



Factors to Consider When Evaluating College or University Safety

What is the universities commitment to campus safety and security?

You can gauge this commitment in a number of very visible ways, starting with the campus public safety agency:

- Is the agency adequately resourced?
- Are the members of the department appropriately trained?
- Is the department empowered to enforce campus policies and/or laws?
- Does the department have a community engagement strategy this requires officers to interact with campus community members on an on-going basis?

Does the institution have comprehensive, collaborative programs for victim advocacy and assistance and alcohol or other drug counseling?

- Does the campus have strong advocacy programs to assist students who may be victims of crimes, especially sexual assault? Creating a support system fosters campus-wide attention to the problems at hand, and can help deter future crimes.
- Most campus violence is alcohol or other drug related, and 1,600 college students die annually from alcohol related causes. Dry campuses and those which offer substance-free housing experience fewer problems

Has the campus embraced innovative technological solutions to enhance safety and security?

- Automatic card access systems, intrusion detection systems, and security video in selected areas can minimize criminal activity and aid in solving crimes. Recent technologies, such as those that allow tracking of students in specific situations, may reduce crime on campus.
- Closely connected with this is the need for the campus to have a comprehensive crisis communication strategy that leverage both high-tech communications protocols, such as mass notification systems, and low-tech systems such as sirens, loud speakers, etc.

And finally, institutions that tend to have stricter alcohol and other drug abuse policies tend to have fewer problems

Ways Students Can Protect Themselves

- 1.** Attend programs presented by the university, including campus police orientation programs, sexual assault awareness programs, and those that focus on high risk drinking.
- 2.** Take advantage of the programs offered by the campus public safety agency such as campus safety escorts, self-defense programs, and other initiatives aimed at student safety.
- 3.** Safeguard against a false sense of security; protect yourselves by locking doors, traveling in pairs, and protecting personal items.
- 4.** Always watch out for one another; if you leave with several friends, ensure you return back to your dorm with all of those friends.
- 5.** Accept your responsibility to contribute to community safety; i.e, if you notice a safety hazard or risk, notify someone about the risk and ensure that the institution addresses the problem.