

Campus safety



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Life inside campus is a reflection of the life in the larger society. If the society is violent and crime prone, this further extends inside the campus where students are still grappling with a sense of new found freedom. Campus safety hence becomes an important topic to both students and their parents. The United States department of education has in the recent past indicated renewed efforts towards ensuring that students are provided with the necessary security to have conducive learning environment.

This paper emphasizes that is important for institutions to provide students with proper information on campuses safety. The incident at Virginia Tech left parents and the public in general baffled and at the same time worried over the safety of students in campus. The incident saw a deranged gun man kill over thirty students and then turn the gun on himself. This incident raised a number of questions in regard to university and colleges ability to maintain security in their institutions. The opinion that had been in everyone's lip is that more should be done to ensure the safety of students.

There are a number of precautions and measures that have been taken up by universities and colleges to beef up security within the institutions. Statistics conducted by the U. S department of education in 2003 indicated that there are over three thousand cases of aggravated assault on students each year, two thousand reported cases of forcible sex offenses and over twenty eight thousand reported cases of burglary in the various institutions of higher learning each year.

These figures are released annually and indicate the seriousness of the issue, reminding the various institutions on the need to beef up their security measures. There is a legislation in the federal law that seeks to define and

outline ways in which universities can ensure safety inside the campuses. The Clery Act is a law that gets its inspiration from Jeanne Ann Clery, a student murdered in the campus hostels in 1986.

Her parents went ahead and formed the Security on Campus Inc, a non governmental organization that centers its attention on providing information on campus safety. The Clery Act demands all universities and colleges in the United States to disclose all relevant information on crime within the campuses. This information would range from statistics, crime logs and past incidents. The motivation behind Clery Act is to have students made aware of the safety precautions and crime history of a certain institution before making an application.

After the Virginia tech massacre, a number of precautions were taken up to ensure that such an incident is curbed in the future. Such precaution when taken usually centres on the student themselves. Colleges and universities are demanding that students avail their crime history, if they have any, in their application forms. This aims at pointing out the bad elements before they join campus and become a potential threat to the rest of the students. Though this is not likely to completely wipe out crime it can significantly reduce such incidents by locking out students with a rocky past.

The University of Texas for example has set up a rapid response unit that responds to all cases of insecurity inside the campus. Instant messaging services have also been initiated to provide alerts to students incase of any incident. In response to the Virginia tech incident, the senate passed a gun law meant to restrict access of guns to mentally deranged people; this is to

be done in conjunction with the mental institutions. Schools have not been left behind.

The question of whether guns should be allowed into the learning institutions is also being tackled. The Columbine High School shootings in which a number of students were killed and others injured by two students brought to the surface the issue of whether students and teachers should be allowed to carry guns to school. The issue of how school authorities could ensure that students are not carrying guns has also been a thorny one especially in the knowledge that it is not practical to conduct body searches to all students.

Periodical searches may also not reveal much. To maintain safety in school as far as guns are considered, many schools are installing metal detectors in various locations. Others are beefing up security increasing the number of policemen on patrol in the school and conducting body searches on suspicious characters and students who have had a history of violence and crime (Brown, B. , Rob M. , 16). In conclusion, it is clear that safety concerns in the institutions of higher learning have become major concerns.

The shooting incidents in schools and universities have left many with skeptical look at the safety status of a number of campuses. The Clery Act passed in the 1980s contains guidelines and requirements that campuses must make public the status of security within campus as well as providing statistics of such occurrences. A number of measures have been initiated by colleges to beef up their security as well as assure students on their safety. This is in recognition of the need for safety within campus and a bearing that it has on academics.