Dissertations   Graduate College

12-2016

An Analysis of Campus Violence Threat Assessment Policy Implementation at Michigan Community Colleges

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Recommended Citation

AN ANALYSIS OF CAMPUS VIOLENCE THREAT ASSESSMENT
POLICY IMPLEMENTATION AT MICHIGAN
COMMUNITY COLLEGES

by

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A dissertation submitted to the Graduate College
in partial fulfillment of the requirements
for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy
Public Affairs and Administration
Western Michigan University
December 2016

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This dissertation evaluated campus violence threat assessment policy and procedure implementation at the community college level of higher education. The importance of this topic was to provide a manageable and collaborative initiative for leadership at institutions of higher learning to identify, develop, implement, and evaluate a policy that can effectively prevent acts of campus-related violence. A mixed-methods study approach using a Likert-scale survey with supporting open-ended questions was used to guide the exploration. Bardach's (2016) Eightfold Path for Policy Analysis was the framework used by Michigan community colleges to apply to their own unique situations. This method determined the prevalence of threat teams and protocols at Michigan community colleges and in turn improved the understanding of this particular policy problem for their respective administrators.

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

First and foremost, I would like to acknowledge my wife Robin. The expression that "for every good man, there is a great woman by his side" embodies her love and support through this monumental endeavor. Second, I would like thank my dissertation committee members: Dr. Matthew Mingus and Dr. Robert Peters, both from Western Michigan University School of Public Affairs and Administration, and Dr. Richard Johnson from the University of Toledo, School of Criminal Justice. Their guidance, constructive feedback, and positive reinforcement were very much appreciated along each step of this unforgettable process. Third, I would like to thank Dr. Sharon Newbill from the University of New Mexico, who provided invaluable perspective for this research endeavor. Finally, I would like to thank Hope Smith who took on the task of editing and correctly formatting my dissertation for the graduate college.

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CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

Statement of the Problem

The manner in which community college administrators have developed and implemented campus threat assessment policies to objectively address threats of violence on campus is largely unknown when it comes to the management of such potential acts. Based on the literature reviewed regarding campus violence, 4-year academic institutions have conducted comprehensive reviews of campus safety policies on their respective campuses. There has been some limited attention by researchers addressing campus violence at 2-year or community colleges; however, there appears to be quite a void.

Based on the literature, administrative reviews at 4-year institutions have occurred in order to update or revise current policies. What is unknown, however, is whether community colleges have also recognized this necessity. Campus threat assessment policies are typically far-reaching. They impact all facets of community college operations, including not only public safety and/or law enforcement but also instructional and student affairs services.

The most significant outcome of the Virginia Tech shooting in 2007 is that institutions of higher education recognized the need for a threat assessment policy to be in place for prudent prevention and management of potential acts of violence. This tragic event nearly a decade ago was the catalyst for change and an impetus for inquiry. Potential acts of violence include not only weapon-involved incidents, such as those involving guns or knives, but also robberies, rapes, domestic violence, and even simple assaults. There may be other identified threats that

could have an impact on campus safety as well, such as citizens in the community who have communicated in some manner their intent to do harm on campus. The mechanism for threat assessment is the creation of a threat assessment team. It is the team's responsibility to evaluate the legitimacy of the concern or threat reported, assess the likelihood that the person in question may cause harm to himself/herself or others, develop a plan for reducing the risk, implement the plan, and then continually monitor or re-evaluate the situation to ensure effectiveness (Deisinger, Randazzo, O'Neill, & Savage, 2008). In addition, the committee can collect and review data on a periodic basis for the purpose of identifying strategies for reducing the probability of violence by using interventions such as education and training. This is a deductive process that "primarily focuses on the facts of the particular case in question to guide to inferences; that examines closely the progression of ideas and planning behaviors; and that corroborates information gathered from multiple sources" (Reddy et al., 2001, p. 167).

Community college leaders have implemented threat assessment protocols to prevent or manage specific threats of violence; however, minimal research exists to confirm this statement. The motivations are clear for implementing preventive measures, for example, making the campus environment safe for all, reducing liability to the school, and easing fear or even the perception of fear among students, staff, and faculty (Fox & Savage, 2009). The purpose of the current research is to determine to what extent threat assessments are utilized within community colleges and to ascertain how community colleges have implemented such assessments in order to meet the need for a safer campus. The concept is not new. Deisinger et al. (2008) indicated that this is a proactive approach to preventing and even managing potential acts of violence. Another unknown, however, is whether prevention or management plans are developed from objective or subjective criteria or a combination of the two. The issue of violence on community

college campuses is extremely emotional and often ignites strong feelings and reactions among students, staff, faculty, and even the community as a whole.

Therefore, this study addresses the lack of analysis regarding the implementation, use, impact, and ultimately the benefits of threat assessments by community colleges, as well as possible improvements to existing protocols.

Significance of the Research

The literature regarding threat assessment use in community colleges is lacking. It is extensive, however, for 4-year colleges and universities (Baker & Boland, 2011; Fletcher & Bryden, 2009; Keller, Hughes, & Hertz, 2011; Seo, Torabi, Sa, & Blair, 2012). This literature does provide a template for all institutions of higher education with regard to campus threat assessment existence and implementation. Therefore, the impetus for this study is to determine whether community colleges have embraced threat assessment protocols as well and how such protocols are structured and utilized. For those community colleges that do have threat assessment protocols in place, this study investigates the ways that threat assessment teams use the results of the assessment to prevent or manage a potential act of violence.

This study is also necessary to evaluate if community colleges may be overlooking data that would significantly reduce the potential for violence, or if they could fail to notice potential threats due to the way the data are collected, recorded, and reported. For example, if a violent act is committed off campus against a community college student, this does not necessarily suggest that the violence is not a community college issue that should be automatically excluded from campus threat assessment. Omission of off-campus incident data may be problematic or faulty. Instead, their inclusion may lead to violence prevention.

In addition, the study may reveal a need for educational efforts in terms of strategies for reducing the probability of incidents such an assaultive attack or date rape. Furthermore, current practices in the prevention or management of campus violence in general are noble and well-intended but are not exhaustive in their attempts to provide a safer community college campus environment. When dealing with the unpredictability of human behavior, community colleges may find it impossible to be exhaustive in campus violence prevention or management planning. As Fox (2008) indicated, "Over-aggressiveness in trying to identify and coerce a troubled and belligerent student into treatment can potentially intensify feelings of persecution and precipitate the very violent act that we're attempting to avert" (p. 94). This statement highlights the importance of a well-planned and well-thought-out campus threat assessment as well as the value in being proactive in preventing and managing potential acts of violence on a college campus, while still recognizing the drawback of unintended consequences. Threat assessment is not a new concept; rather, it is an adaptation of concepts that have been around for many years. The foundations of threat assessment rest in workplace violence prevention programs, Secret Service protective intelligence models, and student development approaches to deal with students in crisis in kindergarten through grade 12 public school settings (Dunkle, Silverstein, & Warner, 2008). Threat assessment is a cost-effective approach to dealing with potential acts of violence in that threat assessment protocols typically use already available internal resources to assess and manage the threats. The threat assessment team can be mobilized with existing stakeholders at the academic institution. Threat assessment teams should be widely utilized by community colleges; however, the existence of such teams is not well documented based upon the lack of current literature and research.

There are several focus points that provide further significance to this study. First and foremost is the proposition that if campus threat assessment programs are developed and implemented on community college campuses, then a dynamic approach can be used to prevent or manage a potential act of violence. As a proactive approach, threat assessments seek to identify potential threats and to activate necessary management plans to prevent or minimize campus violence (Scalora, Simons, & VanSlyke, 2010). Despite Clery Act data that indicates few acts of violence at community colleges, administrators at such institutions must always be prepared for potential threats, thus having a threat assessment protocol in place is a valid concern, as human behavior can be both predictable and unpredictable. The prevention of even one act of violence has immeasurable value.

Second, student success should remain the primary goal of any violence prevention initiative. Due to the traumatic nature of campus violence, not only on the student body as a whole but also on the direct victims of the violence, there is an element of recovery that must be addressed. In the case of the Virginia Tech shootings, several students lost their lives, but there were also many who were injured with non-life-threatening wounds. Because of this, according to Carr (2007), victims may need to leave school by either dropping out or taking a leave of absence. They may move back home to recover, regroup, or transfer to another school. Furthermore, Carr stated that when victims remain in school, they may have problems concentrating, studying, and attending class. So in addition to having a proactive structured assessment of violence system, there should also be responsive student affairs protocols in place to assist students with coping and overcoming the stress caused by such an event and then continuing forward with their academic goals.

Third, the perception of campus violence is being sensationalized to the point that the public believes many college campuses are not safe for students, staff, and faculty. To provide perspective, Fisher (1995) indicated that a few violent campus incidents highlighted by the media have cast a negative spotlight on college and university campuses and created the impression that campuses are increasingly dangerous places. When campus safety procedures are being evaluated, one must incorporate perceptions of fear into the evaluation. Apparently, actual analysis of data on history and trends should be considered; however, Carmen, Polk, Segal, and Bing (2000) asserted that college administration should be cognizant of the fear of crime and should respond to students' concerns in an attempt to retain and establish a safe learning environment. The work of campus threat assessment teams can provide students with more realistic perceptions. If items have been overlooked, those items can be addressed by the team; if the items have been addressed, the uncovered perception can be assuaged and relieved.

Fourth, the response to acts of violence on college campuses has historically been reactive in nature rather than proactive. The Virginia Tech shootings are the most notable example of late. The shooter was previously known to many entities across the campus. The warning signs were many, yet there was no intervention. A proactive approach would enable assessment teams to analyze and discern between behaviors and warning signs that are indicative of actual future violent actions and those behaviors that do not tend to lead to any affirmative violent action. The problem with the Virginia Tech incident was that there was not a central screening administrative body on campus to link all these indicators together and act accordingly. Deisinger et al. (2008) emphasized that these problems are "typical of the problems and weaknesses regarding information sharing and follow-up at institutions across the country" (p. 16).

Policy Analysis and Research Questions

As a starting point for this analysis, a rational approach was used for direction in order to develop and implement a policy and protocol regarding community college campus threat assessments. According to Wildavsky (1979), "Policy analysis is about the realm of rationality and responsibility where resources relate to the goals. Rationality resides in connecting what you want with what you can do, and responsibility in being accountable for making that connection" (p. 18). Michigan community colleges should implement campus threat assessment policies in the event a threat of violence is made. Community colleges should have a proactive approach to identify and resolve any potential acts of violence on college premises. It should be a policy that can actually be implemented, administered, and managed. Furthermore, Stone (2002) stated:

> In the rational model, stated objectives are the standard by which possible actions are evaluated. To serve the purpose, goals must be known to the decision-maker, explicitly formulated and fixed. If the decision-maker could not articulate a goal, could not formulate it precisely enough to know whether it had been achieved, or changed his or her mind about goals frequently, there could be no stable standard of reference by which to judge the effectiveness of proposed alternatives. Explicitness and precision about goals are, therefore, not only virtues, but necessities in the analytic model. (p. 100)

Based on this rational approach and central to the objectives of this study, community colleges should implement and evaluate their campus threat assessment policies. Bardach's (2016) policy problem solving will be used to analyze these efforts and includes the following process: (1) define problem, (2) assemble evidence, (3) construct alternatives, (4) select criteria, (5) project outcomes; (6) confront trade-offs, (7) decide, and, finally, (8) tell the story. This framework is noted for its practical manner of walking policymakers through the process of policy development and analysis.

Bardach's work does not delve deeply into theory but, again, provides a very practical interpretation of what a policymaker considers when developing policy. In short, Bardach argued that policymakers must define the problem and gather evidence before constructing alternatives. His work speaks to potential difficulties in gathering information; it recommends using both documents and individuals but acknowledges extracting information from people is often limited by the structural bureaucracy of what they feel comfortable divulging. Then, with these alternatives in mind, policymakers must select criteria for comparison and project potential outcomes (whether positive or negative). They must address the trade-offs and share these before they make their recommendation.

The first step, *define the problem*, also known as the problem identification, has already been established in this paper. The problem is the potential threat of violence against students, staff, and faculty on community college property as well as off-campus and the possible lack of a policy and procedure in place to prevent or manage such an occurrence.

Second, *assemble evidence* involves providing data to support the problem being defined. This is usually done by reviewing Clery data and other local, state, and federal crime reporting. In addition, searching and collecting media reports of campus violence can be used in this phase. This can be at times difficult to accomplish, especially when no prior research has been conducted specific to the problem defined. With the problem of campus violence prevention, considerable literature is available exploring the nature of campus violence, rates of campus violence, and alternatives to mitigate threats; however, no research thus far has been conducted to analyze the policy process utilized at the community college level. An educated guess could be made that most community colleges have implemented some sort of threat assessment policy;

however, this has not been qualified or quantified to date. One of the purposes of the current research is to begin filling this particular void.

Third, *constructing alternatives* involves deciding what policy alternatives are available, which one to use, and weighing the risks and benefits of the alternatives. This is where the limits of structural bureaucracy come in to play. Based on the recommendations by the Virginia Tech Review Panel (2007), one solution is implementing a campus threat assessment policy and procedure. The benefits include having a proactive and objective method of threat assessment and subsequent management, resulting in safer community college campuses. The risks involved include the potential for subjectivity and bias in the assessment process. In addition, risks could include the cursory identification of students at an academic institution simply because of their physical appearance, their demographics, or their noticeable mental health problems, rather than relying on the facts of the situation and objective assessment of those facts.

Fourth, *select criteria* involves determining what methods will be used to determine the outcomes of the policy option selected. Since the current study is focused on the process of campus threat assessment, it would seem that *process values* would be a desirable method to incorporate, as Bardach (2016) stated, "American democracy values process and procedure is having a say in the policy issues that affect you and include rationality, openness and accessibility, transparency, fairness, nonarbitrariness—as well as substance" (pp. 33-34). The concept of threat assessment includes all these values; however, without seeking to qualify these values through thoughtful inquiry with stakeholders of the process, it will not lead us to the outcomes desired for threat assessment. In the case of this study, the selection of criteria relates to the evaluation of the adequacy and impact of community college threat assessment policies.

The fifth step is *project outcomes,* or the impact the policy alternative(s) will have for all stakeholders involved. No one can predict the future 100% of the time. Policy, as Bardach (2016) indicated, "is about the future, not the past or the present" (p. 47). Hence, policymakers, or, in this case, community college administrators, must be realistic in their projected outcomes with threat assessment protocols. One realistic projected outcome would be that an institution properly identifies, evaluates, and mitigates potential acts of violence that may include active shootings, physical and sexual assaults, robberies, and emergency interventions by campus police. Another realistic projected outcome would be no loss of life or grievous injury to others. In addition, a mere reduction of incidents is a favorable outcome.

Sixth, *confronting the trade-offs* means weighing the pros and cons of each altenative and addressing deviations in the project outcomes an institution is aiming for. With the current problem of mitigating potential acts of violence at community college campuses, a serious trade-off to confront is the situation in which an actual act of violence was not prevented, even though the person of interest was evaluated through the threat assessment process. Although the incident was not entirely prevented, the trade-off included the fact that no act of violence occurred because campus law enforcement intervened immediately to end the event and properly secure all campus areas impacted by the incident.

Seventh, *decide* refers to the actual decision to implement a certain policy, but also suggests an internal check of how well the decision-makers have done their work to a certain point. Bardach (2016) stated that "unless you can convince yourself of the plausibility of some course of action, you probably won't be able to convince your client" (p. 69).

The eighth step is to *tell the story* by presenting to a body of stakeholders the policy initiative at hand. Stakeholders must be enlisted through the entire policy process, as the threat

assessment team attempts to provide justification for implementation, to obtain funding, or to simply educate. For the implementation of campus threat policies, community college administrators will need to articulate that the campus threat assessment policy and procedure will be objectively and thoroughly followed, without bias or prejudice. It must be reinforced that the structure of the process is sound and universal. Objectivity should be built into the assessment questions.

Therefore, the following research questions will be examined:

1. How have Michigan community colleges implemented campus threat assessment protocols according to Bardach's (2016) Eightfold Path for Policy Analysis?

2. How have Michigan community colleges evaluated the outcomes of campus threat assessment policies?

3. What adjustments and improvements are suggested by applying Bardach's (2016) Eightfold Path for Policy Analysis to the findings?

This chapter has presented an introduction to the research subject by providing a statement of the problem, the significance of the research, and the research questions and analysis to be conducted in the study.

The following chapter presents a review of the literature pertinent to the subject of campus threat assessment. It includes previous research about campus violence, campus threat assessment protocols, policy initiatives, and other studies focusing on quantitative and qualitative topics related to campus threat assessment.

CHAPTER II

LITERATURE REVIEW

To provide further basis for this research endeavor and to build upon what has already been analyzed, a review of relevant literature pertaining to campus violence, threat assessments, previous policy initiatives, and quantitative/qualitative research was conducted. Although the topic of campus violence has been in the global forefront through the many incidents and media coverage over the past decade, it is necessary to further define and clarify what campus violence is in order to fully comprehend from an administrative perspective what problem-solving is necessary. Thus, the literature review begins with campus violence research.

Campus Violence

Gifford, Pregliasco, and Mardas (2002) stated that "crime and violence have become societal issues, and as incidents of violence occur in society, they will undoubtedly occur on college and university campuses" (p. 9). In agreement with this statement, Fleenor (2009) indicated campus violence continues to be a problem in today's world. Colleges and universities struggle to address the demands for accountability and improved safety and search for improvements by revising campus safety policies and procedures to better protect the entire campus community. Also in agreement are Dahl, Bonham, and Reddington (2016), who indicated that community colleges are just as prone to acts of violence as 4-year institutions, citing the 2015 shooting at Umpqua Community College in Oregon, and the 2013 shootings that took place at the Community College of Philadelphia and Lone Star Community College in Texas.

Violence is defined as "behavior by persons against persons that intentionally threatens, attempts, or actually inflicts physical harm" (Reiss & Roth, 1993, p. 35). The World Health Organization report (Krug, Dahlberg, Mercy, Zwi, & Lozano, 2002) further defines violence as

> the intentional use of physical force or power, threatened or actual, against oneself, another person, or against a group or community, that either results in or has a high likelihood of resulting in injury, death, psychological harm, maldevelopment or deprivations. (p. 4)

A phenomenological study conducted by Mayhew, Caldwell, and Goldman (2011) explored the essence of campus violence. This study examined just one institution. The university had approximately 12,000 students and was located in a town of 100,000 residents in the southeastern area of the United States. The main research question explored the essence of campus violence. The researchers used the phenomenological approach to "explore, understand, and verify ideas expressed by the sample population" (p. 257). The study produced a range of definitions of campus violence but also identified limitations as well, due to the reality that the sample consisted of self-identified stakeholders, most of whom were administrators with prior experience with violent acts on campus. The researchers clearly articulated that different definitions and themes would have emerged if a particular subset of the campus population, such as female or first-year students, had been interviewed instead.

As Whitaker and Pollard (2014) summarized, one case in particular thrust the issues of campus violence to the attention of public administrators and politicians. This was the rape and murder in 1986 of Jeanne Ann Clery, a freshman at Lehigh University, a 4-year institution located in Bethlehem, Pennsylvania. Because of this incident, her parents led the initiative to raise awareness and to prevent campus violence. Their efforts culminated in the nation's first campus crime statistics and security reporting laws, such as the Student-Right-to-Know and Campus Security Act of 1990 and eventually the Clery Act of 1998. In the Clery case, the act of

violence was committed by a fellow student while Jeanne Ann Clery slept in her dorm room. As

Bennett (2015) affirmed, campus violence, more often than not, comes from a member of the

campus community. More than half of the incidents of campus violence occurred due to current

or previous intimate relationships, refused advances, obsession, or sexual violence.

In recent times, however, the Virginia Tech shooting massacre has been the most

recognized example of violence in a higher education setting and the impetus for many colleges

and universities to take a discerning look at their campus threat assessment procedures with the

intent of finding proactive approaches to prevent similar tragedies from occurring on their

campuses. Davies (2008) provided a succinct overview of the Virginia Tech campus shootings:

> On the morning of April 16, 2007, Seung Hui Cho, a senior at Virginia Tech, shot and
> killed two people in West Ambler Johnston residence hall shortly after 7:00 a.m. He then
> returned to his own residence hall, changed from his bloody clothes, and left again.
> University and city police, plus emergency rescue teams, quickly cordoned off the crime
> scene and began to search for the killer and any evidence that he might have left behind.
> Cho blended in with the normal flow of students and staff for the next two hours, except
> for a trip to the Blacksburg post office. There he mailed to the NBC network a set of
> writings and videotapes expressing contempt for his fellow students as privileged,
> spoiled, and morally corrupted by a materialistic society. He also mailed a letter to the
> English Department, where he was a major, criticizing a faculty member for being treated
> poorly. Shortly after 9:00 a.m. classes began, Cho entered Norris Hall—which has a mix
> of classrooms, offices, and laboratories—carrying two semi-automatic handguns, about
> 400 rounds of ammunition, a hammer, and a knife. He chained the main doors shut from
> the inside and began entering classrooms on the second floor, shooting anyone he saw.
> According to survivors, he said nothing and showed no emotion. A student placed a 9-1-
> 1 call, and the first police were on the scene in three minutes. Five minutes later they had
> blasted the lock off an unchained door. Two police teams attacked; they didn't know
> whether there was one shooter or several, because they could hear two different caliber
> guns being fired. Almost immediately on hearing the blast of the shotgun that took the
> lock off the door, Cho killed himself. Had the police not entered the building so quickly,
> more people would have been killed. Cho still had about 200 unused bullets when he
> died. The police continued their search of the building, while emergency rescue and
> medical teams began to triage and evacuate the wounded. No one who was alive when
> they were triaged died, and several lives were saved by rapid emergency medical action.
> But by then 30 more people, 25 students and five faculty were dead—plus, of course,
> Cho himself. In little more than two hours, 33 people had died, and 17 were wounded.
> Still others were injured jumping from windows. An unknown number of people who

were directly or indirectly involved will carry the experience with them for the rest of their lives. (pp. 9-10)

This extreme act of violence made such a profound impact on higher education decision-makers to redirect resources to campus safety initiatives and rewrite longstanding policies that it is a necessary component in setting the stage for the remainder of this study. Based on Davies' summary alone, it is clear that there were several warning signs for potential violence from Mr. Cho, as well as lost opportunities for proactive interventions. These signs were not collectively evaluated in a unified effort to assess the true degree and validity of the threat presented by Mr. Cho, and therefore opportunities were missed. In agreement, Hope (2016) indicated that Mr. Cho had clear mental health issues that administrators and others missed primarily because people were not communicating relevant information to one another.

Ten years before Virginia Tech, a qualitative case study (Asmussen & Creswell, 1995) was conducted over an 8-month period after a campus shooting occurred at an unnamed large Midwestern university in the mid-1990s. The sample consisted of on-campus only stakeholders. An open-ended interview was administered to discover themes. One of the primary themes that emerged consistent with the current research endeavor is the necessity of having a campus-wide plan to mitigate future acts of violence. Much of this theme dealt with the lack of a centralized system to bring appropriate stakeholders together to access the threat of violence, keep lines of communication open, and require cross-departmental cooperation and coordination. So even by the mid-1990s, based on the Asmussen and Creswell research, there was support for a defragmented and more unified system to address pre and post acts of violence. Although it was not called campus threat assessment at the time, the resounding description of what was needed holds true to campus threats assessment policy invoked post 2007.

In support of the themes determined by the Asmussen and Creswell (1995) study, a case study conducted by Kelsey (2007) focused on three institutions of varying size and demographics: a large urban institution, an institution in a suburban area, and one located in a rural community. Each of these institutions experienced an act of violence on their respective campuses, which echoed similar themes. Those themes included the necessity for the enhancement of communication and a campus threat assessment team to coordinate efforts to prevent or manage future acts of violence. The Kelsey study also concluded that ongoing staff training was necessary if the process of open communication was to be enhanced for all stakeholders to understand the threat assessment process and other mechanisms that each campus relies on in response to violence.

Some acts of violence are unpredictable, but as the public has learned through media coverage of the Virginia Tech event and other violent acts, many of these behaviors were predictable; however, specific information about a particular threat was not connected and evaluated to properly intervene in a timely manner to prevent or manage the impending violent behavior (Bennett, 2015). In addition, there is the challenge of determining which individuals with traits similar to the Virginia Tech perpetrator are likely to be a shooter versus those who are not likely but are much more numerous. Unfortunately, as Pezza and Bellotti (1995) pointed out, all too often higher education administrators rely on mistaken beliefs about campus violence. These mistaken beliefs include, but are not limited to: (a) perpetrators are mentally ill, (b) drugs and alcohol make people violent, (c) sexual urges make people more prone to violence, and (d) love conquers all. Furthermore, as Sutton (2016) indicated, college administrators must confront three main challenges associated with campus violence: (a) sexual assault that requires

misconduct education and prevention; (b) substance abuse on campus, specifically alcohol, marijuana, and prescription drugs; and (c) threat management.

However, in addressing the need for improved safety on college campuses, an understanding of the veritable elements that contribute to campus violence is necessary (Marcus & Swett, 2002). In agreement with this, the U.S. Secret Service and the U.S. Department of Education (2002), five years before the Virginia Tech event, identified several commonalities with regard to campus violence actions. First, incidents of target violence are rarely spur-of-the-moment or impulsive behaviors; rather, such acts are planned in advance. Second, prior to most acts of violence, other people had knowledge about the perpetrator's thoughts or plan to commit violence. Third, most attackers did not make threats directly before the actual attack. Fourth, there is no accurate or reliable profile of a person who will engage in an act of violence. Fifth, most perpetrators had experienced problems dealing with significant losses or personal failures. Many had considered or even attempted suicide. Sixth, many perpetrators felt bullied, persecuted, or injured by others prior to committing an act of violence. Lastly, most perpetrators had access to and had used weapons prior to an act of violence. Hence, campus violence is a complex phenomenon that has, unfortunately, beleaguered public administrators, specifically higher education administrators. "The administration of states, counties, cities, towns, school districts, public and private higher education systems is stymied by the complexity surrounding the crisis of violence" (Dupont-Morales, 1995, p. 121).

A significant mixed-methods study conducted by Patton and Gregory (2014) sought to obtain perceptions of safety at Commonwealth of Virginia community colleges. A survey of 11,161 students brought forth a myriad of student perceptions. The quantitative portion of the study used a non-experimental survey research design involving electronic surveys. The

qualitative aspect used a case study design of two Virginia community colleges. Perceptions included the following:

1. Information sharing between administrators and students should increase. This can occur through routine surveys administered to students in order to gain their insights on safety and, in turn, administrators can address the most important issues identified by students.

2. It was important to students to have a campus security presence during instructional hours. If this was unattainable due to budgetary restraints, then perhaps interns or student volunteers could be used in a "watch" system.

3. Administrators should focus on improving lighting in parking lots and walkways. This was especially concerning at night time.

4. Colleges should take into consideration principles of crime prevention through environmental design when planning construction of new buildings, parking lots, and walkways.

5. New student orientation should include information about campus crime statistics and safety information. This information should also be distributed to part-time students outside of new student orientation, as many part-time students are unable to attend such programs.

In yet another mixed-methods study conducted by Hites et al. (2013), a geospatial method was used to assess campus safety at a large urban campus in the southeast region of the United States. University administrators in this area of the United States were driven to determine the perceptions of students with regard to campus safety due to students' consistently poor ratings of campus safety. Qualitative data were collected from 10 student focus groups that

totaled 61 students. Themes from the focus groups included the following: (a) poor communication or lack of communication about campus safety, (b) little or no student knowledge regarding the use of campus safety call boxes, (c) a need for greater campus police presence, (d) a need for improved signage indicating locations that were considered on-campus versus those consider off-campus, and (e) a need for improved lighting on campus.

The results were similar to the Patton and Gregory (2014) study conducted one year later and further support the dilemma of campus violence in the higher education setting. The study also defined and articulated the value of implementing a policy of using campus threat assessment protocols to recognize, identify, and mitigate threats. Assertions made by the research included in the literature review are also supported by qualitative research. What is lacking is the qualification of the campus threat assessment policy process implemented by institutions of higher education, specifically community colleges, which this dissertation has attempted to address.

To quantify the crisis of violence, specifically to college students, in a comprehensive study conducted from 1995–2002, the Violent Victimization of College Students Report (Baum & Klaus, 2005) showed that 479,000 crimes of violence occurred involving college students ages 18–24. These crimes included rape/sexual assault, robbery, aggravated assault, and simple assault. These data included both part-time and full-time students attending public and private institutions, both 2-year and 4-year. The aggregate data indicated that although the data overall showed violent crimes down 54%, the most striking outcome was that only 35% of violent acts were reported to campus police during the study period. The statement that violent crimes have declined overall or were perhaps underreported is further supported by Clery Act (*Jeanne Clery Disclosure*, 1998) data. In agreement with this, Sloan (1994) and Barton, Jensen, and Kaufman

(2010) indicated that before the Crime Awareness and Campus Security Act of 1990 was passed, few colleges and universities felt the need to even publicize their crime data. Does this hold true for Michigan community colleges as well?

In order to gain perspective for the reported level of violence at Michigan community colleges with student populations of 10,000−15,000, this researcher did a search through the Clery Act Uniformed Crime Report and obtained five hits. The student population range of 10,000−15,000 was selected because it is the mean student population among the 28 community colleges in Michigan. The schools that fell into this category were Delta College in Saginaw, Henry Ford Community College in Dearborn, Mott Community College in Flint, Schoolcraft College in Livonia, and Washtenaw Community College in Ann Arbor. From 2007−2009, only 18 reported acts of violence occurred among all five of these community colleges; however, Carr (2007) stated that doubts about the validity and reliability of the data provided by the Clery Act are commonplace. Hughes, Elliott, and Myers (2014) agreed, indicating that "this under-reporting may be due, in large part, to victims either discounting the actual impact of the crime itself or because they knew the perpetrator and felt it was a personal matter that should be resolved between the parties themselves" (p. 122).

Among community colleges, the focus of this current study, underreporting is a key reason why the violent crime data are nominal. Presently there is little research to explore this assertion. One study that does provide insight into underreporting was conducted by Hart and Colavito (2011). The outcome of their study reflected a growing sense of apathy on college and university campuses. In the context of this study, such apathy is defined as the "absence of interest or concern toward campus crime with the exception of incidents that are viewed as severe" (p. 9).

These characteristics may account for the relatively low rates of violence at Michigan community colleges and may suggest that violence is more prone to occur off-campus than at residential universities. Community colleges are commuter-based and have a wide variety of student demographics. There are predominantly no residence halls and, in many cases, no formal law enforcement entity present on a 24-hour basis (Jaschik, 2013). In contrast to this, however, Dahl et al. (2016) indicated that community colleges may actually have a more difficult time identifying potential threats, as most community colleges "only see students for a short period of time during a week, with no additional contact in nonacademic settings, so in turn making it tougher when it comes to the detection of students who might need help" (p. 707). The open door admission policies of most community colleges may also make it more difficult to identify potential threats. Dahl et al. further stated that "because they are mainly commuter campuses, there may also be relatively few opportunities for students and faculty to build relationships that could detect troubling changes in behavior" (p. 708).

Although the literature suggests that the threat of campus violence may be nominal, it is nonetheless a potential reality in present-day society and on higher education campuses. This is supported by O'Neill, Fox, Depue, and Englander (2008), who further stated that "although the risk for mass shootings and other incidents of extreme violence on college and university campuses is remote, it remains very real and the consequences are devastating to victims, families, and to the entire campus community" (p. 2). In order to mitigate potential acts of violence on higher education campuses, policies that promote viable threat assessment protocols should be implemented. The literature pertaining to threat assessment protocols for higher education is expansive and will be explored next.

Campus Violence Threat Assessments

Newman and Fox (2009) studied shooting incidents that occurred at Case Western

Reserve in 2003, Virginia Tech in 2007, Louisiana Tech in 2008, and Northern Illinois

University in 2008. The resounding theme from this study indicated that institutions of higher

education have a considerable challenge to mitigate potential acts of violence. Those challenges

include the following:

> There is less to work with in the way of advanced information, more concern about
> privacy, and more problematic architectural surroundings. It is harder to get the word out
> that a dangerous situation is in progress. It would seem that college officials have to
> focus more attention on the identification and treatment of mental illness and, thereafter,
> the appropriate level of communication between health authorities and university officials
> for intervention to be feasible. (p. 1305)

Again, these last statements support the necessity of threat assessment protocols to

address these concerns, albeit keeping in mind the complexities of any potential act of violence

and, in many cases, the unpredictable aspects of human nature, where perpetrators "have many

different motives and are less likely to warn of their intentions" (Newman & Fox, 2009, p. 1305).

There is a wealth of research supporting the implementation of threat assessment

protocols at institutions of higher education. Some states, including Virginia and Illinois, have

enacted laws requiring all colleges and universities to establish threat assessment teams as well

(Deisinger et al., 2008). In support, Pollard, Nolan, and Deisinger (2012) stated:

> The approach is well-tested, implemented in a variety of settings over the past 30 years,
> and has been demonstrated to be effective. Threat assessment is recognized by the
> American National Standards Institute (ANSI) report "A Risk Analysis Standard for
> Natural and Man-Made Hazards to Higher Education Institutions" as the standard for the
> prevention of targeted on-campus violence (ASME-ITI, 2010). The standard was
> developed as part of the ongoing efforts by the American Society of Mechanical
> Engineers, of which ANSI is a part, at the behest of the White House after 9/11. The
> mission is to develop risk management processes across the country designed to produce
> methodologically sound as well as easily implemented risk reduction options. ANSI
> standards are often cited in legal cases where no other licensure or codified standard
> exists—such as in threat assessment. (p. 264)

The resounding theme from many of the campus shootings and other acts of violence that have occurred since the Virginia Tech incident has been that perpetrators provided warning signs of their impending actions. In agreement, Greenlee (2016) indicated that the student shooter had numerous interactions with a variety of departments and people, yet there was no cross-discussion amongst these entities. They never communicated with each other about the red flags. As Greenlee further stated, "If they had gotten together and talked about what was happening with that individual, there was a possibility that they may have been able to intercede before something happened" (p. 18). Hollister and Scalora (2015) also supported this by stating, "In general, criminological reviews, threatening statements, physical aggression, and harassing behavior have corresponded with increased likelihood of subsequent violence" (p. 46). What appeared to be lacking from these types of behaviors was a process in place to identify, assess, and prevent or manage potential acts of violence. These statements are supported by Keller et al. (2011), who also indicated that "what appears to be lacking is a process for both early detection of individuals who engage in behavior that is either potentially alarming or threatening and effective intervention before this behavior becomes a high profile, full-blown crisis" (p. 77).

This brings us to the concept of threat assessment as a means of preventing or managing potential acts of violence. Systematic threat assessment is an optimal strategy for determining the creditability and seriousness of a threat and the likelihood that it will be carried out (Jimerson, Brock, & Cowan, 2005). Like the studies by Asmussen and Creswell (1995) and Kelsey (2007), the Mayhew et al. (2011) study also concluded that threat assessment teams were a necessity to coordinate information of potential threat, assess the validity and severity of the threat, and implement a prevention or management plan. This statement is further supported by

a Pavela (2008) interview with Dr. Gene Deisinger of Iowa State University, an expert in the

implementation of threat assessment protocols. In the interview, Dr. Deisinger explained that

> threat assessments are a safety management tool that is based on information and
> observations about a specific situation. Threat assessment focuses on a subject's
> behavior and information about the situation to determine the likelihood of escalation in
> behavior. A threat assessment is a dynamic process, recognizing that threat levels are
> affected by a number of variables, many of which change over time and as interventions
> or stressors are modified. The purpose of a threat assessment is to anticipate reasonably
> foreseeable actions of a specified person, or to anticipate likely changes in a specific
> situation. The assessment allows for early identification of situations that are likely to
> pose a risk, provides a baseline against which to measure changes in the situation, and
> facilitates development and implementation of interventions to increase likelihood of a
> safe resolution. (p. 2)

With threat assessment fully defined, the method of administering the process itself is

through the formulation of a threat assessment team. A campus threat assessment team involves

representatives from the respective college or university assembled and available as needed to

review identified potential acts of violence. This team should consist of a cross-section of

personnel including administrators, staff, and faculty. Specifically, the team should include

representatives from public safety or campus law enforcement, the dean of students, the student

conduct officer, faculty, counselors, legal counsel, and at least one executive-level administrator

(Cornell, 2010).

Such teams are often called Student Cares Committees or Behavior Intervention Teams.

According to Deisinger et al. (2008), the assessment team "is perhaps the most critical tool that a

college or university can use to prevent targeted violence on campus, as well as identify and

intervene with other problems that affect the health and well-being of the campus community"

(p. 14). The team or committee can meet weekly, biweekly, monthly, or as needed. The team or

committee must be vested with the authority to review and discuss any students, staff, or faculty

who have raised concerns or may be at risk of harming either themselves or others, or who pose

a significant disruption to the learning environment. The team may receive and evaluate all reports of threatening or other alarming behaviors by any student, staff, or faculty.

There are essentially four basic steps entrusted to the threat assessment team: (1) identify threats, (2) evaluate the seriousness of the threat, (3) intervene to reduce the risk of violence, and (4) follow up to monitor and re-evaluate effectiveness of the safety plan (Cornell, 2010). In keeping with these basic steps, Randazzo and Plummer (2009) indicated that information sharing through open lines of communication is essential to properly identify a threat, evaluate the risk, intervene accordingly, and monitor the effectiveness in the prevention or management of potential threats of violence. Open communication is critical in the reduction or elimination of *information silos* that can exist in higher education organizations.

In agreement with the steps outlined by Cornell (2010), the authors of *Campus Violence Prevention and Response: Best Practices for Massachusetts High Education* (O'Neill et al., 2008) asserted that threat assessment teams must be given the authority and capacity to draw upon all available resources as needed to evaluate potential acts of violence. O'Neill et al. further stated that "the team should be empowered to take actions such as conducting additional investigation, gathering background information, identifying warning signs, establishing a threat potential risk, and properly administering preventative or management plans" (p. 45). For this to occur, strategic-minded leadership must see the need for policy initiatives that provide such empowerment. Therefore, effective policy implementation is crucial for assessment teams to be initiated and granted the necessary resources and authority to be effective.

Policy Initiatives

The primary research question is to ascertain if community colleges in Michigan already have threat assessment policies. As Gomez (2015) indicated, "If there are no formalized policies

and procedures in place, get to work in creating some. Having those will ensure that the threat

assessment process is consistent and impartial" (p. 6). In agreement, Crawford and Burns (2015)

stated:

> Schools at all levels of education have sought to better prepare for, prevent, and respond
> to school shootings and other forms of violence. Several high-profile mass murders and
> various other shootings and violent acts, most notably toward the latter part of the 1990's
> and early/middle 2000's, generated various legislative acts, school policies, and
> prevention efforts to address concerns regarding school violence. (p. 631)

As a starting point for most policy initiations, the initiative mandated to all institutions of

higher education is the Clery Act (*Jeanne Clery Disclosure*, 1990). *The Jeanne Clery Disclosure

of Campus Security Policy and Campus Crime Statistics Act,* codified at 20 USC 1092(f) as a

part of the Higher Education Act of 1965, is a federal law requiring colleges and universities to

disclose certain timely and annual information about campus crime and security policies. All

public and private institutions of postsecondary education participating in federal student aid

programs are subject to this law. Violators can be fined up to $27,500 or face other enforcement

action by the U.S. Department of Education, the agency charged with enforcement of the Act and

where complaints of alleged violations should be made. The Clery Act, originally enacted by the

Congress and signed into law by President George Bush in 1990 as the Crime Awareness and

Campus Security Act of 1990, was championed by Howard and Connie Clery after their

daughter Jeanne was murdered at Lehigh University in 1986. They also founded the non-profit

Security On Campus, Inc., in 1987. Amendments to the Act in 1998 renamed it in memory of

Jeanne Clery (*Summary of the Jeanne Clery Act*, 2016).

The Clery Act (1990) mandates that schools have to publish an annual report every year

by October 1st containing three years of campus crime statistics and certain security policy

statements, including sexual assault policies that assure victims' basic rights, the law

enforcement authority of campus police, and where students should report crimes. The report is to be made available automatically to all current students and employees, while prospective students and employees are to be notified of its existence and afforded an opportunity to request a copy. Schools can comply by using the Internet as long as the required recipients are notified and provided the exact Internet address for the report, and paper copies must be available upon request. A copy of the statistics must also be provided to the U.S. Department of Education.

The Clery Act (1990) also states that each school must disclose crime statistics not only for the campus, but also for unobstructed public areas immediately adjacent to or running through the campus and for certain non-campus facilities, including Greek housing and remote classrooms. The statistics must be obtained from campus police or security, local law enforcement, or other school officials, such as student judicial affairs directors, who have significant responsibility for student and campus activities. Professional mental health and religious counselors are exempt from reporting obligations but may refer patients to a confidential reporting system, and the school must indicate whether it has such a system.

Crimes are reported in the following seven major categories, with several subcategories: (1) Criminal Homicide, specified as (a) Murder and Non-negligent Manslaughter, and (b) Negligent Manslaughter; (2) Sex Offenses, specified as (a) Forcible Sex Offenses (including rape), and (b) Non-forcible Sex Offenses; (3) Robbery; (4) Aggravated Assault; (5) Burglary; (6) Motor Vehicle Theft; and (7) Arson.

Schools are also required to report the following three types of incidents if they result in either an arrest or disciplinary referral: (1) Liquor Law Violations, (2) Drug Law Violations, and (3) Illegal Weapons Possession. If both an arrest and referral are made, only the arrest is counted.

The statistics are also categorized geographically as on campus, residential student facilities on campus, non-campus buildings, or on public property such as streets and sidewalks. Schools can use a map to denote these areas. The report must also indicate if any of the reported incidents, or any other crime involving bodily injury, was a hate crime.

Finally, the Clery Act (1990) requires schools to provide timely warnings and a separate, more extensive public crime log. These requirements are most likely to affect the day-to-day lives of students. The timely warning requirement is somewhat subjective and narrower in scope. It is triggered only when the school considers a crime to pose an ongoing threat to students and employees. In contrast, the public crime log records all incidents reported to the campus police or security department. Timely warnings cover a broader source of reports (campus police or security, other campus officials, and off-campus law enforcement) than the crime log but are limited to those crime categories required in the annual report. The crime log includes only incidents reported to the campus police or security department but covers all crimes, not just those required in the annual report, which means crimes like theft are included in the log. State crime definitions may be used.

Schools that maintain a police or security department are required to disclose in the public crime log any crime that occurs on campus or within the patrol jurisdiction of the campus police or the campus security department and that is reported to the campus police or security department. The log is required to include the nature, date, time, and general location of each crime as well as its disposition, if known. Incidents are to be included within two business days, but certain limited information may be withheld to protect victim confidentiality, ensure the integrity of ongoing investigations, or keep a suspect from fleeing or eluding. Only the most limited information necessary may be withheld, and even then it must be released once the

adverse effect is no longer likely to occur. The log must be publicly available during normal

business hours. This means that, in addition to students and employees, the general public, such

as parents or members of the local press, may access it. Logs remain open for 60 days and

subsequently must be available within two business days of a request (*Summary of the Jeanne

Clery Act*, 2016).

Since 1990, the Clery Act has been the starting point for institutions of higher education

to implement policies regarding campus safety and threat prevention. However, have institutions,

specifically community colleges, made strides to adhere to this mandate? McIntire (2015)

indicated that large, residential institutions of higher education have greatly increased safety and

security preparedness since 2007, while community colleges and smaller institutions of higher

education have not followed suit, should something such as an act of violence occur. In contrast,

however, community colleges in the Commonwealth of Virginia, due to state law, have widely

embraced threat assessment policy initiatives. As Johnson (2016) indicated, several community

colleges in Virginia have implemented a threat policy platform to "help manage and coordinate

threat assessment team efforts, saving time and resources while improving collaboration and

information sharing" (p. 36).

After the Virginia Tech incident in 2007, a review panel was convened to analyze the

events that transpired as a starting point for a policy change initiative. The panel was

empowered by then-Governor Kaine with the authority to interview all stakeholders related to

the incident. The panel had access to all records pertaining to the shooter as well. Three themes

emerged from the interviews of more than 200 people: (1) Structural—the underlying systems of

public health and public safety provided by governmental agencies, (2) Management by the

university and government—what was done or not done by top decision makers, and (3) Actions

on the ground—what was done at the scenes by medical and victim-survivor services (Davies, 2008). Further administrative and legal actions occurring in the aftermath of the tragedy included Virginia Tech implementing its own threat assessment process in 2008. Janosik and Gregory (2009) agreed that the policy initiatives by Governor Kaine were important in order to facilitate change at the state and national levels, particularly "to seek training, change, and positive efforts to work together" (p. 225). Shortly after that action, the Commonwealth of Virginia passed a law requiring all of Virginia's public colleges and universities to form panels with the authority to investigate students' academic, medical, and criminal records, with panel findings being exempt from public disclosure laws (DiMaria, 2012).

Following the results of the Virginia Tech Panel Review, other institutions of higher education made it a priority to review and revise their respective campus policies for dealing with violence (Mastrodicasa, 2008). One of the central outcomes of institutional reviews was the necessity for sharing responsibility for gathering and disseminating information through the inclusion of a diverse group of stakeholders (Scalora et al., 2010). As we have learned, the mechanism for this information sharing is the formation of campus threat assessment policies and procedures. Continued support for this necessity is provided by Fox and Savage (2009), who stated that "the establishment of a multidisciplinary team to respond to threats and other dangerous behaviors can be extremely helpful in identifying potential problem students and guiding them toward the help they need" (p. 1471).

Despite the value of implementing threat assessment policy initiatives, the question arises as to whether the assessment process can eliminate all acts of violence. Two examples would indicate the answer is *no*. Maher (2014) indicated that, in 2009, two years after the first extreme act of violence at Virginia Tech, a graduate student at Virginia Tech beheaded a female student

who had rebuffed his romantic advances. In addition, in 2012, a threat assessment team was in place at the University of Colorado where James Holmes was enrolled. Holmes was recently convicted of several murders for the Aurora, Colorado, movie theater massacre in the summer of 2012. Holmes made threats to staff members but left the university shortly after, making follow-up and monitoring difficult, if not impossible. In addition to missed signals or perhaps the lack of vigilance, it is challenging to prove that having a threat assessment policy makes colleges and universities safer. It is difficult to quantify events that do not occur, and difficult to measure the absence of incidents.

In conjunction with this view, Pezza (1995) indicated that college and university communities must recognize that those taking action are proceeding more intuitively than some might like, and that expectations for success may need to be modest. Furthermore, Maher (2014) interviewed Dr. Gene Deisinger, who agreed with Maher's statements by indicating that "there are no standards for how to report a successful case, and privacy concerns make data sharing complicated." In agreeing that privacy concerns can encumber the threat assessment process, Eells and Rockland-Miller (2011) indicated that fear of lawsuit through the violation of the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA) is pervasive. This law protects the privacy of student records, mandating that colleges and universities cannot share information internally or externally. An exception exists, however, if it can be shown that the information is necessary to protect the health or safety of students or other persons and has a legitimate educational interest. In that circumstance, institutions are protected against violation of this law.

As the literature conveys, the primary outcome of a threat assessment policy initiative is to identify, assess, prevent, and manage a threat of violence on a college campus. In agreement, Randazzo and Plummer (2009) indicated that many questions need to be addressed in evaluating

the type of policy initiative. First, Randazzo and Plummer asked, how do college and university

stakeholders, planners of school safety, and crisis response programs respond to and interpret the

results of a campus threat assessment? The procedural questions that are asked in order to assess

the potential threat level are objective and rely on the information gathered in the investigative

phase. What is not known from a research standpoint is how the responsible parties may

disengage from the potential internal and external responses of the assessment and proposed

outcomes.

Second, Randazzo and Plummer (2009) asked, how do assessment teams respond to data

or information garnered from the assessment that does or does not fit their preconceptions about

campus threats of violence? Preconceptions should not be involved because the assessment team

will not have prior knowledge of the potential threat of violence. From the onset of involvement

in a campus threat assessment plan, team members should leave any personal interests or

agendas out of the process. According to Ciulla (2004),

> It is a fact of organizational life that participants get preoccupied with their own interests
> and aims. This has certain negative consequences, such as unproductive conflict and
> depletion of resources. To avoid these consequences, it is necessary to unify
> organizational members by refocusing their attention on collective goals. (p. 153)

Third, Randazo and Plummber (2009) asked, how do actual assessment findings affect

the thinking about campus safety and crisis response planning and management? The campus

threat assessment team, entrusted by the institutional administration to effectively and efficiently

assess a potential threat of campus violence, must remain objective in its assessment of a

potential threat. To evaluate this particular question, however, a researcher would need to

candidly interview each team member to gather such information. This would be a necessary

and logical step in policy evaluation.

The final intended outcome would be whether the management plan is effective. If an act of violence is prevented, then the answer is obvious. Having an effective plan means more than this, and as Deisinger et al. (2008) stated,

> The plan should be based upon the information gathered in the threat assessment inquiry, and tailored to address the problems of the person in question. Threat management is more art than science. It focuses both on addressing what is already working for the person of concern, and creatively searching for resources, both on and off campus, that is available to help move the person away from thoughts and plans of violence and get assistance to address underlying problems. (p. 105)

More importantly with this aspect, if the individual or individuals being assessed are treated with respect and dignity in the outcome, then the process is considered effective. Unfortunately, in certain scenarios of campus violence, it may be unavoidable that law enforcement and the use of force are utilized to prevent the act of violence. However, as this policy intends, many other interventions can be implemented to resolve the potential threat, interventions that do not require the use of force against an individual. These include, but are not limited to, direct engagement of the individual or individuals; mandated internal counseling; or external counseling, therapy, and psychological assessment (Deisinger et al., 2008). In agreement, Hope (2016) indicated that administrators can create threat assessment teams that include personnel from public safety, public health, and administration to "identify students who might need support for mental health issues and to provide support in a comprehensive and ongoing way" (p. 1). There is also merit in including stakeholders such as students, faculty, and staff in the implementation of new policy initiatives to address campus violence. Schafer, Lee, Burress, and Giblin (2016) indicated that college policymakers may obtain input only from representative bodies such as student government or the faculty union. This method provides a cost-effective way to secure broader input, support, understanding, and recognition of what a particular campus threat assessment policy is trying to achieve.

The following chapter addresses the methodology used to collect data and to address the research questions of this study.

CHAPTER III

METHODOLOGY

To guide the exploration of policies and procedures to minimize community college campus violence, a mixed-methods research approach using a Likert-scale questionnaire with follow-up supporting questions was used. Many factors contributed to the decision to use a mixed-methods study approach. In general, this approach adds three important elements to the research: (1) it allows the individual voices of participants to be heard, (2) it allows for comprehensive analyses of phenomena, and (3) it allows for enhanced validity of findings (Chaumba, 2013). Furthermore, Creswell and Plano Clark (2007) elaborated that triangulation, concurrent, or parallel design entails separate quantitative and qualitative data collection and analysis within the same timeframe and merging of data during interpretation for various reasons that may include validating findings from one method, gaining a complete understanding of phenomenon under study, or confirming findings.

Bardach's (2016) Eightfold Path for Policy Analysis was the framework used for community colleges to apply to their own unique situations. This framework is noted for its practical manner of walking policymakers through the process of policy development and analysis. Bardach's work does not delve deeply into theory but, again, provides a very practical interpretation of what a policymaker considers when developing policy. In short, Bardach argued that policymakers must define the problem and gather evidence before constructing alternatives. The policy analysis framework speaks to potential difficulties in gathering information. It recommends using both documents and individuals but acknowledges that

extracting information from people is often limited by the structural bureaucracy of what they feel comfortable divulging. Then, with these alternatives in mind, policymakers must select criteria for comparison and project potential outcomes (whether positive or negative). They must address the trade-offs and share these before they make their recommendation.

Bardach's method determined the prevalence of threat teams and protocols at the community college level and, in turn, improved the understanding of this particular policy problem for community college administrators. The mixed-methods study also addressed the research questions associated with the issue of how the information used in a campus threat assessment is processed and applied to the prevention or management of a campus violence threat. Potential threats of violence include not only weapon-involved threats, such as the use of guns or knives, but also robberies, rapes, domestic violence, and even simple assaults. There may be other identified threats that could have an impact on campus safety as well, such as citizens in the community who have communicated in some manner their intent to do harm on campus.

The research emphasis is further solidified by restating the dependent and independent variables associated with the research questions:

1. How have Michigan community colleges implemented campus threat assessment protocols according to Bardach's (2016) Eightfold Path for Policy Analysis?

2. How have Michigan community colleges evaluated the outcomes of campus threat assessment policies?

3. What policy adjustments and improvements are suggested by applying Bardach's method to the findings?

The variable for Question 1 is that policy implementation is strengthened by the use of Bardach's analysis process. For Question 2, the variable is that the use of campus threat assessments at Michigan community colleges will reduce violent acts. For Question 3, the variable is that the use of Bardach's method in the policy review process strengthens the ability of community college administrators to effectively review and revise their campus threat assessment policies and procedures in a structured and meaningful manner.

Bardach's (2016) framework is a good fit for this type of research, as the focus is to examine how each community college applied this framework to its own situation. Bardach emphasized that assembling evidence is essential in policy problem solving and that "consulting people is crucial in collecting information, data, and ideas" (p. 83). For this study, a Likert-scale questionnaire with open-ended follow-up questions was used to assemble this evidence. Each survey question is structured to mirror each step of Bardach's process.

Setting

The setting for this study was 27 community colleges in the state of Michigan. There are actually 28 community colleges in Michigan, the 28th being Kalamazoo Valley Community College. However, the researcher for this study is also the student conduct administrator at this institution; therefore, the college was excluded to reduce potential bias. The 27 colleges provided ample opportunity to identify perspectives from the questionnaire responses, as well as to conduct cross-case theme analysis. The community colleges participating in this study included the following:

1. Alpena Community College, Alpena;

2. Bay de Noc Community College, Escanaba;

3. Delta College, Saginaw;

4. Glen Oaks Community College, Centreville;

5. Gogebic Community College, Ironwood;

6. Grand Rapids Community College, Grand Rapids;

7. Henry Ford Community College, Dearborn;

8. Jackson College, Jackson;

9. Kellogg Community College, Battle Creek;

10. Kirtland Community College, Roscommon;

11. Lake Michigan College, Benton Harbor;

12. Lansing Community College, Lansing;

13. Macomb Community College, Warren;

14. Mid-Michigan Community College, Harrison;

15. Monroe County Community College, Monroe;

16. Montcalm Community College, Sidney;

17. Mott Community College, Flint;

18. Muskegon Community College, Muskegon;

19. North Central Michigan College, Petoskey;

20. Northwestern Michigan College, Traverse City;

21. Oakland Community College, Auburn Hills;

22. St. Clair County Community College, Port Huron;

23. Schoolcraft College, Livonia;

24. Southwestern Michigan College, Cassopolis;

25. Washtenaw Community College, Ann Arbor;

26. Wayne County Community College District, Detroit;

27. West Shore Community College, Scottville.

(*2013-2014 Activities Classification Structure*, 2014)

Pertinent information regarding the enrollment and demographics at the 28 Michigan

community colleges in total can be found in Table 1.

Table 1

Enrollment and Demographic Information at 28 Michigan Community Colleges

Demographic Information	Number or Percentage
Enrollment	
Total	449,084
Credit/Program	226,255
Non-credit/Non-program	222,829
Full-time	33.91%
Part-time	66.09%
Student Demographics	
Age	
Average age	26.4 years
Under 18 years	7.09%
18-24 years	55.36%
25-34 years	20.07%
35-49 years	12.65%
Over 50 years	4.49%
Gender	
Women	56.78%
Men	43.22%
Ethnicity	
Minorities	25.18%
White/Non-Hispanic	64.45%
Black	17.48%
Hispanic	3.54%
Asian American	2.09%
Native America/Alaskan	0.72%
Native Hawaiian/Pacific Islander	0.13%

Table 1—Continued

Demographic Information	Number or Percentage
Other Student Demographics	
First generation to attend college	36%
Single parent	17%
Non-U.S. citizen	7%
Veteran	4%
Student with disabilities	12%
Full-time student employed full-time	22%
Full-time student employed part-time	40%
Part-time student employed full time	41%
Part-time students employed part time	32%
Receiving Financial Aid	
Pell Grant	33%
Any aid	58%
Federal grant	38%
Federal loan	19%
Institutional aid	13%
Tuition and Fees	
Average in-district cost per credit hour	$94.41
Average out-of-district cost per credit hour	$156.00
Degrees and Certificates Awarded	
Associate degrees	26,741
Certificates	12.025
Revenue Sources	
State funds	19.9%
Local property taxes	34.0%
Tuition and fees	44.6%
Other	2.5%
On-Campus Housing	
Available at 7 of the 28 community colleges	
Colleges Offering Sports (Competitive Athletics)	
19 colleges are members of the National Junior College Athletic Association	

2013-2014 Activities Classification Structure, 2014

Subjects

The subjects or population that completed the questionnaires included all student conduct administrators and their direct supervisors at the 27 Michigan community colleges. In most cases, the direct supervisor was a cabinet or executive-level person. The respondents consisted of approximately 60 personnel, which included 2 representatives from each of the 27 institutions included in the sample. One institution, Oakland Community College, has multiple campuses with different administrators, which explains why there were 60 respondents.

Access

The research was conducted by acquiring contact information through the Association of Student Conduct Administrators and also contacting the 27 community colleges directly in order to seek permission and confirm who would respond to the questionnaire.

Initial contact with each institution's student conduct administrator occurred through a phone call or email on or about November 1, 2015, indicating who the researcher is, what the research involved, how the research would be conducted (through the questionnaire and open-ended follow-up questions), when the research would take place, why the research was being conducted, and how the information garnered from the questionnaires would be used.

Instrument

A Likert-scale questionnaire with open-ended follow-up questions was used to gather research data. The questionnaire consisted of 10 items. The open-ended follow-up questions were asked to add value to the responses on the Likert scale. Question 1 asks whether the survey participant has a threat assessment policy currently in place at his or her respective institution. Questions 2 through 9 address how each step of Bardach's model applies to each institution's

policy implementation process. Question 10 is simply a wrap-up that allows the participant to add additional comments.

Yin (2014) indicated that the use of questionnaires in mixed-methods research is "targeted—focusing directly on the study topic; insightful—providing explanations as well as personal views, such as perceptions, attitudes, and meanings" (p. 106). The consent document and questionnaire were mailed to 60 student conduct administrators at the 27 Michigan community colleges used for the study via the U.S. Postal Service on November 15, 2015, with a deadline for responding of December 15, 2015, although several were received up until January 12, 2016. Twenty-one questionnaires were returned, which provided responses to both the Likert-scale items and the open-ended questions on the survey that resulted in the data analyzed for this study.

Data Analysis

Data analysis was conducted using the computer software program SPSS 23. The researcher used an explanatory mixed-methods approach (Creswell, 2008) with quantitative and qualitative data collected from the survey. The survey consisted of a series of closed and open-ended responses. Closed-ended items were developed from Bardach's model and used a 5-point Likert scale. Open-ended questions used to further explain Likert responses followed each item. According to Schuman (2008), the value of open-ended questions is mostly interpretive, in that they help in understanding the meaning of closed-question responses. Data from each component were analyzed separately and then integrated through the process of triangulation (Creswell & Plano Clark, 2011).

The quantitative responses were entered into an Excel spreadsheet, then uploaded into SPSS 23 for analysis. Instrument reliability was determined to be acceptable by using Cronbach

alpha procedures. Descriptive statistics were generated for each item with frequency by response option and measures of central tendency (mean and standard deviation).

Content analysis of the comments was conducted using open coding (Strauss & Corbin, 1990) within a matrix of major categories and subcategories (Miles, Huberman, & Saldaña, 2014). Open coding entails the initial breakdown of raw text into conceptual categories. These categories are discrete and detail a particular phenomenon, which, in this study, are the responses to each survey question. Themes emerge by systematically linking categories to quantitative findings. The intent of analysis is to find a common core of consensual meanings across categories yet retain the personal experience. For an analysis to be credible, it must be plausible and cohesive and correspondence with the data must be demonstrable (Denzin, 1989; Riessman, 1993).

Validity

The primary test of validity focuses on construct validity (Yin, 2014). Two steps must be met to achieve this level of validity. One, this research must define campus violence in terms of specific concepts and relate them to the original objectives of this research—that the implementation of campus threat assessment policy is a means to prevent or manage acts of violence. Second, the research must identify operational measures that match the concepts. This is done through the use of Bardach's Eightfold Path for Policy Analysis to measure how community colleges have implemented and used campus threat assessment policies and procedures.

Risks

There are some identifiable risks to the subjects associated with participation in this research. Even though the research occurs in an educational setting where participants are specifically involved in the policy decision-making process, there may be sensitivity or hesitation to respond openly to the questions. This may be due to acts of violence that have occurred on some of the campuses that continue to impact the learning environment. The researcher's intent was to explain to each respondent during the informed consent process the purpose and extent of the study and its intended goal to find policy themes that may improve community college understanding of campus violence and threat assessment policies and procedures.

This research will provide community college administrators a better understanding of the policy-decision making process associated with effectively implementing campus threat assessment protocols at their campuses. Specifically, using Bardach's Eightfold Path for Policy Analysis allowed each participant in the mixed-methods study the opportunity to apply this framework to his or her own unique situation and perhaps use this process for any future policy-decision endeavors. The research outcomes were also provided to each participant at the conclusion of the study.

The data or information acquired for this study may be deemed sensitive. Specific incidents that may have occurred on participant campuses were not part of the questionnaire. Identities of participants were protected in the study by not mentioning the names of any individual respondent and by referring to the community colleges as Community College A, Community College B, and so forth. All responses and consent documents are stored separately,

for at least 3 years after the close of the study, in a locked file cabinet at the School of Public

Affairs and Administration, Western Michigan University.

This chapter focused on the methodology that was used to conduct the research for the

current study, including the type of data collection instrument used and that both quantitative and

qualitative data addressed the research questions. Furthermore, this chapter also discussed how

Bardach's Eightfold Path for Policy Analysis is integrated into the design. The following

chapter will address the research outcomes of both the quantitative and qualitative aspects of the

study.

CHAPTER IV

RESEARCH OUTCOMES

The outcomes of this study resulted from 21 participants' responses to a survey consisting of Likert-scale items and open-ended questions. The survey was mailed to 60 student conduct administrators at 27 Michigan community colleges on November 15, 2015. Although the deadline for return was December 15, 2015, several questionnaires were received up until January 12, 2016.

The following outcomes were determined using SPSS 23 to analyze the quantitative aspects of the data. The quantitative responses were entered into an Excel spreadsheet, then uploaded into SPSS 23 for analysis. Instrument reliability was determined to be acceptable by the Cronbach alpha procedures ($\alpha = .95$), thus analysis proceeded. Descriptive statistics were generated for each item with frequency by response option and measures of central tendency (*M*, *SD*).

Content analysis of the comments was conducted using open coding (Strauss & Corbin, 1990) within a matrix of major and subcategories (Miles et al., 2014). Content analysis can be referred to as "a research method for subjective interpretation of the content of text data through the systematic classification process of coding and identifying themes or patterns" (Hsieh & Shannon, 2005, p. 1278). It is "a method for systematically describing the meaning of qualitative material" (Schreier, 2012, p. 1). Open coding entails the initial breakdown of raw text into conceptual categories. These categories are discrete and detail a particular phenomenon, which, in this study, are the responses to each survey question. Themes emerge by

systematically linking categories to quantitative findings through the process of triangulation.

The intent of analysis is to find a common core of consensual meanings across categories yet

retain the personal experience. For an analysis to be credible, it must be plausible and cohesive

and correspondence with the data must be demonstrable (Denzin, 1989; Riessman, 1993).

For the first Likert scale question—*To what extent do you agree or disagree that your*

institution has a formal campus threat assessment policy?—the quantitative analysis shows the

mean is 3.43 (*SD* = 1.6), which, when rounded, is categorized as *neutral.* Frequency distribution

shows that two thirds of the sample (13 of 21, or 62%) responded *agree* or *strongly agree*. One

third (7 of 21, or 33%) responded *disagree* or *strongly disagree* (see Table 2). The results of this

question indicate that the majority of respondents have some form of threat assessment policy or

protocol in effect.

Table 2

Data Analysis Results for Survey Question 1: To What Extent Do You Agree or Disagree That
Your Institution Has a Formal Campus Threat Assessment Policy?

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Strongly disagree	4	19.0	19.0	19.0
	Disagree	3	14.3	14.3	33.3
	Neutral	1	4.8	4.8	38.1
	Agree	6	28.6	28.6	66.7
	Strongly agree	7	33.3	33.3	100.0
	Total	21	100.0	100.0	

Qualitative analysis from the follow-up to Question 1—*What was the primary reason for its implementation?*—indicates that a third of respondents (*n* = 7, with no response from 2 participants) did not have a formal policy, as shown in these responses:

> We do not have a formal policy, but we do have a behavioral intervention team that utilizes a threat assessment tool.

> No policy. We are a very small CC campus, but strongly supported and patrolled by local law enforcement. At this time we do not find it necessary to have a formal policy other than our emergency response policy that covers bomb threats, fire, tornado, etc.

> We do not have a formal policy, but I do an informal threat assessment tool that I use when warranted.

For those participants who suggested a policy is in place, the reason given most often involved campus safety, especially with the recent threats and shootings on U.S. campuses.

Representative comments include the following:

> We understand that threats are a fact of life so there is a multi-pronged approach in dealing with them and hopefully preventing them. We have a behavioral intervention team, employee training and awareness to threat response, and law enforcement on campus.

> Concerns over shootings at Columbine and other such threats, especially after VA Tech.

> Prevention and management of potential acts of violence on our campus.

A subsidiary theme is suggested by the last statement above: Strategy of Preparedness and Response to Campus Emergencies:

> The primary reason for implementation of a threat assessment policy is to provide clear expectations that threats will not be tolerated and to clearly articulate what the consequences of issuing a threat will be.

> To ensure that the prevention of violent acts against the college community would be addressed as part of the college's overall emergency preparedness strategy.

> Previously there was an institutional failure to document and appropriately deal with concerning behavior.

We have been working on improvements to our campus safety and security procedures. In 2014, we began a more active collaboration with area law enforcement agencies. We still have much work to do but we are on the right track.

Table 3 indicates the major themes derived from all respondents.

Table 3

Recurring Themes from Open-Ended Question 1: What Was the Primary Reason for Its Implementation?

Recurring Theme	A	B	C	D	E	F	G	H	I	J	K	L	M	N	O	P	Q	R	S	T	U
No policy	X				X			X	X						X				X		X
Campus Safety			X				X						X			X				X	
Prevention				X		X								X			X	X			
Recent Violence		X								X	X	X	X								

The quantitative analysis of the second Likert scale question—*To what extent do you agree or disagree that when your institution defined the problem of campus violence, this definition included threats of violence?*—indicates the mean is 3.43 (*SD* = 1.4), which, when rounded up, is placed in the *agree* group and when rounded down is considered *neutral*. This indicates very weak agreement (i.e., 1 person makes a difference, which is considered very unreliable, especially in a small sample). Frequency distribution shows that two thirds of the sample (13 of 21, or 62%) agree or strongly agree. A little over a fourth (6 of 21, or 29%) disagree or strongly disagree (see Table 4). The results of this question indicate that the respondents have a strong understanding of the problem of campus violence through clear definitions of the campus and threats of violence.

Table 4

Data Analysis Results for Survey Question 2: To What Extent Do You Agree or Disagree That When Your Institution Defined the Problem of Campus Violence, This Definition Included Threats of Violence?

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Strongly disagree	3	14.3	14.3	14.3
	Disagree	3	14.3	14.3	28.6
	Neutral	2	9.5	9.5	38.1
	Agree	8	38.1	38.1	76.2
	Strongly agree	5	23.8	23.8	100.0
	Total	21	100.0	100.0	

Qualitative analysis from the follow-up to Question 2—*What is your college's definition of campus violence*?—indicates that 9 participants did not respond and 4 disclosed that a definition was not part of policy:

Not clearly defined in the campus policy.

Though not directly stated, campus violence would be defined as any act that includes verbal or physical assault, a threat of assault, or any threatening or disruptive behavior on campus.

Unknown, but I'm sure we informally have defined. It would seem to be any action that results in harm to others physically (campus shootings).

Definitions offered varied, even those informally or indirectly stated, as two of the above. Some mentioned threats, harm, and violence against anyone on campus:

It included threats of violence, but specifically we define it as intentionally or recklessly causing physical harm or endangering the health or safety of any person.

A basic definition would include any act which results, or threatens to result in harm to a person or damage to property.

> Physical force, threatening physical force, intimidation used against any person engaged in an activity properly undertaken as part of an institutional relationship of the college except as permitted under normal law enforcement procedures.

> Any incidents that put anyone on campus at risk.

> Violent acts include physical assault, threat of assault (either written, verbal, or otherwise), and/or threatening behavior (physical or verbal) occurring in the campus or workplace setting.

> We use the World Health Organization's (WHO) definition that states "the intentional use of physical force or power, threatened or actual, against oneself, another person, or against a group or community, that either results in or has a high likelihood of resulting in injury, death, psychological harm, mal-development, or deprivation."

Two others extended the definition by using language from their student code of conduct:

> Per our student code of conduct language—violence of any kind will not be tolerated on college premises or at college sponsored events. A series of the various code violations are located in the code of conduct.

> From our student handbook it says "no student will engage in physical abuse, verbal abuse, threats, intimidation, harassment, coercion and/or conduct that threatens or endangers the health and safety of any person."

Another extended the definition to anger, illegal activities, and patterns of inappropriate behavior:

> Any act of violence or threat of violence. Also look at behaviors that interfere w/ classroom or campus activities, patterns of inappropriate behavior, anger management concerns, direct and indirect threats, and illegal activities.

Table 5 indicates the major themes derived from all respondents.

The quantitative analysis of the third Likert scale question—*To what extent do you agree or disagree, that in the policy-making process your institution assembled evidence and/or collected data of the problem of campus violence*?—shows the mean is 2.95 ($SD = 1.2$), which, when rounded, places it in the *neutral* category. Frequency distribution shows that the responses are almost evenly distributed across *neutral* (8 of 21, or 38%), *agree* or *strongly agree* (7 of 21, or 33%), and *disagree* or *strongly disagree* (6 of 21, or 29%) (see Table 6). The responses to this

question were less clear as only one third indicated they collected data regarding the problem of
campus violence. Based on the strong response to the neutral and disagreement categories, it
appears this has not been a factor in the policy development process.

Table 5

Recurring Themes from Open-Ended Question 2: What Is Your College's Definition of Campus Violence?

Recurring Theme	A	B	C	D	E	F	G	H	I	J	K	L	M	N	O	P	Q	R	S	T	U
No Definition	X				X			X	X				X		X				X		X
Violence of Any Kind		X	X	X							X	X		X		X	X	X			
Threats						X	X			X										X	

Table 6

Data Analysis Results for Survey Question 3: To What Extent Do You Agree or Disagree, That in the Policy-Making Process Your Institution Assembled Evidence and/or Collected Data of the Problem of Campus Violence?

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Strongly disagree	4	19.0	19.0	19.0
	Disagree	2	9.5	9.5	28.6
	Neutral	8	38.1	38.1	66.7
	Agree	5	23.8	23.8	90.5
	Strongly agree	2	9.5	9.5	100.0
	Total	21	100.0	100.0	

Qualitative analysis for the follow-up to Question 3—*What was the evidence and/or data collected*?—indicates that the number and type of responses suggest that data to inform policy is limited at the sample schools: 8 did not respond and 1 said "No policy has been written, therefore no data or evidence collected." Many mentioned internal and external evidence used. Clery Act data were especially noted, either in use or under consideration to use:

> We have staff members who have attended the Clery Compliance & Title IX seminars. They are reviewing and incorporating data into our policy development.

> This is a relatively new process using Maxient software to track a variety of behavioral issues, including violence. There is not sufficient data to analyze at this time.

> Clery stats, media outlets. No campus has been survey conducted.

> We used Clery data and data provided by the organization called NHERM or the National Center for Higher Education Risk Management.

> Only getting started. The Umpqua tragedy will be looked closely and will look at Clery data eventually.

> Annual crime data.

> Secondary data collected, such as statistics and trends from staff training, webinars, and articles.

> Data was mainly driven by media coverage of incidents around the U.S. The statistics that the Dept. of Justice came out with involving sexual violence on campus. Finally, local data of crimes in the area that could spill over on the campus—domestic violence, etc.

> We used local, state, and federal crime reporting data.

Table 7 indicates the major themes derived from all respondents.

Table 7

Recurring Themes from Open-Ended Question 3: What Was the Evidence and/or Data Collected?

Recurring Theme	A	B	C	D	E	F	G	H	I	J	K	L	M	N	O	P	Q	R	S	T	U
No Evidence	X				X		X	X	X						X	X	X		X		X
Clery Data						X							X					X		X	
Crime Data		X		X		X							X								
Recent Violence			X							X	X										

For the fourth Likert scale question—*To what extent do you agree or disagree, that when constructing policy alternatives your institution weighed the risks and benefits of each potential alternative?*—the quantitative analysis shows the mean is 2.90 (*SD* = 1.2), which, when rounded, is categorized as *neutral*.

Frequency distribution shows an almost equal number responded *disagree* or *strongly disagree* (8 of 21, or 38%) as did those who responded *agree* or *strongly agree* (7 of 21, or 33%). One fourth were *neutral* (6 of 21, or 29%) (see Table 8). Although fairly evenly distributed, the results confirm that most respondents did not use this aspect of Bardach's model in their policy development process.

Table 8

Data Analysis Results for Survey Question 4: To What Extent Do You Agree or Disagree, That When Constructing Policy Alternatives Your Institution Weighed the Risks and Benefits of Each Potential Alternative?

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Strongly disagree	3	14.3	14.3	14.3
	Disagree	5	23.8	23.8	38.1
	Neutral	6	28.6	28.6	66.7
	Agree	5	23.8	23.8	90.5
	Strongly agree	2	9.5	9.5	100.0
	Total	21	100.0	100.0	

The qualitative analysis for the follow-up to Question 4—*What were some of the risks and benefits of each potential alternative?*—indicates 9 did not respond and 3 did not engage in a consideration of risks/benefits and/or were not aware of policy alternatives. Of those who did comment, only one mentioned a model:

Went with one alternative—Virginia Tech model.

Local responses considered to mediate campus violence were:

Defining threats and other key concepts that would hold up in a court of law. Combing our behavioral intervention team with our student threat assessment team and our student cares committee.

As far as campus violence is concerned there were not many alternatives because the constant goal was the safety and security of the college. One alternative addressed years ago was to hire armed police or unarmed security. The benefit of armed police outweighed that of security.

We have spent considerable time working on how and when to assemble our emergency response team. This included the consideration of many alternatives. The team also spent a morning on scenario training/discussion with a law enforcement trainer.

Concealed carry v. open carry for example. Concealed carry could lead to individuals who are not properly trained endangering others. It could also create additional threats in case of an active shooter on campus. Only our trained security are allowed to carry on campus.

Table 9 indicates the major themes derived from all respondents.

Table 9

Recurring Themes from Open-Ended Question 4: What Were Some of the Risks and Benefits of Each Potential Alternative?

Recurring Theme	A	B	C	D	E	F	G	H	I	J	K	L	M	N	O	P	Q	R	S	T	U
No Evaluation	X	X	X		X			X	X						X	X	X	X	X	X	X
Campus Safety						X	X					X									
Liability				X						X			X								
Communication											X	X									

For the quantitative analysis of the fifth Likert scale question—*To what extent do you agree or disagree, that in the policy-making process your institution included a method to be used to determine the outcomes (measure of success) of the policy option chosen?*—the mean is 2.24 (*SD* = .995), which, when rounded, is in the *disagree* group. Frequency distribution shows that almost two thirds disagree/strongly disagree (13 of 21, or 62%) and only 1 agreed (5%) with the question. Almost one third were neutral (7 of 21, or 33%) (see Table 10). These responses confirm that it is difficult to quantify success with regard to having a threat assessment policy in place. The qualitative responses confirm this as well, with a clear theme that not having an act of violence occur indicates perhaps that the policy has worked, but it cannot necessarily be quantified.

Table 10

Data Analysis Results for Survey Question 5: To What Extent Do You Agree or Disagree, That in the Policy-Making Process Your Institution Included a Method to Be Used to Determine the Outcomes (Measure of Success) of the Policy Option Chosen?

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Strongly disagree	5	23.8	23.8	23.8
	Disagree	8	38.1	38.1	61.9
	Neutral	7	33.3	33.3	95.2
	Agree	0	0	0	0
	Strongly agree	1	4.8	4.8	100.0
	Total	21	100.0	100.0	

Qualitative analysis for the follow-up to Question 5—*What were those methods and did they show any success?*—indicates that 11 respondents had no response. One mentioned a process:

> We are still in the "measure of success" continuum. That is to say we annually review our process and usually make changes to that process. Examples: consistency of application, training for members, and Title IX implications.

Most reported no methods or no awareness of methods:

> No methods identified for measuring outcomes. We do review cases to record the outcome, i.e., was a viable threat made, what was level of threat, what was the intervention.

> Not aware of any outcome measures.

> We do not measure if the outcome was successful other than no further issues occur.

> No method integrated into the process. More common sense—act of violence diverted by use of assessment tool—then success.

> No method used to determine this.

Table 11 indicates the major themes derived from all respondents.

Table 11

Recurring Themes from Open-Ended Question 5: What Were Those Methods and Did They Show Any Success?

Recurring Theme	A	B	C	D	E	F	G	H	I	J	K	L	M	N	O	P	Q	R	S	T	U
No Method	X	X	X		X		X	X	X	X		X	X		X	X	X		X		X
Post-Case Review				X						X											
Common Sense						X								X				X		X	

The quantitative analysis of the sixth Likert scale question—*To what extent do you agree or disagree, that in the policy-making process your final policy decision to address campus violence had an impact or satisfied the needs of all stakeholders?*—resulted in a mean of 2.90 (*SD* = 1.4), which, when rounded, placed it in the *neutral* group. Frequency distribution shows an equal number responded *disagree/strongly disagree* (8 of 21, or 38%) as did *agree/strongly agree*, and one third (8 of 21, or 38%) responded *strongly disagree/disagree*. About a fourth were neutral (5 of 21, or 24%) (see Table 12). There was an equal mix of agreement and disagreement, which means, as the research indicates, that the process needs to be more inclusive. Many of qualitative responses confirmed this as well.

Table 12

Data Analysis Results for Survey Question 6: To What Extent Do You Agree or Disagree, That in the Policy-Making Process Your Final Policy Decision to Address Campus Violence Had an Impact or Satisfied the Needs of All Stakeholders?

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Strongly disagree	5	23.8	23.8	23.8
	Disagree	3	14.3	14.3	38.1
	Neutral	5	23.8	23.8	61.9
	Agree	5	23.8	23.8	85.7
	Strongly agree	3	14.3	14.3	100.0
	Total	21	100.0	100.0	

The qualitative analysis for the follow-up to Question 6—*How did the final decision satisfy the needs of stakeholders?*—indicates that 9 participants did not respond. Several dismissed the question, saying that not everyone can be satisfied, or indirect evidence suggested to the respondent that stakeholders were satisfied:

Stakeholders were satisfied.

I doubt that you ever satisfy the needs of all stakeholders. There are reasonable accommodations to meet the interests of faculty and law enforcement. The position of open carry and concealed carry advocates is not represented on the policy.

It's believed to have satisfied stakeholders because the program has name recognition. People make referrals and use the system.

The only contributing comments I would have would be that we saw an increase in reporting of threating behavior so there was apparently an impact but it's not really quantifiable.

It was interesting whom the respondents identified as stakeholders. The board and executive leadership were cited by some as stakeholders:

> Board approved. Reporting requirements and access to campus violence data is satisfactory to students, faculty, and staff.

> President and Cabinet approved. No Board approval necessary. Satisfied as much as it can be for now. Let's hope the tool never fails us.

Others included staff, faculty, and students in the stakeholder group:

> It was approved by our Student Cares Committee, Cabinet, and President.

> Supported in writing by the President, Cabinet, and Board of Trustees. We also did a public relations campaign that included web pages, flyers, email sent to all staff, faculty, students, with no negative feedback in return.

> We conducted a survey to all staff and faculty and all were satisfied. However, one theme emerged indicating more student involvement needed.

Others admitted that stakeholders were not satisfied, were unaware of, or were not part of the

process:

> Not all stakeholders satisfied, but I believe that many people on campus see and appreciate that we are taking campus safety seriously.

> Some key stakeholders were not part of the process.

> I think many stakeholders are unaware that there is a group of folks on campus that work on these issues.

Three cited strategies—survey, formal presentation, and formation of an intervention

team—were thought to have positively engaged stakeholders:

> We conducted a survey to all staff and faculty and all were satisfied. However, one theme emerged indicating more student involvement needed.

> Formal presentation open to the public with media coverage and question & answer time allowed.

> Most recent decision was to enact the behavioral intervention team in order to help students, assist instructors with behaviors in the classroom and to hopefully defuse a violent incident before it happened. It seems to have had a positive effect on all the stakeholders involved.

Table 13 indicates the major themes derived from all respondents.

Table 13

Recurring Themes from Open-Ended Question 6: How Did the Final Decision Satisfy the Needs of Stakeholders?

Recurring Theme	A	B	C	D	E	F	G	H	I	J	K	L	M	N	O	P	Q	R	S	T	U
No Impact	X				X		X	X							X				X		X
Satisfied w/Policy		X	X	X		X					X	X		X		X	X	X			
Dissatisfied w/Policy									X	X			X							X	

The quantitative analysis of the seventh Likert scale question—*To what extent do you agree or disagree, that in the policy-making process your institution confronted the trade-offs or deviations in the projected outcomes to address acts of campus violence?*—indicates the mean is 2.48 (*SD* = .981), which, when rounded, places it in the *neutral* category. Frequency distribution shows that almost half disagree/strongly disagree (10 of 21, or 48%) and 3 agreed (14%) with the question. One third was neutral (8 of 21, or 38%) (see Table 14). The responses affirm that the majority of respondents did not consider how to address deviations in the policy when the outcome was different than anticipated. For instance, if the assessment fails to stop an act of violence, how does an institution address it? This aspect should be thought out and planned for in the policy development stage.

Table 14

Data Analysis Results for Survey Question 7: To What Extent Do You Agree or Disagree, That in the Policy-Making Process Your Institution Confronted the Trade-Offs or Deviations in the Projected Outcomes to Address Acts of Campus Violence?

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Strongly disagree	4	19.0	19.0	19.0
	Disagree	6	28.6	28.6	47.6
	Neutral	8	38.1	38.1	85.7
	Agree	3	14.3	14.3	100.0
	Strongly agree	0	0	0	0
	Total	21	100.0	100.0	

Qualitative analysis for the follow-up to Question 7—*What were the trade-offs and/or deviations from the projected outcomes?*—indicates the majority did not respond or said the issue was not considered. The few who offered comments included:

Trade-offs for enacting a behavioral intervention team were that faculty may think we are taking over the classroom management, thus not willing to fill out a referral form, in a potential act of violence.

Some felt the database should be open to all. Some believed everyone should know about everyone who made a threat to anyone.

Main deviation identified was people (faculty mostly) being unwilling to report suspicious behavior of students. We addressed this by letting them know that each case would be kept as confidential as possible and that the main purpose of reporting was saving lives potentially.

Liability is the issue here. You can never be totally free from liability. No matter how many policies and legal backing you have.

Table 15 indicates the major themes derived from all respondents.

Table 15

Recurring Themes from Open-Ended Question 7: What Were the Trade-Offs and/or Deviations From the Projected Outcomes?

Recurring Theme	A	B	C	D	E	F	G	H	I	J	K	L	M	N	O	P	Q	R	S	T	U
Not Evaluated	X	X	X	X	X		X	X	X	X		X	X		X	X	X	X	X		X
Policy Buy-In						X					X			X							
Liability																				X	

The quantitative analysis of the eighth Likert scale question—*To what extent do you agree or disagree, that in the policy-making process your institution conducted internal checks to determine how the policy-decision makers were doing in the development of a policy to address campus violence?*—indicates the mean is 2.81 (SD = 1.1), which, when rounded is categorized as *neutral*. Frequency distribution shows an even three-way split across responses: *disagree/strongly disagree* (7 of 21, or 33%), *agree/strongly agree* (7 of 21, or 33% each), and *neutral* (7 of 21, or 33%) (see Table 16). Although these response groups are equal, if the *neutral* responses are combined with the *disagree/strongly disagree* responses, it is clear that there is a need for administrative accountability in the process to ensure objectives are being met based on a clear timeline.

Table 16

Data Analysis Results for Survey Question 8: To What Extent Do You Agree or Disagree, That in the Policy-Making Process Your Institution Conducted Internal Checks to Determine How the Policy-Decision Makers Were Doing in the Development of
a Policy to Address Campus Violence?

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Strongly disagree	4	19.0	19.0	19.0
	Disagree	3	14.3	14.3	33.3
	Neutral	7	33.3	33.3	66.7
	Agree	7	33.3	33.3	100.0
	Strongly agree	0	0	0	0
	Total	21	100.0	100.0	

The qualitative analysis for the follow-up to Question 8—*What type of checks are there and how often were they conducted?*—indicates the majority did not respond or said checks were not made. A few mentioned campus committees that included the board, a senior level administrator, or faculty, some of which meet regularly and others only occasionally. Responses included:

> We have a core team that internally discusses every threat and determines if checks and balances are being met. We discuss each issue and use it as a learning experience and as a development opportunity.

> The Associate Dean was assigned this and completed the task through many meetings with the Cabinet and Board of Trustees.

> Chair of committee was VP and she definitely kept the ball rolling.

> We have met consistently as a group. In addition, various departments have completed specific assignments.

> The oversight committee meets annually to review. The review consists of this question: what has changed and what is working/not working?

We have a three council model: faculty, administrative, and staff. Each council was provided the opportunity to provide input after presentations. After this it went to the Board of approval.

We have a behavioral intervention team (BIT) that meets twice a month to review situations. When we started the process of having a BIT we had a large group of folks from different divisions within the college participate in the development.

Table 17 indicates the major themes derived from all respondents.

Table 17

Recurring Themes from Open-Ended Question 8: What Type of Checks Are There and How Often Were They Conducted?

Recurring Theme	A	B	C	D	E	F	G	H	I	J	K	L	M	N	O	P	Q	R	S	T	U
No Accountability	X	X			X			X	X	X					X	X	X		X		X
Committee Used			X	X		X	X				X	X	X								
Monthly Meetings														X				X		X	

The quantitative analysis of the ninth Likert scale question—*To what extent do you agree or disagree, that in the policy-making process your institution told the story or presented the policy decision to all stakeholders?*—indicates the mean is 2.76 (*SD* = 1.3), which, when rounded, is placed in the *neutral* group. Frequency distribution shows that almost half disagree/strongly disagree (10 of 21, or 48%) and a little over a fourth agree/strongly agree (6 of 21, or 29%). Nearly a fourth was neutral (5 of 21, or 24%) (see Table 18). Based on the responses to this question, it is clear that the majority of respondents were not required, nor was it deemed necessary, to build support or consensus for the implementation of their respective threat assessment policies.

Table 18

Data Analysis Results for Survey Question 9: To What Extent Do You Agree or Disagree, That in the Policy-Making Process Your Institution Told the Story or Presented the Policy Decision to All Stakeholders?

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Strongly disagree	4	19.0	19.0	19.0
	Disagree	6	28.6	28.6	47.6
	Neutral	5	23.8	23.8	71.4
	Agree	3	14.3	14.3	85.7
	Strongly agree	3	14.3	14.3	100.0
	Total	21	100.0	100.0	

Qualitative analysis for the follow-up to Question 9—*How was this message delivered?*—revealed that 13 participants did not respond. The most often mentioned mechanism was that it was informally delivered to general stakeholders through orientation sessions, email reports, and other university portals:

> In reference to the behavioral intervention team as well as other topics, it is relayed in new employee orientations, student orientations, security reports sent by email and on website.

> A marketing plan was developed to ensure all stakeholders know of the program. We used meetings, the internet, and our web site to educate others. A pamphlet was developed. It was discussed at Board of Trustees meetings.

> Email to all staff, faculty, and students.

> Our campus is made aware of our code of conduct through face-to-face department level meetings, a campus-wide portal, and as part of training for all new employees. Students are made aware in the new student orientation, the portal and the college catalog.

> Just policy manuals updated. Student Conduct and Public Safety web pages have link to policy.

Formal presentation to executive leadership was mentioned by a few:

< />

We delivered to Board, Executive Council, and employees, but we never formally shared with students. It's just expected they review the policies. We recognize this as an opportunity for improvement.

The process of making policy includes a college senate that is representative of internal stakeholders, the College President, and the College Board of Trustees. The only avenue for external stakeholders is at the Board of Trustees meetings and this appears to be underutilized.

Formal presentation to President and Cabinet.

Presented very much so! There were formal presentations to the President, Cabinet, and Board. Also did a marketing campaign to educate using the web, email, flyers, and social media.

Table 19 indicates the major themes derived from all respondents.

Table 19

Recurring Themes from Open-Ended Question 9: How Was This Message Delivered?

Recurring Theme	A	B	C	D	E	F	G	H	I	J	K	L	M	N	O	P	Q	R	S	T	U
Story Not Told	X	X			X			X	X		X			X		X			X	X	X
Broadly Told						X			X	X		X	X		X		X				
Lack of Inclusivity				X			X														

For the qualitative analysis for the final open-ended question, Question 10—*Is there anything else you would like to add to the responses you have provided?*—several said they did not have a policy, so they found the survey difficult to complete:

Not sure our campus has completed a process you described in the memo. However, we deal with campus threats/violence issues on a regular basis and have a team approach to deal with the issues. I look forward to the results of your study to help improve our college.

It was difficult to answer as the assumption was a formal policy and data review process in establishing things.

Only one respondent felt his or her institution had a policy and could respond effectively to the survey:

> In our most recent policy revision process related to threat assessment, we made a conscious decision to expand beyond "active shooter" scenarios to focus on three types of risk: disruption, harm to self, harm to others. Also chose to focus on early detection.

One summed up his or her reaction to the study by stating:

> Your study will be the extra evidence we need to get things going formally.

Table 20 indicates the major themes derived from all respondents.

Table 20

Recurring Themes from Open-Ended Question 10: Is There Anything Else You Would Like to Add to the Responses You Have Provided?

Recurring Theme	A	B	C	D	E	F	G	H	I	J	K	L	M	N	O	P	Q	R	S	T	U
Nothing to Add		X	X			X			X	X	X	X	X	X	X			X	X	X	X
Difficult to Complete				X			X									X					
Study Useful	X			X			X								X						

Research Question Integration

Once the overall research results were documented, the next step was to integrate the research outcomes with the research questions. The first research question is: *How have Michigan community colleges implemented campus threat assessment protocols according to Bardach's (2016) Eightfold Path for Policy Analysis?* The data from Question 1 of the survey show that 60% of the respondents indicated they have a campus threat assessment policy. The responses indicated that prevention and management of potential acts of violence were central to policy implementation.

The second research question was: *How have Michigan community colleges evaluated the outcomes of campus threat assessment policies?* Question 5 of the survey focuses on this question. Only three respondents, or 10%, indicated they had evaluated the outcomes of campus threat assessments, whereas 60% indicated they did not have an evaluation process, and 30% remained neutral. The central perspective was if no acts of violence occur, then the policy has worked.

The third research question was: *What adjustments and improvements have been made by applying Bardach's (2016) Eightfold Path for Policy Analysis?* Question 8 in the survey indicates 33% made adjustments or improvements during and after the process. However, 33% did not do this, and 33% remained neutral. The central perspective for the affirmative respondents indicated there is a core team or committee that meets routinely to evaluate and revise the policy as needed. The affirmative responses reflected a collegial and open discussion of the issues and suggestions for change.

This chapter reported the outcomes of this study, specifically addressing the quantitative and qualitative responses to the questionnaire distributed in the fall of 2015 to 60 student conduct administrators at 27 Michigan community colleges. The fifth and final chapter will include the researcher's discussion of the outcomes, contributions to the literature, limitations of the research, and recommendations for future research.

CHAPTER V

DISCUSSION

This research endeavor has proven to be both rewarding and challenging: rewarding in that the research conducted with Michigan community colleges regarding campus threat assessment policies has filled a void that the literature has not addressed. It is also challenging in that the data collected were limited, with only 21 of 60 potential participants responding. The data collected are valuable and valid; however, greater response on the part of the potential participants would have provided even greater value and validity. The policy framework used for this research was the basis for the research instrument and proved to be challenging for the respondents. The framework assumes an organization has a formal process in place to make policy decisions. The research outcomes proved otherwise and, again, demonstrate a lack of engagement. Table 21 illustrates how Michigan community colleges have progressed toward implementing threat assessment policy using Bardach's model.

To restate the framework, Bardach's Eightfold Path for Policy Analysis (2016) includes the following components: (1) defining the problem, (2) assembling evidence, (3) constructing alternatives, (4) selecting criteria, (5) projecting outcomes, (6) confronting trade-offs, (7) deciding, and, finally, (8) telling the story. Each path was addressed in the questionnaire sent to 60 Michigan community college student conduct administrators. In addition, three research questions further developed the level of threat assessment policy implementation at Michigan community colleges. Those questions were:

Table 21

Michigan Community College Campus Threat Assessment Policy Implementation Progress Utilizing Bardach's (2016) Model

College	Problem	Evidence	Alternatives	Criteria	Outcomes	Trade-Offs	Decide	Story
A	Incomplete	Incomplete	Incomplete	Incomplete	Incomplete	Incomplete	Incomplete	Incomplete
B	Completed	Completed	Completed	Incomplete	Incomplete	Incomplete	Incomplete	Incomplete
C	Completed	Completed	Incomplete	Incomplete	Incomplete	Incomplete	Completed	Incomplete
D	Completed	Incomplete	Completed	Incomplete	Completed	Incomplete	Completed	Incomplete
E	Incomplete	Incomplete	Incomplete	Incomplete	Incomplete	Incomplete	Incomplete	Incomplete
F	Completed	Completed	Completed	Completed	Completed	Completed	Completed	Completed
G	Completed	Completed	Completed	Incomplete	Incomplete	Incomplete	Completed	Incomplete
H	Incomplete	Incomplete	Incomplete	Incomplete	Incomplete	Incomplete	Incomplete	Incomplete
I	Incomplete	Incomplete	Incomplete	Incomplete	Incomplete	Incomplete	Incomplete	Incomplete
J	Completed	Completed	Completed	Incomplete	Incomplete	Incomplete	Incomplete	Incomplete
K	Completed	Completed	Completed	Completed	Completed	Completed	Completed	Completed
L	Completed	Completed	Completed	Incomplete	Completed	Completed	Completed	Incomplete
M	Incomplete	Incomplete	Incomplete	Incomplete	Incomplete	Incomplete	Incomplete	Completed
N	Completed	Completed	Incomplete	Incomplete	Completed	Incomplete	Incomplete	Completed
O	Incomplete	Incomplete	Incomplete	Incomplete	Incomplete	Incomplete	Incomplete	Incomplete

Table 21—Continued

College	Problem	Evidence	Alternatives	Criteria	Outcomes	Trade-Offs	Decide	Story
P	Completed	Incomplete	Incomplete	Incomplete	Completed	Incomplete	Incomplete	Completed
Q	Completed	Incomplete	Incomplete	Incomplete	Incomplete	Incomplete	Incomplete	Incomplete
R	Completed	Completed	Incomplete	Incomplete	Completed	Incomplete	Completed	Completed
S	Incomplete	Incomplete	Incomplete	Incomplete	Incomplete	Incomplete	Incomplete	Incomplete
T	Completed	Incomplete	Incomplete	Incomplete	Incomplete	Incomplete	Completed	Incomplete
U	Incomplete	Incomplete	Completed	Incomplete	Completed	Incomplete	Incomplete	Incomplete
Completed	13	9	8	2	8	3	8	6
Incomplete	8	12	13	19	13	18	13	15

1. How have Michigan community colleges implemented campus threat assessment protocols according to Bardach's (2016) Eightfold Path for Policy Analysis?

2. How have Michigan community colleges evaluated the outcomes of campus threat assessment policies?

3. What adjustments and improvements are suggested by applying Bardach's (2016) Eightfold Path for Policy Analysis to the findings?

The research addressed Bardach's model by providing several supporting perspectives.

The first question on the survey was asked to determine if the participants currently had a threat assessment protocol. The majority or 60% affirmed they had some sort of assessment policy or protocol in place. Even the second question—how their respective colleges defined the problem of campus violence—was strong, again, with the majority responding with a clear definition. Beyond the first two questions, however, the responses were scattered with a *neutral* response being given in most instances. Noteworthy responses were provided to each question, however, and will be discussed next. The results support the contentions in the literature review that institutions of higher education, including community colleges in Michigan, do in fact have some level of threat assessment in place (Deisinger et al., 2008; Hope, 2016; Randazzo & Plummer, 2009; Schafer et al., 2016).

In defining the problem, it was clear the Michigan community colleges that responded have completed this task. As the survey shows, 60% defined the problem of campus violence, 27% did not, and 13% remained neutral. The central perspective indicated that physical force, threatening physical force, and intimidation used against any person engaged in an activity properly undertaken as part of an institutional relationship of the college, except as permitted under normal law enforcement procedures, are considered to be threats. The research outcomes

showed that most community colleges have defined campus violence with a wide range and have made these definitions available to all stakeholders through various methods, such as student and faculty handbooks. Even though the individual community college's word choice differed, the general definition of campus violence was consistent. The results support the contentions in the literature review that community colleges in Michigan have defined the problem of campus violence when initiating threat policy (Bennett, 2015; Fleenor, 2009; *Jeanne Clery Disclosure*, 1990; Sutton, 2016).

As to assembling the evidence, the central perspective was that local, state, and federal crime reporting, specifically Clery Act data, was crucial in this step. As the survey shows, the responses were essentially equal: 33% indicated they collected evidence or data regarding the problem of campus violence, whereas 29% indicated they did not, and 38% remained neutral. The central perspective for those with affirmative responses indicated the use of Clery and other federal statistics in the collection of evidence. Based on the survey responses, the use of Clery data was the primary method of evidence collected to support launching policy efforts to address potential acts of violence through threat assessment. As Johnson (2016) stated, several community colleges in Virginia have implemented a threat policy platform to "help manage and coordinate threat assessment team efforts, saving time and resources while improving collaboration and information sharing" (p. 36). The results support the contentions in the literature review that community colleges have attempted to assemble appropriate levels of evidence when developing threat assessment policy (*Jeanne Clery Disclosure*, 1990; Patton & Gregory, 2014; U.S. Secret Service & U.S. Department of Education, 2002).

As to constructing alternatives, the survey responses showed there were few alternatives available to the participants. As the survey shows, the responses indicated 40% were in

agreement—that they weighed the risks and benefits of potential policy alternatives, whereas

37% were in disagreement that this occurred, and 23% remained neutral. The central perspective

in this process was what is best for enhancing campus safety. Although the literature suggests

other alternatives, such as behavior profiling and computer programs that identify students at

risk, are options, stakeholders such as administrators, students, parents, community members,

and even the U.S. Department of Education have not supported such measures as they have the

potential to "infringe on students' civil liberties and to unfairly label or stigmatize certain

students as dangerous" (Reddy et al., 2001, p. 158). These alternatives are also "inductive in

practice as they rely on aggregate information about prior events to guide inferences about facts

in a specific case" (Reddy et al., 2001, p. 167). Therefore, the Virginia Tech Model of Campus

Threat Assessment (which addresses all potential acts of violence—shootings, physical assaults,

sexual violence, etc.) appeared to many as the only objective alternative available in the

development stage of the policy process. This model is used because it is so widely marketed

and available. The model is comprehensive and easy to follow and allows community colleges

to use it in a manner that fits their respective institutional culture. Further support from the

literature regarding limited alternatives for objective threat assessment is considered by earlier

research (Deisinger et al., 2008; Randozzo & Plummer, 2009).

As to selecting criteria or determining what methods will be used to determine the

outcomes of the policy alternative(s), a notable comment from one respondent indicated that they

are still in the "measure of success continuum, that is to say, we annually review our process and

usually make changes to that process. For example, a review is made in regard to consistency of

application, training for members, and Title IX implications." The overarching theme was that if

no act of violence occurs, the policy is successful. This aspect of Bardach's model was difficult

to assess for the research participants. As the survey shows, the majority of respondents, or 60%, indicated they did not have a method to measure the success of the policy, whereas 30% remained neutral, and only 3 participants, or 10%, agreed there was a method to measure success. What is difficult is knowing whether the absence of violence is because of implementation of the threat assessment policy. It is very difficult to measure the success of having a threat assessment in place. None of the contentions indicated in the literature supported this aspect of Bardach's model.

As to project outcomes of the alternative(s) or the impact the policy will have for all stakeholders, the central perspective was most stakeholders were satisfied, primarily board and executive leadership; however, in many cases, stakeholders such as student organizations were left out of the process, and therefore their satisfaction level is unknown. As the survey shows, 43% agreed their process satisfied the needs of stakeholders, whereas 34% disagreed this occurred, and 23% remained neutral. Based on the responses to the research instrument, it was apparent the institutions must be as inclusive as possible in the creation, implementation, and revision of threat assessment policies. Most schools had the involvement of only executive-level leadership in the process, whereas schools who indicated more stakeholders being involved improved transparency, which in turn heightened the level of satisfaction of the policy. It is clear that threat assessment teams could be more inclusive, which would increase satisfaction with the process and outcome. The outcomes of this aspect of Bardach's model are supported in the literature review as well, that diverse and inclusive stakeholder involvement is essential to policy success (Maher, 2014; Mastrodicasa, 2008; Scalora et al., 2010; Virginia Tech Review Panel, 2007).

As to confronting trade-offs of each policy alternative and addressing deviations in the outcomes, the primary perspective or, in this case, deviation identified was people (mostly faculty) being unwilling to report suspicious behavior of students. This was addressed, however, by letting personnel know that each case would be kept as confidential as possible and that the main purpose of reporting was to potentially save lives. As the survey shows, only 6, or 20%, agreed that confronting deviations might occur from the policy implemented, whereas 47% indicated they had not done this, and 33% remained neutral. One comment involved the fear of faculty losing the ability to have control over their classrooms.

Based on the research outcomes, most participants, in fact, felt that having a threat assessment policy in place was better than not having a policy in place. The secondary concerns require ongoing education for the constituents of community colleges to understand and build open communication or community in an effort to keep their campus safe from acts of violence. None of the contentions in the literature review supported this aspect of Bardach's model.

As to making the policy decision and what internal checks are needed among the personnel tasked with the policy decision, the central perspective is that a third of all respondents have some level of oversight committee structure to keep the policy process moving forward. As the survey shows, the distribution was a three-way split, with 33% in agreement that they had a process to evaluate outcomes of their policy, 33% in disagreement, and 33% remaining neutral. The central perspective for the affirmative respondents indicated there is a core team or committee that meets routinely to evaluate and revise the policy as needed. The affirmative responses reflected a collegial and open discussion of the issues and suggestions for change. It is important for institutions to have at least an annual review of all policies. However, this research endeavor did not seek to determine how often this process occurred. It would be beneficial for

further research to ascertain this information. The contentions in the literature support this aspect of Bardach's model of the importance of strong organizational structure to keep the process moving (Ciulla, 2004; Hope, 2016).

With telling the story, the central perspective indicated that community college campuses are made aware of the code of conduct through face-to-face department-level meetings, a campus-wide portal, and as part of training for all new employees. Students are made aware in the new student orientation, the portal, and the college catalog. Many also indicated that the process of making policy includes a college senate that is representative of internal stakeholders, the college president, and the college board of trustees. The only avenue for external stakeholders is at the board of trustee meetings, and this appears to be underutilized. Again, opening up all channels of communication when developing a threat assessment policy only adds to support it. As the survey shows, 33% indicated this had occurred; however, 40% indicated this had not occurred, and 27% remained neutral. It was clear from the research outcomes that community colleges are in fact including all in the process of communication with regard to campus threat assessment policy and protocol, but that student involvement could be improved. These perspectives are further supported by the contentions of the literature review (Hope, 2016; Schafer et al., 2016).

The research addressed the three specific research questions in the following manner. Regarding how Michigan community colleges have implemented campus threat assessment protocols by using Bardach's (2016) Eightfold Path for Policy Analysis, the research showed most Michigan community colleges have some sort of threat assessment policy in place, with 60% of the respondents indicating their institution has a campus threat assessment policy. The responses indicated prevention and management of potential acts of violence were central to

policy implementation. To find further validation of these data, the researcher conducted an Internet search of Michigan community colleges with threat assessment information or policy available on the Internet. The results of this search showed that 10 Michigan community colleges had made this information readily available. The majority, or six, of those community colleges specifically cited the use of a Behavior Intervention Team (BIT) as the means of conducting threat assessment. This information was available from a Web link that provided a direct route to the page. In addition, three of the six schools using BIT had their information directly linked to their annual campus security report. Of the three remaining community colleges, two of the links went directly to the respective college's student handbook, and the third college's link led directly to a policy page detailing its threat assessment policy and procedure. All of the community colleges identified in the Internet search were consistent in their policy statements regarding campus threat assessment. The statements centered around three themes: (1) a definition of violence and threats of violence that are prohibited, (2) reporting procedure for violations, and (3) response to reported violations.

Regarding how Michigan community colleges have evaluated the outcomes of campus threat assessments, the research showed three respondents, or 10%, indicated they had evaluated the outcomes of campus threat assessments, whereas 60% indicated they did not have an evaluation process, and 30% remained neutral. This is indicative of the difficulty in measuring such a task. The theme from this question indicated that if no acts of violence (shootings, physical assault, sexual violence, etc.) occur, then stakeholders assume the policy has worked.

Finally, with the question of what adjustments and improvements have been made by applying Bardach's (2016) Eightfold Path for Policy Analysis, the research showed that 30% of the institutions made adjustments or improvements during and after the process. However, 40%

did not do this, and 30% remained neutral. The central theme for the affirmative respondents

indicated there is a core team or committee that meets routinely to evaluate and revise the policy

as needed. The affirmative responses reflected a collegial and open discussion of the issues and

suggestions for change. Therefore, it appears this aspect of the policy development process is in

need of further development. However, many schools indicated that policy review is part of their

institutional continuous improvement process.

Contribution to the Literature

The professional literature on subject of campus violence is ever-growing; however,

research on policy initiatives other than integrating the Virginia Tech model into campus threat

assessment protocols has room to grow. In a limited manner, this researcher has addressed this

void in introducing a policy decision model that can give the process of developing and

implementing a campus threat assessment policy more clarity and direction. In addition, based

on the outcomes of the research, further contribution is provided to the literature to support that

community colleges are actively involved in making their respective campuses safe by

confirming that they do have a system in place to assess, prevent, and manage potential acts of

violence.

Limitations of Research

This study had several limitations. The first limitation involved data being collected from

27 Michigan community colleges. Because this study investigated campus threat assessment

policy implementation at a small number of colleges with a small response rate of 21 out of the

60 questionnaires sent, the findings cannot fully represent the practices of all community

colleges nationally. Because the community colleges represent only the state of Michigan, it is

possible that policy implementation practices differ dramatically in other areas of the United States, and the findings do not represent a comprehensive community college administrator population. It is certainly possible that community colleges in close proximity to nationally recognized public tragedies have a high rate of policy implementation.

A second limitation involves the perspectives of the respondents at each community college that participated. A large portion of this study utilized qualitative research that involved collecting data from open-ended questions that sought to address how participants' respective community college developed and implemented campus threat assessment policy and protocol. There is criticism amongst some public administration researchers that qualitative research lacks reliability and validity, which decreases the credibility of the research design (LeCompte & Goetz, 1982). In qualitative research, "Validity and reliability are concerns that can be approached through careful attention to a study's conceptualization and the way in which the data were collected, analyzed, and interpreted, and the way in which the findings are presented" (Merriam, 1998, pp. 199-200). In addition, qualitative studies generate an abundance of data, which can be difficult to analyze. Critics have difficulty in accepting generalizations based on a small sample but with a large amount of information (Yin, 2014).

A third limitation in this study is timing. When this study was conducted, the perspectives of the respondents may have been influenced by current events and campus culture during the timeframe required for response, in this case, from November 15, 2016 to December 15, 2016. No significant campus events occurred during this period; however, the very well-publicized shooting at Umpqua Community College in Roseburg, Oregon, had occurred just 6 weeks earlier, leaving nine dead, nine injured, and the shooter committing suicide. This tragedy placed the spotlight on how educational institutions provide a safe and secure environment on their

respective campuses. This, in turn, may have influenced some not to respond at all or not to respond openly to the questions due to recent concerns.

A fourth limitation is that the researcher is employed as a student conduct administrator at a Michigan community college. The researcher's community college did not participate in the questionnaire; however, this fact may contribute to a perceived bias toward the dissertation topic as a whole. To address this perception, the researcher focused on the outcomes of the research for this dissertation, previous research, and literature from peers and academia addressing the topic of campus threat assessment, rather than on subjective generalizations provided solely by the researcher. The inclusion of quantitative data also assisted in alleviating the perception of bias.

Recommendations for Future Research

Based on the limited study population used for this study and also the subsequent limited response rate of those surveyed, it seems apparent that in the future a study such as this should be conducted at a national level. In addition, an in-person interview component should be integrated into the data collection phase. Having one-on-one interviews may allow respondents to speak more openly about this topic in a conversational setting. Interviews render the process more personal, and if another student conduct administrator conducts a study such as this again, having the respondent know that the research derives from one of their colleagues might also assist in the richness of the information provided.

Conclusions

This dissertation has evaluated campus threat assessment policy and procedure implementation at the community college level of higher education. The primary goal of

implementing and following a threat assessment policy is campus safety. As Deisinger et al.

(2008) indicated,

> This goal must always be kept in mind, both in the short term through assessing and managing cases, and in the long run through outreach and training efforts. Any particular interventions—counseling, support, confrontation, termination, arrest, hospitalization, etc.—are tools to achieve the goals of safety. They are not ends unto themselves. (p. 32)

A mixed-methods study approach used consisted of a Likert-scale survey with supporting

open-ended questions to guide the exploration of community college campus violence.

Bardach's (2016) Eightfold Path for Policy Analysis was the framework used for Michigan

community colleges to apply to their own unique situations. This method determined the

prevalence of threat teams and protocols at Michigan community colleges and improved the

understanding of this particular policy problem for their respective administrators.

In addition, this dissertation has explored the value of campus threat assessment tools at

the community college level of higher education. The importance of this topic is evident

concerning the need for leadership at institutions of higher learning to provide a manageable and

collaborative initiative to identify, develop, implement, and evaluate a policy to effectively

prevent acts of violence on college property and recognize its benefits. A formal threat

assessment policy also addresses the legal issues of campus safety as they have potentially long-

lasting and costly effects on higher education (Adolf, 2012). Therefore, through a process-

oriented effort, the policy deemed most appropriate is that of campus threat assessment and

management. If administered appropriately, it is a policy proven to be cost-effective for

institutions of higher education in order to provide a safe learning and work environment for all.

However, leaders at institutions

> must convey clear support for the threat assessment team, so that all administrative units of the institution will be willing to provide information and accept the team's guidance in

dealing with threatening situations. There must be clear policies and procedures that establish the team's authority and scope of action. (Cornell, 2010, p. 14)

If community colleges seek to develop such policies, they will have to adapt it to their unique setting. The most desirable aspect of this policy initiative is that it is cost-effective, as it uses internal resources to assess and manage potential threats of violence. All of the resources needed to assemble an assessment team, conduct assessments, develop management plans, and monitor those plans are already available, as they are derived from existing personnel and resources. Such resources already possess unique institutional knowledge.

Bardach's Eightfold Path for Policy Analysis, which is the policy framework articulated in this research, is not universal in fit but is an excellent tool to make formal policy decisions within an organization such as a community college. To restate the model, Bardach argued that policymakers must define the problem and gather evidence before constructing alternatives. The model speaks to potential difficulties in gathering information: it recommends using both documents and individuals but acknowledges that extracting information from people is often limited by the structural bureaucracy of what participants feel comfortable divulging. Then, with these alternatives in mind, they must select criteria for comparison and project potential outcomes (whether positive or negative). They must address the trade-offs and share these before they make their recommendation.

Finally, a campus threat assessment policy serves to treat all human beings involved with fairness and respect. It does not rely on subjective information or bias, but seeks to gather information in a rational manner and assess all information regarding the situation and the person(s) involved in a deductive and objective manner, with a diversified team approach.

With this said, aside from the academic importance of this research, there is a pragmatic intent of this body of work. It is anticipated that higher education administrators will read the

information detailed and research collected from this work and be able to apply it to their unique

situation in order to identify, develop, and implement threat assessment policy in a useful and

effective manner. Perhaps the formal use of Bardach's model will also be implemented in all

policy-decision efforts as an objective manner in which to operate their respective institutions of

higher education to best serve all stakeholders. It is recommended that community colleges and

other institutions of higher education could also formalize or institutionalize a more transparent

and rational policy-making process with a cover sheet on all new policies and major policy

revisions requiring a checklist to document the use of Bardach's stages.

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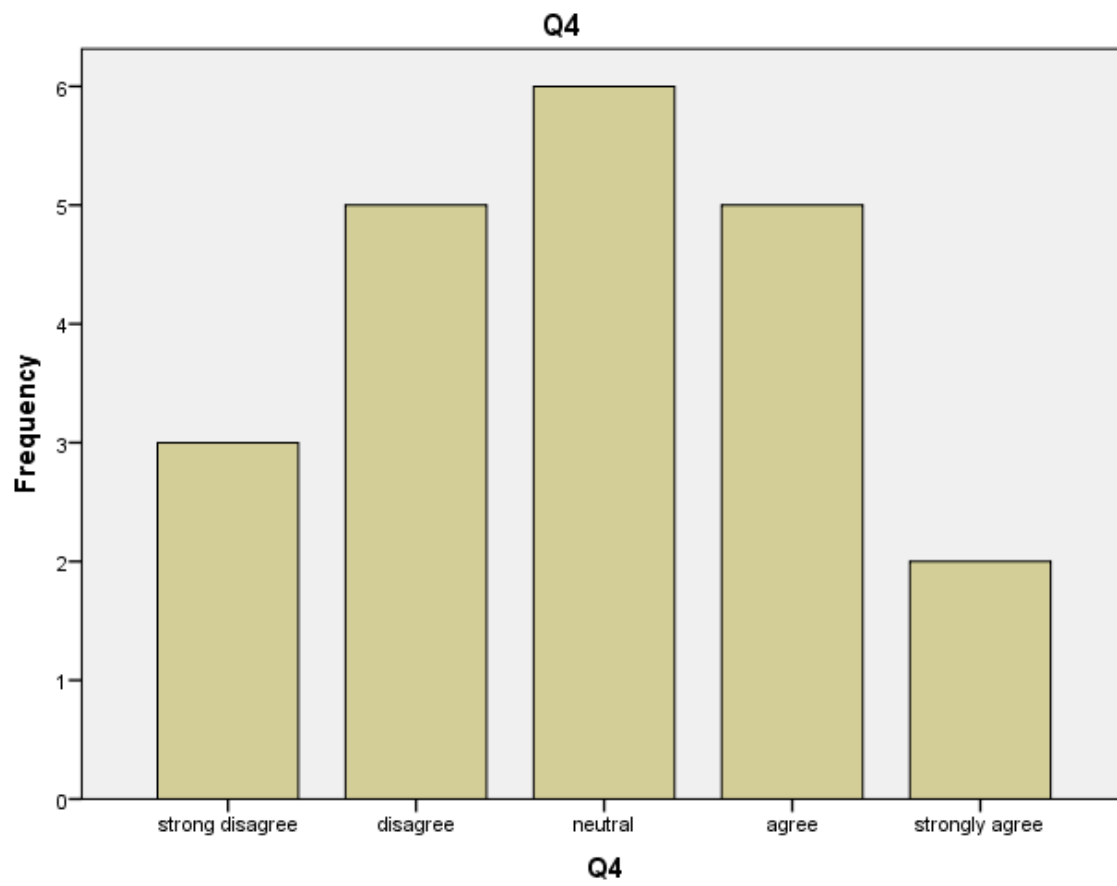
Appendix A

Michigan Community Campus Threat Assessment Survey
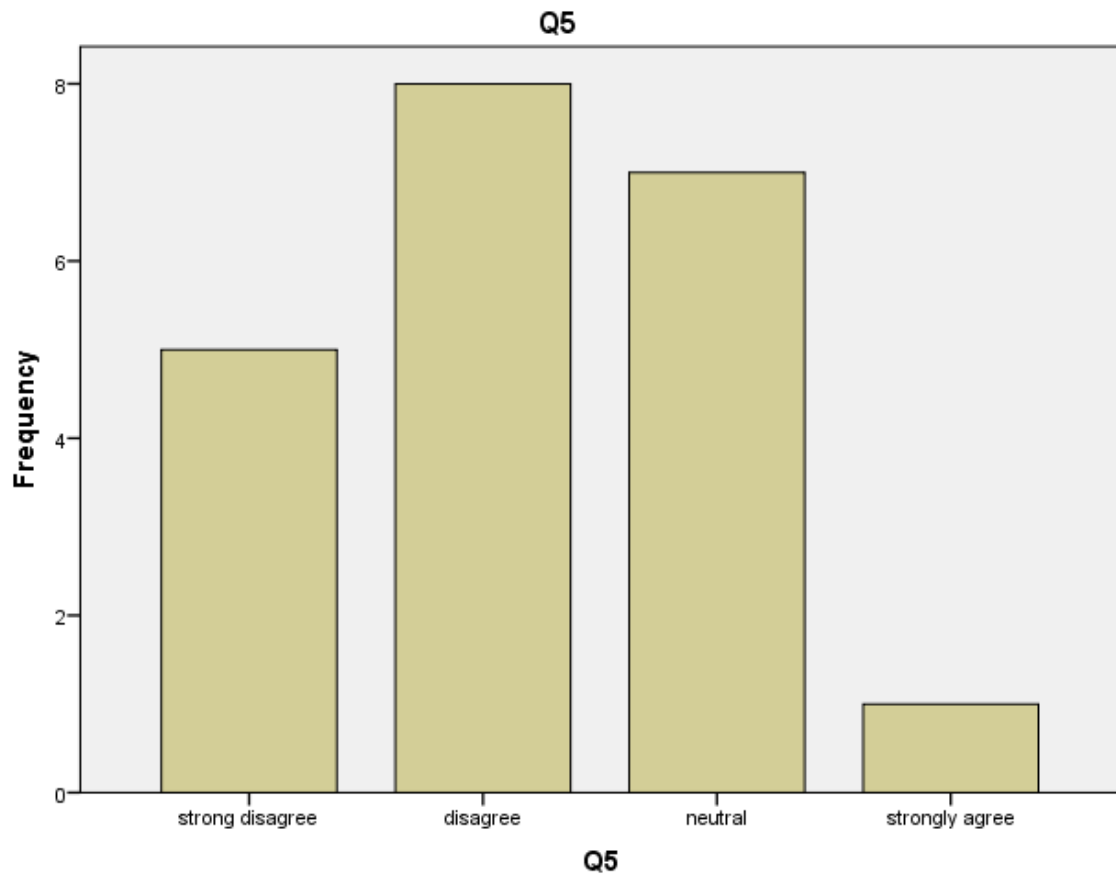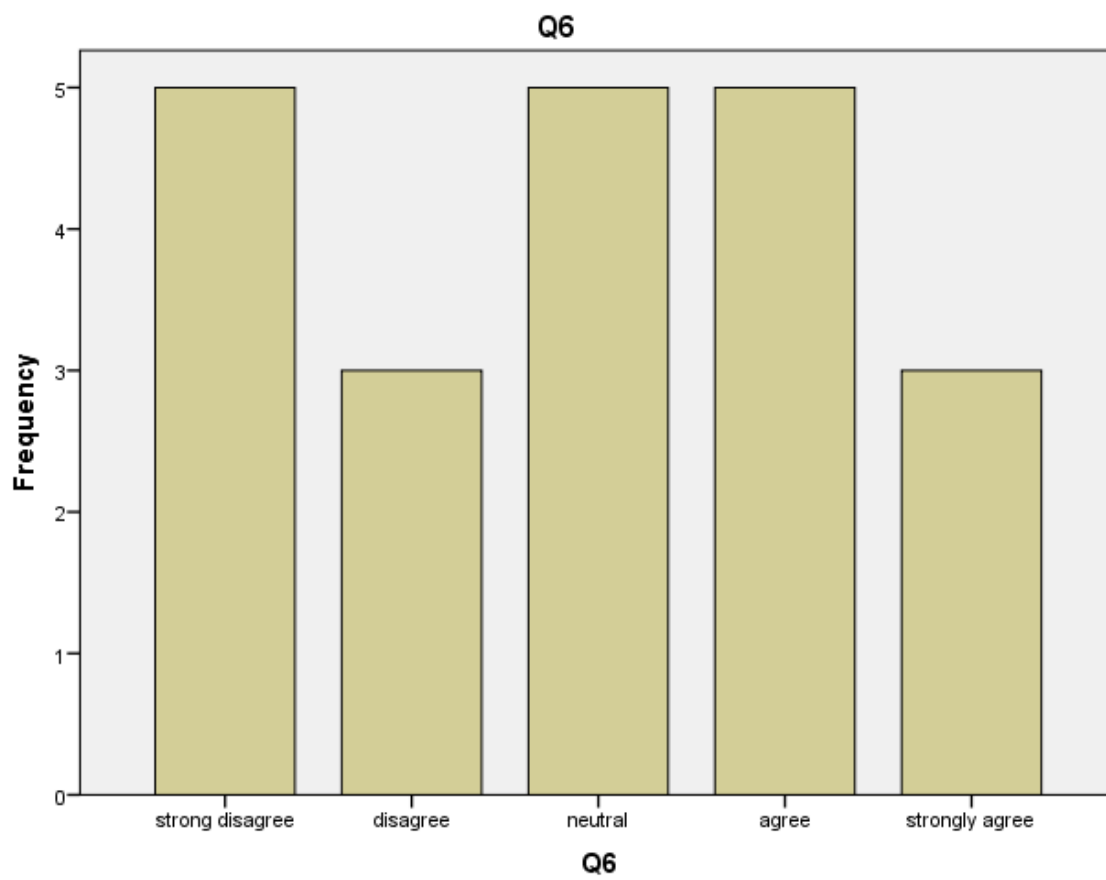**Bar Charts**

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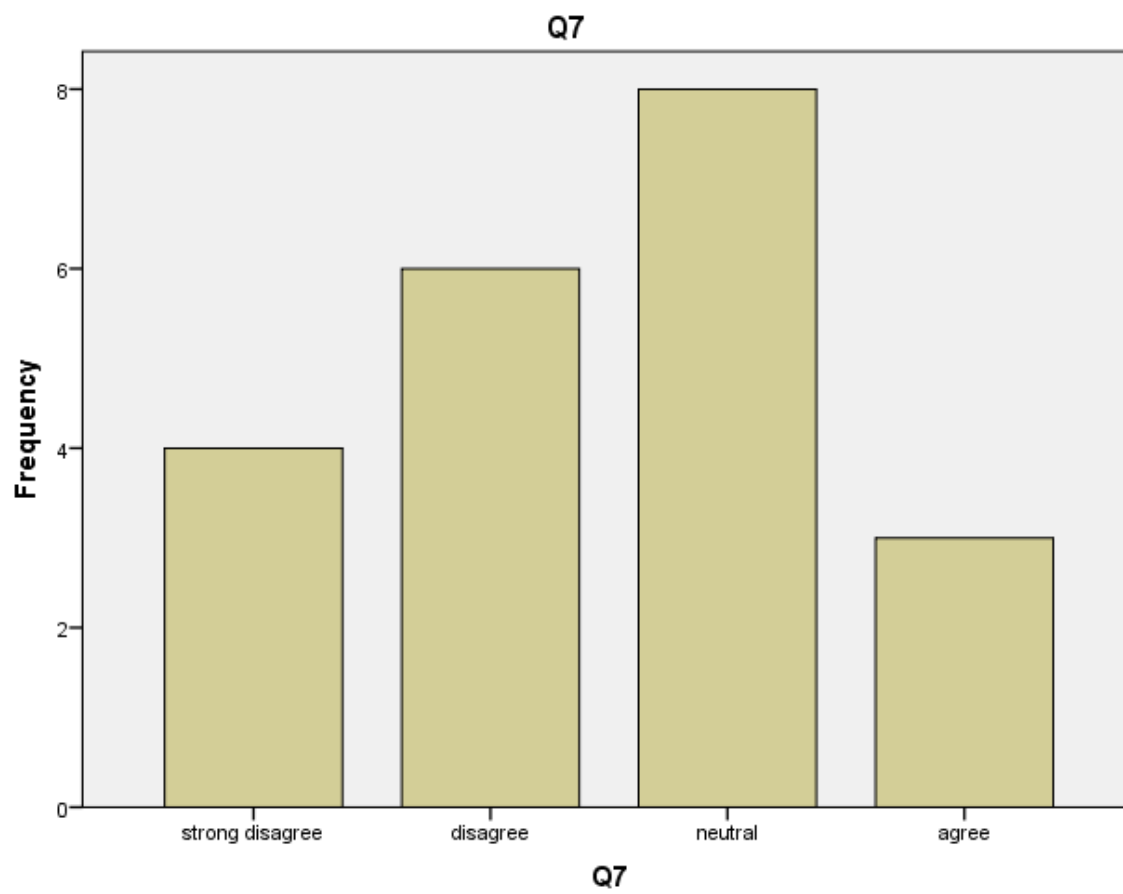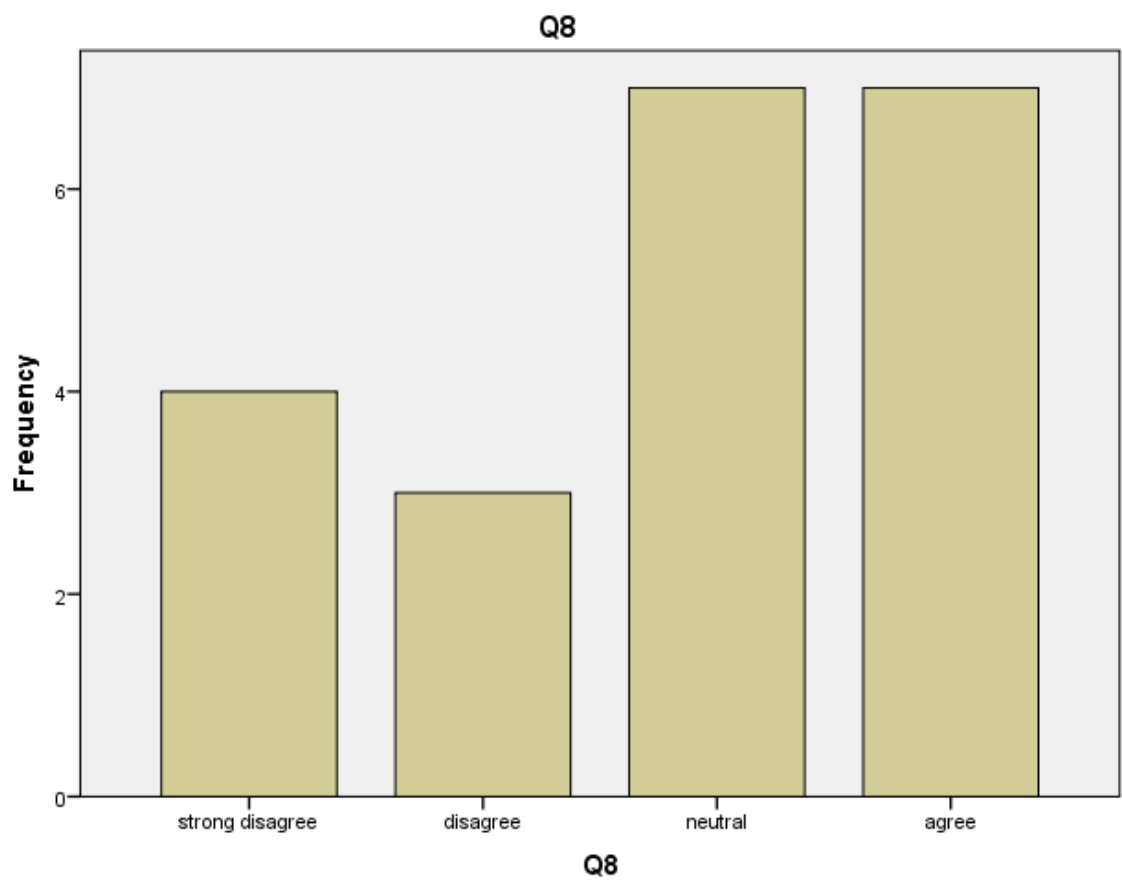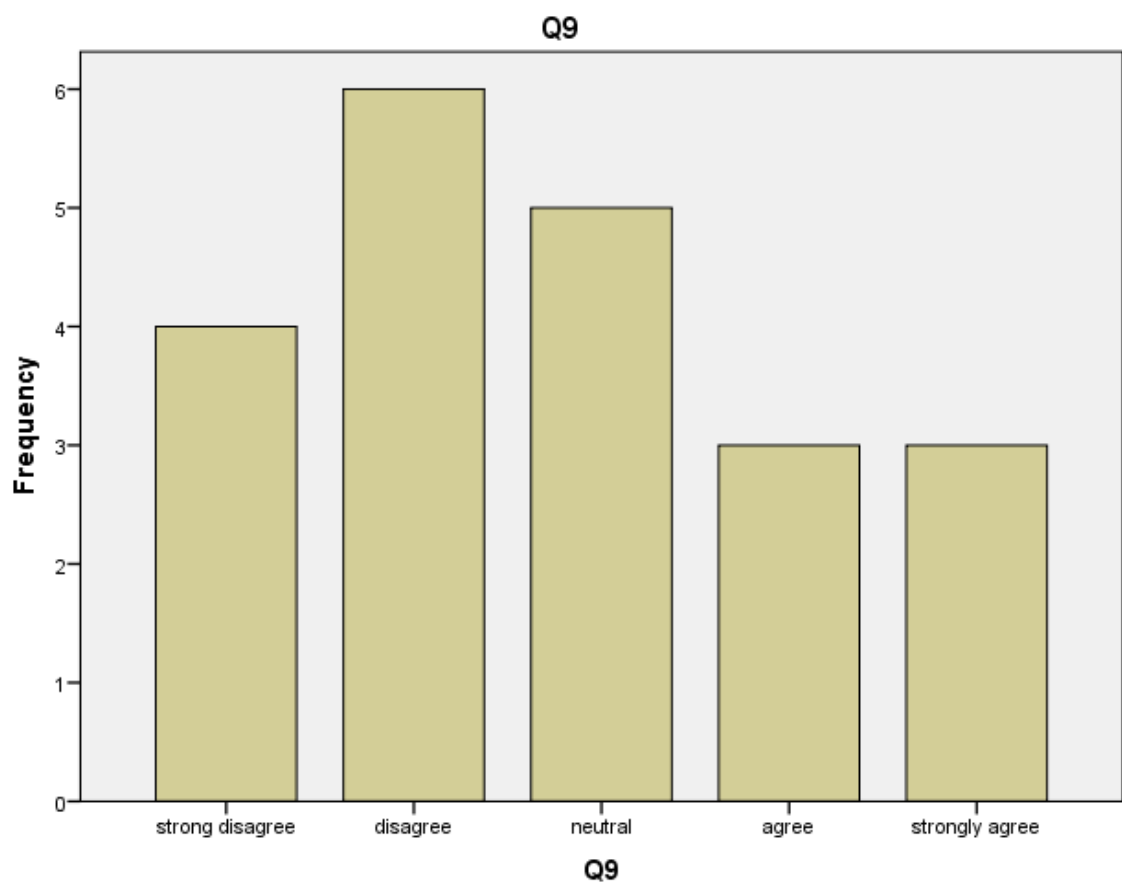
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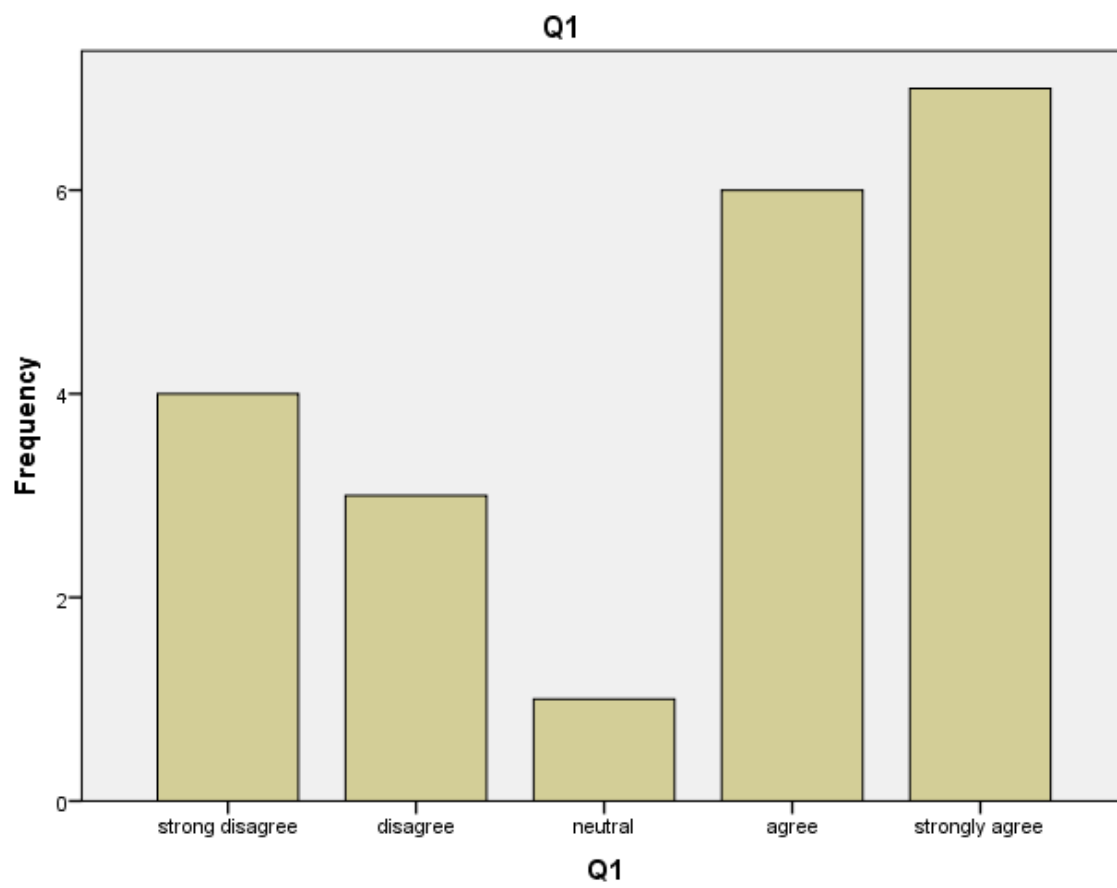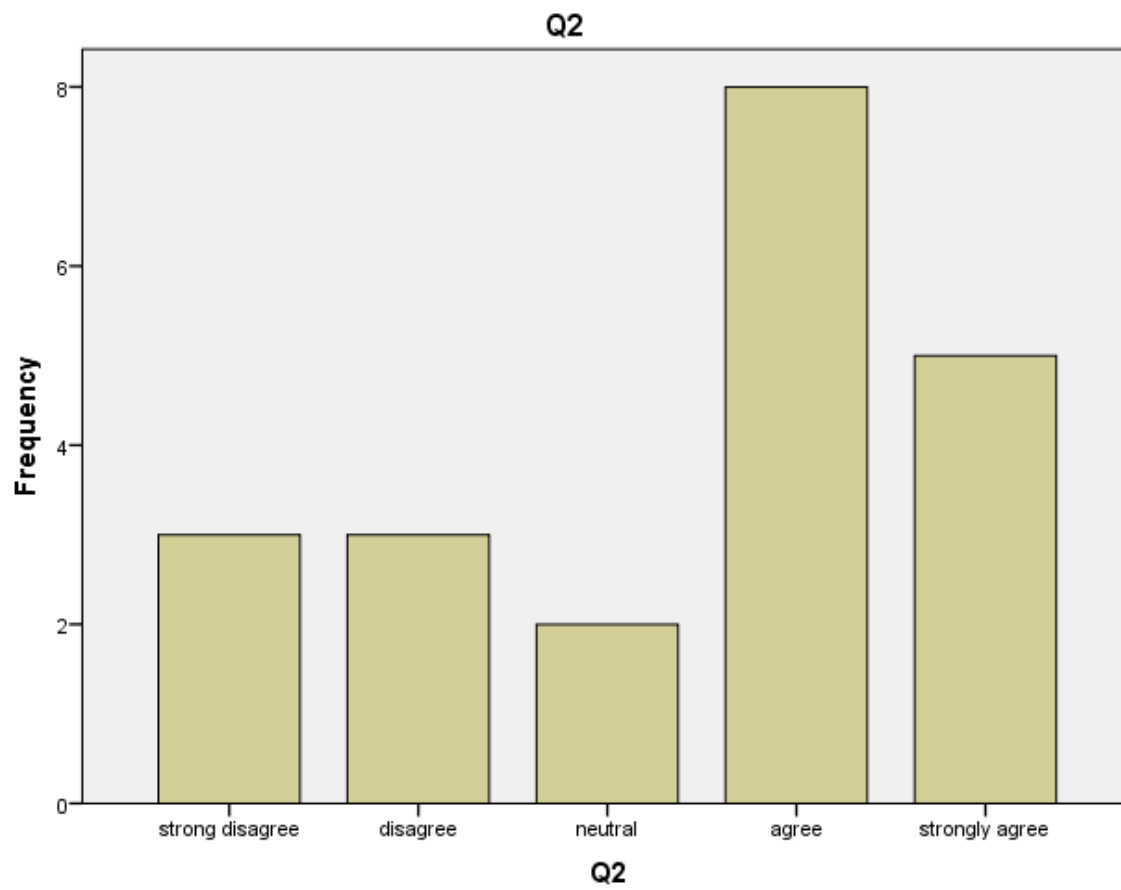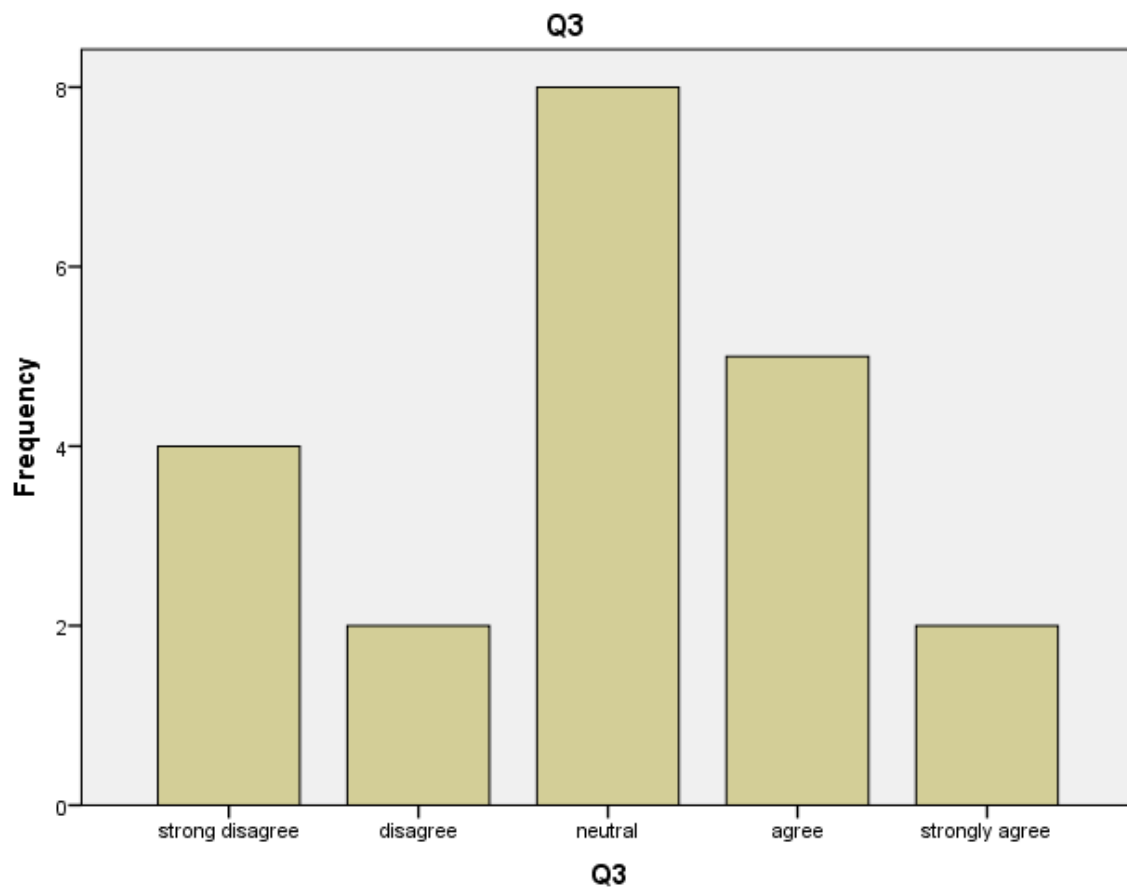
Appendix B

Recommendations From Mass Shootings at Virginia Tech:
The Report From the Review Panel Presented to
Governor Timothy M. Kaine – August 30, 2007

Emergency Planning

1. Universities should do a risk analysis (threat assessment) and then choose a level of security appropriate for their campus, how far to go in safeguarding campuses, and from which threats, need to be considered by each institution.

2. Virginia Tech should update and enhance its Emergency Response Plan and bring it into compliance with federal and state guidelines.

3. Virginia Tech and other institutions of higher learning should have a threat assessment team that includes representatives from law enforcement, human resources, student and academic affairs, legal counsel, and mental health functions. The team should be empowered to take actions, gathering background information, identification of additional dangerous warning signs, establishing a threat potential risk level (1 to 10) for a case, preparing a case for hearings (for instance, commitment hearings), and disseminating warning information.

4. Students, faculty, and staff should be trained annually about responding to various emergencies and about the notification systems that will be used.

5. Universities and colleges must comply with the Clery Act, which requires timely public warnings of imminent danger. "Timely" should be defined clearly in the federal law.

Campus Alerting

6. Campus emergency communications systems must have multiple means of sharing information.

7. In an emergency, immediate messages must be sent to the campus community that provide clear information on the nature of the emergency and actions to be taken The initial messages should be followed by update messages as more information becomes known.

8. Campus police as well as administration officials should have the authority and capability to send an emergency message. Schools without a police department or senior security official must designate someone able to make a quick decision without convening a committee.

Police Role and Training

9. The head of campus police should be a member of a threat assessment team as well as the emergency response team for the university. In some cases where there is a security department but not a police department, the security head may be appropriate.

10. Campus police must report directly to the senior operations officer responsible for emergency decision making. They should be part of the policy team deciding on emergency planning.

11. Campus police must train for active shooters (as did the Virginia Tech Police Department).

12. The mission statement of campus police should give primacy to their law enforcement and crime prevention role.

Virginia Mental Health Legislation

13. Va. Code 37.2-808 (H) and (I) and 37.2-814 (A) should be amended to extend the time periods for temporary detention to permit more thorough mental health evaluations.

14. Va. Code 37.2-809 should be amended to authorize magistrates to issue temporary detention orders based upon evaluations conducted by emergency physicians trained to perform emergency psychiatric evaluations.

15. The criteria for involuntary commitment in Va. Code 37.2-817(B) should be modified in order to promote more consistent application of the standard and to allow involuntary treatment in a broader range of cases involving severe mental illness.

16. The number and capacity of secure crisis stabilization units should be expanded where needed in Virginia to ensure that individuals who are subject to a temporary detention order do not need to wait for an available bed.

17. The role and responsibilities of the independent evaluator in the commitment process should be clarified and steps taken to assure that the necessary reports and collateral information are assembled before the independent evaluator conducts the evaluation.

18. The following documents should be presented at the commitment hearing: The complete evaluation of the treating physician, including collateral information; reports of any lab and toxicology tests conducted; reports of prior psychiatric history and all admission forms and nurse's notes.

19. The Virginia Code should be amended to require the presence of the pre-screener or other CSB representative at all commitment hearings and to provide adequate resources to facilitate CSB compliance.

20. The independent evaluator, if not present in person, and treating physician should be available where possible if needed for questioning during the hearing.

21. The Virginia Health Records Privacy statute should be amended to provide a safe harbor provision which would protect health entities and providers from liability or loss of funding when they disclose information in connection with evaluations and commitment hearings conducted under Virginia Code 37.2-814 et seq.

22. Virginia Health Records Privacy and Va. Code 37.2-814 et seq. should be amended to ensure that all entities involved with treatment have full authority to share records with each other and all persons involved in the involuntary commitment process while providing the legal safeguards needed to prevent unwarranted breaches of confidentiality.

23. Virginia Code 37.2-817(C) should be amended to clarify: the need for specificity in involuntary outpatient orders; the appropriate recipients of certified copies of orders; the party responsible for certifying copies of orders; the party responsible for reporting noncompliance with outpatient orders and to whom noncompliance is reported; the mechanism for returning the

noncompliant person to court; the sanction(s) to be imposed on the noncompliant person who does not pose an imminent danger to himself or others; the respective responsibilities of the detaining facility, the CSB, and the outpatient treatment provider in assuring effective implementation of involuntary outpatient treatment orders.

24. The Virginia Health Records Privacy statute should be clarified to expressly authorize treatment providers to report noncompliance with involuntary outpatient orders.

Information Privacy Laws

25. Accurate guidance should be developed by the attorney general of Virginia regarding the application of information privacy laws to the behavior of troubled students. The guidance should clearly explain what information can be shared by concerned organizations and individuals about troubled students.

26. Privacy laws should be revised to include "safe harbor" provisions. The provisions should insulate a person or organization from liability (or loss of funding) for making a disclosure with a good faith belief that the disclosure was necessary to protect the health, safety, or welfare of the person involved or members of the general public.

27. The following amendments to FERPA should be considered: FERPA should explicitly explain how it applies to medical records held for treatment purposes.

28. The Department of Education should allow more flexibility in FERPA's "emergency" exception. As currently drafted, FERPA contains an exception that allows for release of records in an emergency, when disclosure is necessary to protect the health or safety of either the student or other people.

29. Schools should ensure that law enforcement and medical staff (and others as necessary) are designated as school officials with an educational interest in school records. This FERPA-related change does not require amendment to law or regulation.

30. The Commonwealth of Virginia Commission on Mental Health Reform should study whether the result of a commitment hearing (whether the subject was voluntarily committed, involuntarily committed, committed to outpatient therapy, or released) should also be publicly available despite an individual's request for confidentiality.

31. The national higher education associations should develop best practice protocols and associated training for information sharing.

Gun Purchases and Campus Policies

32. All states should report information necessary to conduct federal background checks on gun purchases.

33. Virginia should require background checks for all firearms sales, including those gun shows.

34. Anyone found to be a danger to themselves or others by a court-ordered review should be entered in the Central Criminal Records Exchange database regardless of whether they voluntarily agreed to treatment.

35. The existing attorney general's opinion regarding the authority of universities and colleges to ban guns on campus should be clarified immediately.

36. The Virginia General Assembly should adopt legislation in the 2008 session clearly establishing the right of every institution of higher education in the Commonwealth to regulate the possession of firearms on campus if it so desires. The panel recommends that guns be banned on campus grounds and in buildings unless mandated by law.

37. Universities and colleges should make clear in their literature what their policy is regarding weapons on campus.

Double Homicide at West Ambler Johnson

38. In the preliminary stages of an investigation, the police should resist focusing on a single theory and communicating that to decision makers.

39. All key facts should be included in an alerting message, and it should be disseminated as quickly as possible, with explicit information.

40. Recipients of emergency messages should be urged to inform others.

41. Universities should have multiple communication systems, including some not dependent on high technology. Do not assume that 21st century communications may survive an attack or natural disaster or power failure.

42. Plans for canceling classes or closing the campus should be included in the university's emergency operations plan.

Mass Shooting at Norris Hall

43. Campus police everywhere should train with local police departments on response to active shooters and other emergencies.

44. Dispatchers should be cautious when giving advice or instructions by phone to people in a shooting or facing other threats without knowing the situation.

45. Police should escort survivors out of buildings, where circumstances and manpower permit.

46. Schools should check the hardware on exterior doors to ensure that they are not subject to being chained shut.

47. Take bomb threats seriously. Students and staff should report them immediately, even if most do turn out to be false alarms.

Emergency Medical Services

48. Montgomery County, VA should develop a countywide emergency medical services, fire, and law enforcement communications center to address the issues of interoperability and economies of scale.

49. A unified command post should be established and operated based on the National Incident Management System Incident Command System model.

50. Emergency personnel should use the National Incident Management System procedures for nomenclature, resource typing and utilization, communications, and unified command.

51. An emergency operations center must be activated early during a mass casualty incident.

52. Regional disaster drills should be held on an annual basis. The drills should include hospitals, the Regional Hospital Coordinating Center, all appropriate public safety and state agencies, and the medical examiner's office. They should be followed by a formal post-incident evaluation.

53. To improve multi-casualty incident management, the Western Virginia Emergency Medical Services Council should review/revise the Multi-Casualty Incident Medical Control and the Regional Hospital Coordinating Center functions.

54. Triage tags, patient care reports, or standardized Incident Command System forms must be completed accurately and retained after a multi-casualty incident.

55. Hospitalists, when available, should assist with emergency department patient dispositions in preparing for a multi-casualty incident patient surge.

56. Under no circumstances should the deceased be transported under emergency conditions. It benefits no one and increases the likelihood of hurting others.

57. Critical incident stress management and psychological services should continue to be available to EMS providers as needed.

Office of the Chief Medical Examiner

58. The chief medical examiner should not be one of the staff performing the postmortem exams in mass casualty events; the chief medical examiner should be managing the overall response.

59. The Office of the Chief Medical Examiner (OCME) should work along with law enforcement, Virginia Department of Criminal Justice Services (DCJS), chaplains, Department of Homeland Security, and other authorized entities in developing protocols and training to create a more responsive family assistance center (FAC).

60. The OCME and Virginia State Police in concert with FAC personnel should ensure that family members of the deceased are afforded prompt and sensitive notification of the death of a family member when possible and provide briefings regarding any delays.

61. Training should be developed for FAC, law enforcement, OCME, medical and mental health professionals, and others regarding the impact of crime and intervention for victim survivors.

62. OCME and FAC personnel should ensure that a media expert is available to manage media requests effectively and that victims are not inundated that may increase their stress.

63. The Virginia Department of Criminal Justice Services should mandate training for law enforcement officers on death notifications.

64. The OCME should participate in disaster or national security drills and exercises to plan and train for effects of a mass fatality situation on ME operations.

65. The Virginia Department of Health should continuously recruit board-certified forensic pathologists and other specialty positions to fill vacancies within the OCME.

66. The Virginia Department of Health should have several public information officers trained and well versed in OCME operations and in victims' services. When needed, they should be made available to the OCME for the duration of the event.

67. Funding to train and credential volunteer staff, such as the group from the Virginia Funeral Director's Association, should be made available in order to utilize their talents.

68. The Commonwealth should amend its Emergency Operations Plan to include an emergency support function for mass fatality operations and family assistance.

69. Emergency management plans should include a section on victim services that addresses the significant impact of homicide and other disaster-caused deaths on survivors and the role of victim service providers in the overall plan.

70. Universities and colleges should ensure that they have adequate plans to stand up a joint information center with a public information officer and adequate staff during major incidents on campus.

71. When a family assistance center is created after a criminal mass casualty event, victim advocates should be called immediately to assist the victims and their families.

72. Regularly scheduled briefings should be provided to victims' families as to the status of the investigation, the identification process, and the procedures for retrieving the deceased.

73. Because of the extensive physical and emotional impact of this incident, both short- and long-term counseling should be made available to first responders, students, staff, faculty members, university leaders, and the staff of The Inn at Virginia Tech.

74. Training in crisis management is needed at universities and colleges.

75. Law enforcement agencies should ensure that they have a victim services section or identified individual trained and skilled to respond directly and immediately to the needs of victims of crime from within the department.

76. It is important that the state's Victims Services Section work to ensure that victims are linked with local victim assistance professionals for ongoing help related to their needs.

77. Since all crime is local, the response to emergencies caused by crime should start with a local plan that is linked to the wider community.

78. Universities and colleges should create a victim assistance capability either in house or through linkages to county-based professional victim assistance providers for victims of crime.

79. In order to advance public safety and meet public needs, Virginia's colleges and universities need to work together as a coordinated system of state-supported institutions.

The Virginia Tech Review Panel. 2007. Mass Shootings at Virginia Tech. Arlington, VA

Appendix C

**Recommendations From the Report to the President on Issues
Raised by the Virginia Tech Tragedy – June 13, 2007**

Recommended State and Local Action

1. Increase information sharing and collaboration among state and local communities, educators, mental health officials, and law enforcement to detect, intervene, and respond to potential incidents of violence in schools and other venues.

2. Provide accurate information to help ensure that family members, educational administrators, mental health providers, and other appropriate persons understand when and how they are legally entitled to share and receive information about mental illness, particularly where college and youth are involved, for the protection and well-being of the student and the community.

3. Along with reviewing federal laws that may apply, clarify and promote wider understanding about how state law limits or allows the sharing of information about individuals who may pose a danger to themselves or others, and examine state law to determine if legislative or regulatory changes are needed to achieve the appropriate balance of privacy and security.

4. Prioritize and address legal and financial barriers to submitting all relevant disqualifying information to the NICS and other crucial inter-agency information sharing systems to prevent individuals who are prohibited from possessing firearms by federal or state law from acquiring firearms from federally licensed firearms dealers.

5. The U.S. Department of Education should ensure that its emergency management grantees have clear guidance on the sharing of information to educational records and FERPA.

6. Federal agencies should continue to work together, and with states and appropriate partners, to improve, expand, coordinate, and disseminate information and best practices in behavioral analysis, threat assessments, and emergency preparedness, for colleges and universities.

7. The U.S. Department of Education, in collaboration with the U.S. Secret Service and the Department of Justice, should explore research of targeted violence in IHEs and continue to share existing threat assessment methodology with interested institutions.

8. Develop cultures within schools and IHEs that promote safety, trust, respect, and open communication.

9. Educate and train parents, teachers, and students to recognize warning signs and known indicators of violence and mental illness and to alert those who can provide for safety and treatment.

10. Establish and publicize widely a mechanism to report and respond to reported threats of violence.

11. Evaluate state and local community mental health systems to ensure their adequacy in providing a full array and continuum of services, including mental health services for students, and in providing meaningful choices among treatment options.

12. Integrate mental health screening, treatment, and referral with primary health care.

13. Review emergency services and commitment laws to ensure the standards are clear, appropriate, and strike the proper balance among liberty, safety for the individual and the community, and appropriate treatment.

14. Where a legal ruling mandates a course of treatment, make sure that systems are in place to ensure thorough follow-up.

15. Integrate comprehensive all-hazards emergency management planning for schools into overall local and state emergency planning.

16. Institute regular practice of emergency management response plans and revise them as issues arise and circumstances change.

17. Communicate emergency management plans to all school officials, school service workers, parents, students, and first responders.

18. Develop a clear communication plan and tools to communicate rapidly with students and parents to alert them when an emergency occurs. Utilize technology to improve notification, communication, and security systems.

19. Ensure of law enforcement through enhanced professionalism of campus police forces and joint training with federal, state, and local law enforcement.

20. Be prepared to provide both immediate and longer term mental health support following an event, and evaluate events and the response to them in order to gather lessons learned and implement corrective measures.

Recommended Federal Action

21. The U.S. Departments of Health and Human Services and Education should develop additional guidance that clarifies how information can be shared legally under HIPAA and FERPA and disseminate it to the mental health, education, and law enforcement communities.

22. The U.S. Department of Education should ensure that parents and school officials understand how and when post-secondary institutions can share information on college students with parents.

23. The U.S. Departments of Education and Health and Human Services should consider whether further actions are needed to balance more appropriately the interests of safety, privacy, and treatment implicated by FERPA and HIPAA.

24. The U.S. Department of Justice, through the FBI and ATF, should reiterate the scope and requirements of federal firearms laws, including guidance on the federal firearms prohibitions in the Gun Control Act of 1968 and how to provide information to the NICS on persons whose receipt of a firearm would violate state or federal law.

25. The U.S. Department of Justice, through the FBI and ATF, should continue to encourage state and federal agencies to provide all appropriate information to the NICS so that required background checks are thorough and complete.

26. The U.S. Department of Justice should work with states to provide appropriate guidance on policies and procedures that would ensure that relevant and complete information is available for background checks.

27. The U.S. Department of Health and Human Services should work through the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention's (CDC) Academic Centers of Excellence on Youth Violence Prevention and collaborate with the U.S. Department of Education to identify opportunities to expand CDC's "Choose Respect" initiative so that it includes efforts to develop healthy school climates and prevent violence in schools.

28. The U.S. Department of Health and Human Services should include a focus on college students in its mental health public education campaign to encourage young people to support their friends who are experiencing mental health problems.

29. The U.S. Departments of Education, Health and Human Services, and Justice should continue to work together and with states and local communities to improve and expand their collaboration on their "Safe Schools/Healthy Students" program.

30. The U.S. Department of Health and Human Services should convene the directors of state mental health, substance abuse, and Medicaid agencies and constituent organizations to explore ways to expand and better coordinate delivery of evidence-based practices and community-based care to adults and children with mental and substance use disorders.

31. The U.S. Department of Health and Human Services should examine current strategies for implementing innovative technologies in the mental health field to enhance service capacity, through such means as telemedicine, electronic health records, health information technology, and electronic decision support tools in health care.

32. The interagency Federal Executive Steering Committee on Mental Health led by the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services should promote federal agency collaboration to support innovations in mental health services and supports for school aged children and young adults in primary care and specialty mental health settings using evidence-based programs and innovative technologies.

33. The U.S. Department of Education should review its information regarding emergency management planning to ensure it addresses the needs of IHEs and then disseminate it widely.

34. The U.S. Departments of Education, Homeland Security, and Justice should collaborate and be proactive in helping state, local, and campus law enforcement receive desired training and making them aware of federal resources on behavioral analysis, active shooter training, and other research and analysis relevant to preparedness and response.

35. The U.S. Departments of Homeland Security and Justice, jointly and separately, and in collaboration with the U.S. Department of Education, should consider programs to be used to facilitate joint training exercises for state, local, and campus law enforcement.

36. The U.S. Departments of Health and Human Services and Homeland Security should examine their community preparedness grants to state and local communities, which include an emphasis on early detection of hazards through information sharing, to clarify the grants that are available for the prevention of and preparedness for violence in schools, offices, and public places.

U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, U.S. Department of Education, and U.S. Department of Justice. 2007. Report to the President on Issues Raised by the Virginia Tech Tragedy. Washington, D.C

Appendix D

Human Subjects Institutional Review Board Approval

WESTERN MICHIGAN UNIVERSITY

W

Human Subjects Institutional Review Board

Date: October 19, 2015

To: Matthew Mingus, Principal Investigator
          Russell Panico, Student Investigator for dissertation

From: Amy Naugle, Ph.D., Chair *Amy Naugle*

Re: HSIRB Project Number 15-10-08

This letter will serve as confirmation that your research project titled "An Analysis of Campus Violence Threat Assessment Policy Implementation at Michigan Community Colleges" has been **approved** under the **exempt** category of review by the Human Subjects Institutional Review Board. The conditions and duration of this approval are specified in the Policies of Western Michigan University. You may now begin to implement the research as described in the application.

Please note: This research may **only** be conducted exactly in the form it was approved. You must seek specific board approval for any changes in this project (e.g., *you must request a post approval change to enroll subjects beyond the number stated in your application under "Number of subjects you want to complete the study*)." Failure to obtain approval for changes will result in a protocol deviation. In addition, if there are any unanticipated adverse reactions or unanticipated events associated with the conduct of this research, you should immediately suspend the project and contact the Chair of the HSIRB for consultation.

Reapproval of the project is required if it extends beyond the termination date stated below.

The Board wishes you success in the pursuit of your research goals.

Approval Termination: **October 18, 2016**

1903 W. Michigan Ave., Kalamazoo, MI 49008-5456
PHONE: (269) 387-8293 FAX: (269) 387-8276
CAMPUS SITE: 251 W. Walwood Hall

Appendix E

Campus Threat Assessment Policy Questionnaire

CAMPUS THREAT ASSESSMENT POLICY QUESTIONNAIRE

Hello. My name is Russ Panico and I am a Ph.D. Candidate in Public Administration at Western Michigan University. I am conducting a study regarding the policy processes used by Michigan community colleges for the development and implementation of campus threat assessment protocols. The questions are based on the policy-making framework developed by Dr. Eugene Bardach and called the *Eightfold Path for Policy Analysis*. The purpose of this study is to gather perspectives that emerge from the 27 community colleges as their own unique situations are viewed through Dr. Bardach's framework.

Responses to the open-ended questions are very important to a thorough understanding and will greatly enhance my ability to identify similarities and differences among Michigan's community colleges. Please use the space on the backside or additional sheets of paper if needed.

Q1) To what extent do you agree or disagree, that your institution has a formal campus threat assessment policy?

☐ Agree ☐ Strongly Agree ☐ Neutral ☐ Disagree ☐ Strongly Disagree

What was the primary reason for its implementation?

Q2) To what extent do you agree or disagree that when your institution defined the problem of campus violence, this definition included threats of violence?

☐ Agree ☐ Strongly Agree ☐ Neutral ☐ Disagree ☐ Strongly Disagree

What is your college's definition of campus violence?

Q3) To what extent do you agree or disagree, that in the policy-making process your institution assembled evidence and/or collected data of the problem of campus violence?

☐ Agree ☐ Strongly Agree ☐ Neutral ☐ Disagree ☐ Strongly Disagree

What was the evidence and/or data collected?

Q4) To what extent do you agree or disagree, that when constructing policy alternatives your institution weighed the risks and benefits of each potential alternative?

☐ Agree ☐ Strongly Agree ☐ Neutral ☐ Disagree ☐ Strongly Disagree

What were some of the risks and benefits of each potential alternative?

Q5) To what extent do you agree or disagree, that in the policy-making process your institution included a method to be used to determine the outcomes (measure of success) of the policy option chosen?

☐ Agree ☐ Strongly Agree ☐ Neutral ☐ Disagree ☐ Strongly Disagree

What were those methods and did show any success?

Q6) To what extent do you agree or disagree, that in the policy-making process your final policy decision to address campus violence had an impact or satisfied the needs of all stakeholders?

☐ Agree ☐ Strongly Agree ☐ Neutral ☐ Disagree ☐ Strongly Disagree

How did the final decision satisfy the needs of stakeholders?

Q7) To what extent do you agree or disagree, that in the policy-making process your institution confronted the trade-offs or deviations in the projected outcomes address acts of campus violence?

☐ Agree ☐ Strongly Agree ☐ Neutral ☐ Disagree ☐ Strongly Disagree

What were the trade-offs and/or deviations from the projected outcomes?

Q8) To what extent do you agree or disagree, that in the policy-making process your institution conducted internal checks to determine how the policy-decision makers were doing in the development of a policy to address campus violence?

☐ Agree ☐ Strongly Agree ☐ Neutral ☐ Disagree ☐ Strongly Disagree

What type of checks and how often were they conducted?

Q9) To what extent do you agree or disagree, that in the policy-making process your institution told the story or presented the policy decision to all stakeholders?

☐ Agree ☐ Strongly Agree ☐ Neutral ☐ Disagree ☐ Strongly Disagree

How was this message delivered?

Q10) Is there anything else you would like to add to the responses you have provided?

Thank you so very much for your participation in this study! It is my hope that the results of this study will be made final by the spring of 2016. At that point, I plan to provide the findings of this study to all potential participants.

If you have any questions about this questionnaire please feel free to contact me at 269-488-4393

or russell.t.panico@wmich.edu.

Appendix F

Informed Consent

WESTERN MICHIGAN UNIVERSITY
School of Public Administration

Principal Investigator: Dr. Matthew S. Mingus, Professor
Student Investigator: Russell Panico, PhD Candidate
Title of Study: An Analysis of Campus Violence Threat Assessment Policy
                                Implementation at Michigan Community Colleges

You are invited to participate in a research project titled "*An Analysis of Campus Violence Threat Assessment Policy Implementation at Michigan Community Colleges.*" This project will serve as Russell Panico's dissertation research for the requirements of the Ph.D. in Public Administration. This consent document will explain the purpose of this research project and will cover the time commitment, the procedures used in the study, and the risks and benefits of participating in this research project. Please read this consent form carefully and completely, and please ask any questions if you need more clarification.

What are we trying to find out in this study?

This study will determine if Michigan community colleges have formal campus threat assessment policies. This study will also determine how the policy initiatives occurred by applying Dr. Eugene Bardach's *Eightfold Path for Policy Analysis*. This process includes: (1) defining the problem; (2) assembling evidence; (3) constructing alternatives; (4) selecting criteria; (5) projecting outcomes; (6) confronting trade-offs; (7) deciding; and finally, (8) telling the story. This process will be further explained by the questions themselves.

Who can participate in this study?

Michigan community college student conduct administrators and their direct supervisors.

Where will this study take place?

The researcher will send the questionnaire by U.S. Postal Service. Responses will be returned in an enclosed self-addressed stamped envelope.

What is the time commitment for participating in this study?

The questionnaire should take no more than one hour to complete. If necessary, a brief follow-up phone call may occur or follow-up emails to clarify responses provided in the questionnaire.

What will you be asked to do if you choose to participate in this study?

The intent of the questionnaire is to ask the respondents to reflect upon the policy decision-making process utilized to implement their campus threat assessment policy and protocol.

What information is being measured during the study?

Your responses to the questions will be analyzed to determine campus violence policy-decision themes that may emerge across Michigan's 28 community colleges.

What are the risks of participating in this study and how will these risks be minimized?

There may be risks associated with your participation in this study based on the sensitive nature of the subject. The information obtained however, may only be helpful to other community colleges in the future who are seeking to implement campus threat assessment policy or any type of policy for that matter.

What are the benefits of participating in this study?

This study is intended to help better understand the problem of campus violence, but also the necessity for campus threat assessment policy and protocol. Bardach's policy analysis framework is a tool that can be applied to any policy initiative. The results of the study will be provided electronically, free of charge, to all Michigan community colleges after the dissertation process is complete. The data included in the study will be organized to show each community college's respective responses to the survey; however, names of the administrators who responded will not be included and names of the community colleges will not be included. In other words, the dissertation will refer to Community College A, Community College B, and so forth.

Are there any costs associated with participating in this study?

There are no costs associated with this study other than your time needed to respond to the questions (about 1 hour).

Is there any compensation for participating in this study?

There is no compensation for participating in this study. The researcher will, however, send the results of the study to you upon completion.

Who will have access to the information collected during this study?

The student researcher, Russell Panico, and his dissertation committee members will have access to the information obtained from the interviews. Each participant will also receive a transcript of their questionnaire responses.

What if you want to stop participating in this study?

You can choose to stop participating in the study at anytime for any reason. You will not suffer any prejudice or penalty by your decision to stop your participation. You will experience NO consequences either academically or personally if you choose to withdraw from this study. The investigator can also decide to stop your participation in the study without your consent.

Should you have any questions prior to or during the study, you can contact the primary investigator, Russell Panico at 269-548-9017 or russell.t.panico@wmich.edu. You may also contact the Chair, Human Subjects Institutional Review Board at 269-387-8293 or the Vice President for Research at 269-387-8298 if questions arise during the course of the study.

This consent document has been approved for use for one year by the Human Subjects Institutional Review Board (HSIRB) as indicated by the stamped date and signature of the board chair in the upper right corner. Do not participate in this study if the stamped date is older than one year.

**Providing responses to the attached questionnaire as requested indicates your receipt of this consent document and willingness to participate in this research project.