3,908	27.9	
Employees	240	35.3	370	35.3	
Total	569		4,278		1,040
Attacks, assaults					
Students	40	3.4	476	3.4	
Employees	16	2.3	24	2.3	
Total	56		500		18

[1] Figures reported in the survey were projected for the entire campus community, including 1,049 full-time employees and 14,009 students.

[2] Includes incidences reported from July 1981 to June 1985.

percent of all serious crimes are reported, (2) survey respondents misclassifying some of the crimes they have experienced, or (3) ambiguity about campus boundaries. For example, someone may have had an item stolen from a restaurant next to campus, and reported it in the survey as having taken place on campus. One other factor that should be considered here is that YSU-reported figures were examined for only a four-year period, but respondents may have been reporting incidences that occurred outside these four years. Even given these considerations, the discrepancies are large.

**Differing views on non-university people on campus exist: employees feel threatened but don't want to restrict campus entrants, while female students feel less threatened but are more inclined to restrict entrance to campus.**

Five attitudinal questions concerning people on campus were asked of employees and the three female target groups, but because of time limitations, were not asked of students surveyed in class. Respondents agreed, disagreed, or had no opinion on five statements. The first statement said, There are too many people on campus who don't belong there. The majority (40.4%) of employees agreed with this, but for each of the three female target groups, the minority agreed; current students, 30.5 percent; graduates, 34.7 percent; and withdrawn, 34.5 percent.

(Place Table 20 Here.)

The second statement read, people from surrounding neighborhoods cause trouble on campus. Employees were split on this: 30.4 percent agreed, 31.4 percent disagreed, and 38.1 percent didn't know. The targeted female student groups disagreed in higher percentages than employees with this

Table 20

## People on Campus, Percent Agreeing With Each Statement

Statement	Employees		Current		Female Students			
	N	%	N	%	Grads N	%	Withdrawn N	%
There are too many people on campus who don't belong here.								
Agree	275	40.4	61	30.5	34	34.7	51	34.5
Disagree	178	26.1	123	61.5	58	59.2	78	52.7
Don't know	228	33.5	16	8.0	6	6.2	19	12.9
People from surrounding neighborhoods cause trouble on campus.								
Agree	207	30.4	35	17.5	24	24.5	29	19.6
Disagree	214	31.4	142	71.0	62	63.3	93	62.8
Don't know	260	38.1	23	11.5	12	12.3	26	17.6
Vagrants and bums hanging around campus make me nervous.								
Agree	364	53.5	97	48.5	48	49.0	65	43.9
Disagree	201	29.5	98	49.0	47	48.0	70	47.3
Don't know	116	17.0	5	2.5	3	3.1	13	8.8
Crime on campus committed by people who don't belong here.								
Agree	362	53.2	99	49.5	53	54.1	69	46.6
Disagree	95	14.0	69	34.5	27	27.6	40	27.0
Don't know	224	32.9	32	16.0	18	18.4	39	26.4
Campus should be restricted only to those working or attending classes here.								
Agree	257	37.7	106	53.0	49	50.0	92	62.2
Disagree	333	48.9	84	42.0	43	43.9	44	29.7
Don't know	48	13.2	10	5.0	6	6.2	4	8.1

statement: current, 71 percent; graduate, 63.3 percent; and withdrawn, 62.8 percent.

Employees and targeted student groups were asked whether they agreed that vagrants and bums hanging around campus made them nervous. The majority (53.5%) of employees agreed, but the target groups' opinions were split. For current students, 48.5 percent agreed and 49.0 percent disagreed; for graduates 49.0 percent agreed and 48.0 percent disagreed; and for students who withdrew, 43.9 percent agreed and 47.3 percent disagreed.

Opinions of students and employees were alike for the statement, Crime on campus is committed by people who don't belong there. The majority of each group agreed: employees, 53.2 percent; current students, 49.5 percent; graduates, 54.1 percent; and students who withdrew, 46.6 percent.

Interviewees were asked whether they thought campus should be restricted only to those working or attending classes there. Employees and students had differing views. The majority of employees (48.9%) disagreed with the statement, while the majority of each female student target group agreed that campus should be restricted: current students, 53.0 percent; graduates, 50.0 percent; and withdrawn students, 62.2 percent.

### Recommendations

Students and employees generally feel that Youngstown State University provides a safe environment for working and learning; only a small percentage reported experiencing serious crimes. There is a group of people, however, who perceive the campus to be less safe than it is. A comprehensive program to change the negative perceptions of this group, and

increase the awareness of others on campus is recommended. Additional informational programs concerning safety, prudent behavior, and reporting would enhance perceptions of the safety of the campus environment. Because females express more apprehension than males, the programs should be targeted towards females.

Existing programs that enhance campus safety would benefit by wider publicity. These programs include the escort service, emergency phones, the shuttle buses, and crime posters.

Some people expressed fear about coming to campus at night. Efforts to increase the visibility of security forces would help allay these fears.

Vagrants and other people on campus who are not participating in the university environment should be discouraged from hanging around campus.

Most of the crimes reported in the survey involved theft of items from cars, and of items left unattended. The majority of crimes could be eliminated if people on campus changed their behavior. One additional program, as outlined below, would involve education of the community, and hopefully changes in behavior that would significantly reduce the amount of crime on campus. This program would involve enlisting the services of a group of volunteer students and employees for a relatively short, say two week, time period who would act as safety officers. Volunteers would monitor various areas on campus to spot behaviors which might encourage theft. For example, purses or calculators left unattended in study areas, valuable items left in unlocked cars, or books left on cafeteria tables. When a volunteer spotted any of the situations above, a "ticket" would be placed on the item informing the "offender" that their actions could lead to theft

of belongings. Each volunteer would keep track of the number of "tickets" given in their area. This would pinpoint areas where student laxity is most prevalent. Students and employees would benefit by being made aware of their crime-promoting behavior, and hopefully changing it. This program would be most effective without prior advertising.

The university administration has taken action on improvements and programs that increase the level of security on campus. Continuing and expanding these efforts will promote YSU as a safe place to work and attend school.

### Footnote

1. Approximately 1,850 classes were listed in the Spring 1985 Schedule of Classes. Every 23rd class listed was chosen to participate. It was assumed that the proportions and types of classes listed would be representative of the school, class, and major of the student body.