Exposure to Preincident Behavior and Reporting in College Students

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Campus targeted violence is preceded by noticeable, alarming behavior, and reporting improvement efforts have been suggested to increase students' willingness to inform campus authorities of forewarning actions. Reporting improvement techniques have been most successful with material appealing to the perceptions of high-risk students (i.e., those likely to observe and not report). The current study examined the characteristics of students that view threatening behavior and lack willingness to report with a large, Midwestern, undergraduate sample ($n = 450$). Approximately 35% of the sample (i.e., $n = 157$) indicated observing preincident behavior on campus, and 65% of these individuals (i.e., $n = 101$) described unwillingness to inform police in the majority of hypothetical threatening situations. Males and students with self-reported delinquency exhibited greater unwillingness to report. Negative feelings toward campus police and high feelings of safety on campus corresponded with unwillingness to report. Students observing preincident behavior had more campus connectedness, negative views of campus police, and fewer feelings of safety on campus. Thus, reporting improvement efforts appears highly important to advancing the violence prevention abilities of campus threat assessment teams. Peer education could generate lasting attitudinal and behavioral change for high-risk students. These strategies could involve highly connected student leaders respected by males and students endorsing delinquency and material formatted in a nonconfrontational manner.

Keywords: campus threat assessment, bystander reporting, preincident behavior, reporting improvement efforts

The identification of individuals engaging in threatening behavior is the first step in threat management efforts (Fein & Vossekuil, 1998), yet improving bystander reporting of preincident behavior has received limited empirical review (Hollister, Bockoven, & Scalora, 2012; Sulkowski, 2011). Suggestions for improving collegiate preincident reporting involve campus-wide alterations in student–faculty relationships and substantial programming aimed at adjusting perceptions of victimization and campus police. Similar strategies have been employed to increase reporting of sexual assault, physical assault, and stalking. However, the extensive resource use these campus-wide interventions require tend to result in underfunded applications or campuses failing to implement the programs (Buhi, Clayton, & Surrency, 2009; Paul & Gray, 2011; Potter, Moynihan, Stapleton, & Banyard, 2009; Thompson, Sitterle, Clay, & Kingree, 2007). Moreover, some campus-wide efforts have been described as ineffective because of the material being too general and unable to generate personal discussion and reflection (Foubert & Perry, 2007; Paul & Gray, 2011), while interventions focused on high-risk students (i.e., those likely to observe problematic behavior and fail to report) have increased effectiveness and administrative support (Foubert, 2000; McMahon & Dick, 2011). Thus, the current study investigated characteristics of students likely to observe and not report concerning behavior preceding targeted violence on college campuses.

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Targeted Violence and Bystander Reporting

Targeted attacks on college campuses, such as the mass shootings at Virginia Tech and Northern Illinois, draw significant attention because of the significant causalities and subsequent fear (Scalora et al., 2010). These events tend to be preceded by noticeable threatening behavior, such as observable violent ideation, target stalking, and weapon acquisition (Calhoun & Weston, 2003; Drysdale, Modzeleski, & Simons, 2010; James et al., 2009). In review of media reports of completed campus attacks (n = 272), 73% involved perpetrators targeting and plotting against specific individuals (Drysdale et al., 2010), and many situations (i.e., 36%) were preceded by others viewing alarming actions from the perpetrator prior to the violent incident. Nonetheless, these concerns were often not reported to trained campus professionals (e.g., law enforcement, campus threat assessment teams). Therefore, as seen in other violence research (Fischer et al., 2011; Foubert & Perry, 2007; Tarling & Morris, 2010; Weller, Hope, & Sheridan, 2013), the failure of bystanders to report concerns in advance of a critical situation can have disastrous consequences.

Several targeted attacks have been prevented following reporting from concerned bystanders (Daniels, Buck, Croxall, Gruber, Kime, & Govert, 2007; Scalora et al., 2002; Scalora et al., 2010). In review of averted K–12 school rampages, 57% were avoided because of students alerting authorities of disturbing behavior (Daniels et al., 2007). The remaining cases were prevented because of reports of staff, parents, or other concerned citizens providing concerns to school protection resources or police. Numerous case studies have displayed threat assessment teams providing effective preventive responses following stakeholder reporting in workplace, public figure, and school settings (Calhoun & Weston, 2003; Calhoun & Weston, 2009). Thus, despite the range of threats campuses experience from internal and external sources (Scalora et al., 2010), proper forewarning by campus stakeholders would most likely result in successful preventive responses by campus threat assessment teams.

Preincident Behavior Reporting and Intervention Suggestions

Nonetheless, empirical research on the reporting of preincident behaviors on campus is limited. One study used four hypothetical scenarios describing individuals expressing numerous grievances and threatening statements (e.g., "Everyone would rethink how these unjust admissions standards ruin peoples' lives if I ended it all and took others with me"; Sulkowski, 2011, p. 65). Approximately 70% of the college student sample appeared willing to report in each scenario. Students with greater trust in campus services and connection to campus were more willing to report, while students reporting engagement in delinquent activity were less willing to report. Another study included a sample of collegiate student, faculty, and staff and vignettes describing one, two, or three preincident behaviors without further explanation of circumstances (Hollister et al., 2012). Willingness to report differed greatly across vignettes (i.e., 9%–91% for students; 39%–100% for faculty and staff), and scenarios with multiple behaviors and direct threats included the highest rates of willingness to inform authorities. Both of these reviews concluded with recommendations for improving preincident reporting. Generating positive student–faculty relationships and ensuring a positive campus climate has been suggested (Sulkowski, 2011), as has challenging antisocial norms through demonstrating the effects of problematic behavior and appropriate responses to misbehaving peers. Moreover, educating the campus community about actions requiring reporting and displaying campus threat assessment teams as problem-solving groups engaging in appropriate reactions (i.e., not overly punitive) have also been proposed (Hollister et al., 2012; Sulkowski, 2011).

Recommendations with increased clarity and empirical support could be gained from using findings from other research regarding reporting and reporting improvement efforts. In addition to victims, bystanders tend to become aware of the majority of general crime (Bosick, Rennison, Gover, & Dodge, 2012), stalking (Buhi et al., 2009), bullying (Polanin, Espelage, & Pigott, 2012), domestic violence (Yamawaki, Ochoa-Shipp, Pulsipher, Harlos, & Swindler, 2012), physical assault (Thompson et al., 2007), sexual assault (Foubert, 2000), and workplace

violence (Paull, Omari, & Standen, 2012) through observation of the events and victims approaching them for assistance. Thus, the reporting of these behaviors by victims and bystanders has been extensively studied to improve proper response to and prevention of criminal activity by authorities. Overall, police are notified of about 40% of criminal activity (Bosick et al., 2012; Truman & Planty, 2012), but numerous moderators influence this reporting rate.

Although offense and victim factors affect reporting decisions (Goudriaan, Wittebrood, & Nieuwbeerta, 2006; Tarling & Morris, 2010; Weller et al., 2013), exploring the characteristics and perceptions of individuals that fail to report after exposure to problematic behavior would appear highly useful in campus threat assessment efforts. Most notably, this understanding could relate to reporting improvement efforts with empirically relevant information being efficiently presented to a target group (i.e., those likely to view threatening behavior and not report). In campus sexual violence interventions, similar identification has appeared necessary in generating willingness to report behaviors of concern (Foubert & Perry, 2007; McMahon & Dick, 2011; Paul & Gray, 2011).

Characteristics of Those Viewing and Not Reporting

Some results would suggest certain groups of students might be more likely to be exposed to preincident behavior on campus. For instance, with a sample of Australian adolescents, repetitive victimization was more likely to be endorsed by male participants (i.e., 71% of those reporting revictimization and 47% of those not reporting revictimization) that had little respect for the law, delinquent peers, and lower socioeconomic status (Fagan & Mazerolle, 2011). In the National Crime Victimization Survey (NCVS), males reported more victimization than females (i.e., 25% of males reporting victimization vs. 20% of females; Truman & Planty, 2012). Certain minority ethnic groups (e.g., Black, Hispanic, American Indian) were more likely to experience victimization than other participants. Individuals with delinquent peers are most likely to engage in concerning behavior and would be expected to display these actions to friends and acquaintances with similar criminalistic traits (Brank et al., 2007; Wong

& Gordon, 2006). Thus, certain groups of students on campus (e.g., males, delinquent students, minority students) may be at increased risk of viewing preincident behavior.

Similar characteristics may be related to unwillingness to report preincident behavior. In general, female bystanders have displayed greater willingness to report than males (Goudriaan et al., 2006; Schnebly, 2008). For instance, with a middle school sampling, boys were less willing to report a weapon-wielding peer than girls, regardless of the possibility of anonymity and freedom from negative student reactions (Brank et al., 2007). With a sample of college students, men were more likely to minimize the seriousness of domestic assault and the culpability of the domestic offenders (Yamawaki et al., 2012). A large sample of teen students ($n = 1354$) from 137 different census tracks included females being more willing to report criminal activity to the police (Slocum, Taylor, Brick, & Esbensen, 2010). Nonetheless, in each of these studies, male or female endorsement of delinquent behavior and attitudes also related to unwillingness to report, which coincides with general criminal reporting findings (Schnebly, 2008). Yet, mixed findings have been found regarding ethnicity and reporting decisions, and the instances of significant effects appear moderated by neighborhood variables (e.g., poverty, frequent criminal activity; Goudriaan et al., 2006; Schnebly, 2008; Tarling & Morris, 2010). In college samples, ethnicity has appeared unrelated to reporting of preincident behavior (Sulkowski, 2011). Thus, in the current study, males and delinquent students are expected to have greater unwillingness to report.

In addition, attitudinal variables appear highly important to individuals' reporting decisions. For instance, college females victimized by physical or sexual assault often failed to report (i.e., 2.2% of physical victims and 1.4% of sexual assault victims reported the events to authorities), and these individuals indicated lack of trust in the ability of police to intervene and make accurate interpretations of fault related to their decisions to not report (Thompson et al., 2007). Also, not wanting "anyone to know," the "offender to get in trouble," or personal shame or embarrassment were related to unwillingness to report (p. 280), which corresponds with reasons for not reporting peer misconduct in a predominantly male Naval Academy setting (Pershing, 2003). Many college

female stalking victims reported failing to report to police (i.e., 97% of the sample), because most attempted to resolve the situation individually (47%) or with the assistance of friends or family (32.1%; Buhi et al., 2009). Mistrust in the police (i.e., 19% of those not informing others) and viewing the situation as insignificant (i.e., 65% of those not informing others) were described by those failing to inform others. High school students failing to inform authorities of concerning behavior were described as often "misjudged the likelihood and immediacy of planned attack" (Pollack, Modzeleski, & Rooney, 2008). Thus, in addition to improving campus connectedness (i.e., current reporting improvement suggestions in campus threat assessment; Sulkowski, 2011), attitudes of campus safety, campus police, and peer loyalty may also affect reporting decisions. In fact, general criminal reporting appears highly influenced by these additional attitudinal variables (Goudriaan et al., 2006; Levitt, 1998; Schnebly, 2008; Tarling & Morris, 2010).

Hypotheses

Thus, the current study attempts to identify differences between the general student population and students that view and do not report preincident behavior. Demographic variables will be explored, and males are expected to be more likely to view and not report preincident behavior. Delinquency is also expected to correspond with being at an increased likelihood of viewing and not reporting preincident behavior. Several attitudinal variables will be used (i.e., campus connectedness, peer loyalty, perceptions of campus safety, perceptions of campus police), and none of these measures are expected to relate to increased exposure to preincident behavior. However, those being unwilling to report to authorities are expected to have lower campus connectedness and poorer perceptions of campus police. Those failing to report are predicted to have greater peer loyalty and perceptions of safety on campus.

Method

Procedures

Undergraduate students from a large, Midwestern university were approached to participate in the study using an online survey tool (i.e., Expe-

rimetrix). Students were informed about the study and agreed to a statement of consent. Next, participants were presented with the survey material. Upon completion, students were provided a debriefing document with researcher contact information for follow-up questions.

Independent Variables

The two measures used for independent variable purposes were vignettes of concerning behavior (Appendix A; Hollister et al., 2012) and questions regarding observance of threatening actions (Appendix B). These two variables were not randomly assigned, but separated students into groups used in analyses.

Vignettes of concerning behavior. This measure consists of 12 scenarios, and 9 contained concerning behavior preceding campus targeted attacks (Drysdale et al., 2010). After each scenario, a variety of potential actions were provided. Selections that would inform university authorities of a threatening individual (i.e., 6 = *Notify the university administration or faculty*; 7 = *Notify police*) were used as an indication of a students' willingness to report, while those that would not (i.e., 1 = *none*; 2 = *Change my personal security (such as changing locks or changing phone numbers)*; 3 = *Have a third party, beside university administration, faculty or police, talk to the individual*; 4 = *Talk with a friend of the individual*; 5 = *Talk with the concerning individual*) were viewed as a student being unwilling to report a situation to authorities. A student's responses to each of the 9 scenarios with preincident behavior were totaled. If students expressed willingness to report in 5 or more of the 9 scenarios (i.e., willing to report in the majority of scenarios), they were analyzed in the *willing to report* group. If students expressed unwillingness to report in 5 or more of the 9 scenarios (i.e., unwilling to report in the majority of scenarios), they were analyzed in the *unwilling to report* group.

Observance of threatening behaviors. Participants were asked, "Have you ever become aware of an individual that made somebody intimidated or fearful for his or her safety while on campus?" With an answer of "yes," students were placed in the corresponding group and questioned about specifics of the incident. However, a "no" prompted a follow-up question pertaining to the exposure to a

list of actions that are considered risk factors for targeted violence. If students selected observing a threatening behavior, they were considered to be viewers of threatening behavior, despite their "no" to the original question. A lack of indication for observance of these behaviors positioned that individual in the group of students that had not seen alarming actions while on campus. Thus, students were analyzed in the *did not observe threatening behavior* group if they denied viewing preincident behavior on campus. Students were analyzed in the *observed threatening behavior* group if they reported observing preincident behavior on campus.

With these variables, four groups were created (i.e., willing to report and observed threatening behavior, unwilling to report and observed threatening behavior, willing to report and did not observe threatening behavior, unwilling to report and did not observe threatening behavior).

Dependent Variables

Various dependent measures were used in the current study. These included demographic questions, the Self-Report Delinquency Scale (Piquero, MacIntosh, & Hickman, 2002), the Campus Connectedness Scale (Summers, Beretvas, Svincki, & Gorin, 2005), and an assessment of peer loyalty (Appendix C), feelings of safety on campus, and feelings toward campus police (Appendix D).

Demographic questions. Questions in this category addressed students' age, gender, year in school, grade point average (GPA), and ethnic background. Year in school contained five choices (i.e., first, second, third, fourth, and other). Ethnic background included six choices (i.e., White, Black/non-Hispanic, Asian/Pacific Islander, Hispanic, American/Alaskan Native, and Other). The current sample included 19 (4.2%) Black/non-Hispanic students, 31 (6.9%) Asian/Pacific Islander students, 18 (4.0%) Hispanic, 2 (0.4%) American/Alaskan Native, and 3 (0.7%) Other. However, in statistical analyses these groups were combined to form a binary variable of White/non-White.

Self-report delinquency scale. This scale addresses the self-reported frequency of criminal behaviors in the previous 12 months (Piquero et al., 2002). Originally 9 questions in length, the measure has been shortened in past analyses "due to limited variability across items and categories" (Sulkowski, 2011, p. 56). The current study uses 4 items (i.e., illicit drug use, theft, forcible robbery, and use of physically aggression) that have high internal consistency in studies with college students ($\alpha = .81$).

Campus Connectedness Scale (CCS). The CCS is an assessment of student's attachment with the campus and campus community (Summers et al., 2005). It contains 14 self-report questions and is partially an adjustment of the Social Connectedness Scale (Lee & Robbins, 1995). The CCS has shown quality psychometrics with college student samples (Summers et al., 2005; Sulkowski, 2011) and included excellent internal consistency with the present sample ($\alpha = .94$).

Peer loyalty. While peer loyalty has been considered an important factor in reporting decisions (Brank et al., 2007; Hollister et al., 2012), no direct measurement has occurred. Thus, to address peer loyalty, a question was used from Pershing (2003) and combined with similar queries. This measure had good internal consistency with the present sample ($\alpha = .70$).

Feelings of safety on campus. This measure included two questions intended to address a student's view of safety on campus. These questions were "I feel safe on campus during the day" and "I feel safe on campus at night." Each was followed with these choices: $1 = $ *in all areas*, $2 = $ *in most areas*, $3 = $ *in some areas*, $4 = $ *in few areas*, $5 = $ *in no areas*. Then, the scores were reverse coded, so that higher scores related to increased feelings of safety on campus. This measure had acceptable internal consistency with the present sample ($\alpha = .63$).

Feelings toward campus police. This measure consisted of five questions pertaining to viewpoints of campus police. Opinions regarding the quality, confidence, and performance of campus police were rated on the following Likert scale: $1 = $ *not at all true*, $2 = $ *a little true*, $3 = $ *moderately true*, $4 = $ *very true*, $5 = $ *completely true*. Higher scores relate to more positive viewpoints of campus police. This measure had good internal consistency with the present sample ($\alpha = .86$).

Results

Data was reviewed in 2 (inform or did not inform in hypothetical situations) $\times$ 2 (observed

or has not observed threatening behavior) between groups analysis of variance (ANOVA).

Demographic Questions

The sample consisted of 450 students, with the majority being female ($n = 335$; 74%) and White ($n = 377$; 84%). The average age was 20.32 years ($SD = 3.20$), and 2.48 years ($SD = 1.28$) was the average previous involvement with the university. The average GPA was 3.35 ($SD = .50$); however, 33 students failed to enter their GPA and were not included in statistical analyses regarding GPA. These individuals completed other required survey items and were involved in all other analyses.

Of the sample, 157 students (35%) reported observing threatening behaviors on campus. Of these 157 students, 56 (36%) indicated willingness to report in the majority of vignettes and 101 (65%) indicated unwillingness to report. Of the overall sample, 293 students (65%) did not report seeing concerning actions on campus. Of these 293 students, 138 (47%) demonstrated willingness to report in the majority of vignettes and 155 (53%) demonstrated unwillingness to report.

The means of demographic variables for each group can be viewed in Table 1. In regard to observance of threatening behaviors, there were no significant differences for participants' age, $F(1, 446) = 3.32$, $p = .07$, $MSE = 10.10$, $r = .09$; year in school, $F(1, 446) = 0.62$, $p = .43$, $MSE = 1.63$, $r = .04$; gender, $F(1, 446) = 1.55$, $p = .21$, $MSE = 0.19$, $r = .06$; ethnicity, $F(1, 446) = 1.67$, $p = .20$, $MSE = 0.14$, $r = .06$; or GPA, $F(1, 413) = 1.74$, $p = .19$, $MSE = 0.26$, $r = .06$, between observers and nonobservers.

For willingness to report vignettes of threatening behavior, there were no significant differ-ences in participants' age, $F(1, 446) = 3.34$, $p = .07$, $MSE = 10.10$, $r = .09$; ethnicity, $F(1, 446) = 0.16$, $p = .69$, $MSE = 0.14$, $r = .02$; and GPA, $F(1, 413) = 0.04$, $p = .85$, $MSE = 0.26$, $r = .01$. However, students with a higher class standing, $F(1, 446) = 4.12$, $p = .04$, $MSE = 1.63$, $r = .10$, tended to express greater willing-ness to report. Females indicated greater will-ingness to report than males, $F(1, 413) = 7.79$, $p = .01$, $MSE = 0.19$, $r = .13$.

No interaction effects between the indepen-dent variables on participant age, $F(1, 446) = 0.74$, $p = .39$, $MSE = 10.10$, $r = .04$; class standing, $F(1, 446) = 0.37$, $p = .85$, $MSE = 1.63$, $r = .03$; gender, $F(1, 446) = 1.13$, $p = .28$, $MSE = 0.19$, $r = .05$; ethnicity, $F(1, 446) = 1.81$, $p = .30$, $MSE = 0.14$, $r = .06$; or GPA, $F(1, 446) = 0.14$, $p = .71$, $MSE = 0.26$, $r = .02$. Thus, main effect findings would be descriptive for all simple effect comparisons involving these variables.

Self-Report Delinquency Scale

The means for each group can be viewed in Table 2. Self-reported delinquency did not differ significantly between observers and nonobservers of threatening behavior on campus, $F(1, 446) = 0.81$, $p = .37$, $MSE = 4.54$, $r = .01$. Furthermore, reports of delinquency lacked significance be-tween those willing and unwilling to report, $F(1, 446) = 3.78$, $p = .05$, $MSE = 4.54$, $r = .09$; although, this finding could be interpreted as a marginal trend indicating those with higher delin-quency expressing greater unwillingness to report. No interaction effects appeared present for this variable, $F(1, 446) = .00$, $p = .97$, $MSE = 4.54$, $r = .00$; therefore, main effects are descriptive for simple effect comparisons.

Table 1
Participant Demographics

Experimental group	Age	Year in school	% Female	% White	GPA
Willing to report	20.74 (4.08)	2.62 (1.33)	0.81 (0.39)	0.85 (0.36)	3.35 (0.50)
Unwilling to report	20.00 (2.29)	2.38 (1.28)	0.70 (0.46)	0.83 (0.38)	3.36 (0.51)
Viewed behavior	19.92 (1.51)	2.53 (1.23)	0.87 (0.33)	0.87 (0.33)	3.40 (0.49)
Did not view behavior	20.53 (3.80)	2.46 (1.30)	0.82 (0.39)	0.82 (0.39)	3.33 (0.51)
Willing to report/Viewed behavior	20.13 (1.64)	2.71 (1.20)	0.86 (0.35)	0.86 (0.35)	3.38 (0.52)
Willing to report/Did not view behavior	20.99 (4.70)	2.59 (1.38)	0.85 (0.36)	0.85 (0.36)	3.41 (0.48)
Unwilling to report/Viewed behavior	19.81 (1.43)	2.43 (1.24)	0.88 (0.33)	0.88 (0.33)	3.41 (0.48)
Unwilling to report/Did not view behavior	20.12 (2.70)	2.35 (1.22)	0.79 (0.41)	0.79 (0.41)	3.32 (0.53)

Note. GPA = grade point average. Percentages are in decimal form. Mean values are listed. *SD*s are parenthetical.

Table 2
Dependent Variables

Experimental group	Delinquency	Campus connection	Peer loyalty	Feelings of safety on campus	Feelings toward campus police
Willing to report	1.02 (1.76)	71.45 (15.48)	12.72 (1.87)	8.24 (1.31)	19.33 (3.21)
Unwilling to report	1.46 (2.37)	71.57 (15.03)	12.72 (1.77)	8.46 (1.14)	18.30 (3.98)
Viewed behavior	1.45 (2.32)	73.61 (12.85)	12.85 (1.74)	8.17 (1.44)	18.04 (4.00)
Did not view behavior	1.24 (2.09)	70.39 (16.25)	12.65 (1.85)	8.47 (1.14)	19.12 (3.48)
Willing to report/Viewed behavior	1.16 (1.80)	75.02 (13.30)	12.71 (1.94)	7.93 (1.56)	18.95 (3.50)
Willing to report/Did not view behavior	0.96 (1.75)	70.00 (16.11)	12.72 (1.85)	8.37 (1.18)	19.49 (3.09)
Unwilling to report/Viewed behavior	1.57 (2.48)	72.83 (12.59)	12.93 (1.63)	8.30 (1.36)	17.54 (4.19)
Unwilling to report/Did not view behavior	1.39 (2.30)	70.75 (16.42)	12.59 (1.85)	8.56 (1.10)	18.79 (3.77)

Note. SRDS = Self-Report Delinquency Scale (Piquero et al., 2005); CCS = Campus Connectedness Scale (Summers et al., 2005); PLQ = Peer Loyalty Questions. Mean values are listed. *SD*s are parenthetical.

CCS

The means for each group on this variable can be found in Table 2. Observers of threatening behavior on campus reported having greater connection to campus than nonobservers, $F(1, 446) = 5.29$, $p = .02$, $MSE = 230.10$, $r = .11$. No significant difference between participants willing and unwilling to report were observed, $F(1, 446) = 0.22$, $p = .64$, $MSE = 230.10$, $r = .02$. Also, no interaction effect appeared present, $F(1, 446) = 0.90$, $p = .34$, $MSE = 230.10$, $r = .04$.

Peer Loyalty Questionnaire

The means of each group can be found in Table 2. No significant differences between observers and nonobservers of threatening behavior on campus were observed, $F(1, 446) = 0.81$, $p = .37$, $MSE = 3.29$, $r = .04$. Moreover, no significant differences between those expressing willingness or unwillingness to report were present, $F(1, 446) = 0.05$, $p = .83$, $MSE = 3.29$, $r = .01$, nor was an interaction effect, $F(1, 446) = 0.92$, $p = .34$, $MSE = 3.29$, $r = .01$.

Feelings of Safety on Campus

The means for this variable are contained in Table 2. Students reporting observing threatening behaviors had significantly lower feelings of safety on campus than students indicating no observation of these actions, $F(1, 446) = 7.68$, $p = .01$, $MSE = 1.56$, $r = .13$. Moreover, students expressing a willingness to inform authorities had significantly lower feelings of safety on campus than students expressing unwillingness, $F(1, 446) = 4.84$, $p = .03$, $MSE = 1.56$, $r = .10$. No

interaction effect was seen for this variable, $F(1, 446) = 0.48$, $p = .49$, $MSE = 1.56$, $r = .03$.

Feelings Toward Campus Police

The means for this variable are shown in Table 2. Students reporting observation of threatening behaviors on campus tended to have significantly less favorable feelings toward campus police, in comparison to those that had not viewed concerning behaviors, $F(1, 446) = 5.80$, $p = .02$, $MSE = 13.29$, $r = .11$. Students expressing a willingness to report had more favorable feelings toward campus police than those that indicated being unwilling to report, $F(1, 446) = 7.96$, $p = .01$, $MSE = 13.29$, $r = .13$. No significant interaction effect was observed, $F(1, 446) = 0.91$, $p = .34$, $MSE = 13.29$, $r = .05$.

Discussion

Although few demographic variables corresponded with increased likelihood of exposure to preincident behavior, several of these factors distinguished students that were unwilling to inform police. Males and students engaging in delinquent activity were unwilling to report, which a finding consistent with prior research (Brank et al., 2007; Schnebly, 2008; Tarling & Morris, 2010). Students with lower class standing demonstrated unwillingness to report, which may relate to their perceptions of collegiate social norms regarding binge drinking and minor criminal activity (Prentice & Miller, 1993; Selwyn, 2008). Thus, these groups of students represent populations highly important to campus threat assessment reporting improvement efforts.

Across the sample, willingness to report corresponded with perceptions of campus safety and campus protection services. Students with high feelings of safety on campus were unwilling to report, which could relate to minimization of problematic behavior and exoneration of those engaging in misbehavior (Buhi et al., 2009; Pollack et al., 2008; Thompson et al., 2007; Weller et al., 2013; Yamawaki et al., 2012). Students with less trust in campus police were more unwilling to inform authorities of preincident behavior, which extends a general crime reporting influence to additional behaviors (e.g., threats, violent ideation) used by protection services in violence prevention efforts.

Perceptions of safety and campus police also differed between viewers and nonviewers of preincident behavior. Students observing concerning behavior felt less safe on campus and had less trust in campus police, which suggests that concerning behavior can influence beliefs about protection services and larger perceptions of the campus community. Therefore, appropriate management of preincident behavior by campus threat assessment teams would appear highly important to the well being of students on campus and their support of campus resources (e.g., campus police). Similarly, positive past experiences with law enforcement increases willingness to report subsequent issues (Goudriaan et al., 2006; Tarling & Morris, 2010).

Another difference between observers of preincident actions and those not viewing this behavior was campus connectedness. This finding could relate to those with increased connectedness being involved in supervisory positions on campus (e.g., residence assistance, student organization leaders). College students often seek these individuals' support during difficult circumstances. For example, 6% of college female stalking victims informed a residence hall advisor of the situation (Buhi et al., 2009). Thus, ensuring these connected individuals are aware of appropriate reporting of concerning behavior would assist in increased violence prevention ability.

Implications

The current study supports existing proposals for increasing reporting of preincident behavior on college campuses, like enhancing faculty-student relations and increasing awareness of actions requiring authority notification in the general campus population (Hollister et al., 2012; Sulkowski, 2011). Moreover, a community policing approach could increase trust and accessibility of campus police, which would relate to improved reporting of threatening behavior (Goudriaan et al., 2006; Levitt, 1998; Oliver, 2000). However, 22% of the sample had viewed preincident behavior and were unwilling to report, and the characteristics of this portion of the student population could be used in additional reporting improvement efforts.

Collegiate efforts to increase reporting have increased success when the material is focused on groups at high-risk for viewing and not reporting the concerning behavior (Foubert & Perry, 2007; McMahon & Dick, 2011; Paul & Gray, 2011). All-inclusive administrative efforts often group students with differing goals and self-perceptions, which prevents the material from being relevant and applicable to some high-risk students (i.e., those likely to view and not report). Reporting improvement efforts with a smaller, like-minded target population can appeal to preexisting self-conceptions and generate earnest, relatable discussion in a manner that corresponds with lasting attitudinal and behavioral change. For example, in collegiate sexual assault prevention efforts, interventions focused on male athletic teams and fraternity members are highly effective (Foubert, 2000; Foubert & Perry, 2007), as the material can be shaped to include nonconfrontational examples (e.g., "two presumably heterosexual men using rape and battery to exert power and control over the survivor"; Foubert & Perry, 2007, p. 75), relevant prosocial suggestions (e.g., assisting female rape survivors), and discussion with similar peers about social norms and intimate encounters. Therefore, the characteristics of students likely to view and not report preincident behavior can be used to guide reporting improvement efforts for campus threat assessment teams.

Potential Application of Findings

Because students with increased campus connectedness are more likely to view threatening behavior and more likely to act as social referents for student social norms, these highly involved students (e.g., residence hall advisors, student organization leaders) could be trained by campus authorities to lead peer education meetings. These individuals become aware of

significantly more preincident behavior than average students; thus, their expertise would be useful in ensuring campus threat assessment teams are informed of potentially dangerous situations. Moreover, peer education allows for intervention material to be credible and accessible to recipients (Foubert & Perry, 2007; Paul & Gray, 2011). Particularly, students with lower class standing (i.e., a group appearing unlikely to report) typically use peers to gain awareness of acceptable student behavior and campus social norms (Paluck & Shepherd, 2012). Highly connected students respected by males (e.g., fraternity presidents, athletic team captains) and students involved in delinquency (e.g., those involved in fringe subcultures, edgy musicians; Kiilakoski & Oksanen, 2011) would appear highly important to effective peer intervention techniques, as these individuals would have the greatest influential ability with students at high-risk for viewing and not reporting preincident behavior. Peer education with these social referents within concentrated male (e.g., male dormitories, fraternities, male athletic teams) or delinquent student (e.g., judicial affairs stipulations) populations would appear especially relevant to the goals of campus threat assessment.

Peer education efforts would appear to have increased effectiveness if including a relatively brief presentation (i.e., 30–60 min) of relevant material provided to an audience with similar attitudes (Foubert, 2000; Foubert & Perry, 2007; Paul & Gray, 2011). Because perceptions of campus police and awareness of campus safety concerns relate to reporting, these concepts should be formed to target problematic beliefs of high-risk groups (e.g., males, students engaging in delinquency) in a nonconfrontational manner. The intervention material could display the combination of preincident behaviors involved in campus-wide issues (e.g., a targeted attack) and demonstrate the problem-solving approach of campus police (e.g., not punitively focused) toward these concerns. The importance of individual reporting decisions in ensuring student safety and the significance of demonstrating prosocial attitudes toward campus authorities could also be displayed. Small focus groups of like-minded students could be formed following the presentation and asked to discuss attitudinal change and suggestions for program improvement. This approach would be expected to address minimizations of preinci-

dent behavior, misperceptions of campus police, and beliefs regarding negative student attitudes about seeking police assistance.

The material within this technique could be formed to the specific intervention group to ensure a nonconfrontational, pertinent presentation, such as men being provided examples of assisting a female friend in a domestic violence situation (Foubert & Perry, 2007), delinquent students being shown students being respected by authorities and remaining anonymous in reporting of safety concerns (Pollack et al., 2008), and youthful students viewing instances of administrative assistance during a difficult college transition. Of course, additional research is crucial in clarifying reporting improvement targets and evaluating the effectiveness of suggested interventions.

Limitations

The findings of the current study are subject to limitations. Self-report information was used, which may not accurately represent campus experiences. For instance, willingness to report may not relate to actual reporting decisions regarding threatening information, and further research should review this possibility. Some of the self-report measures had received limited or no empirical support prior to implementation. Generalizability of results may also be affected due to the sample being from one university and consisting of undergraduate students enrolled in psychological courses. Moreover, this study used between-groups differences in statistical comparisons, which fail to analyze correlations between variables and adjustments that could occur to students over time or after viewing threatening behavior.

Conclusion

Despite these limitations, the current study advances a rarely reviewed, yet important, piece of the campus threat assessment approach. With greater understanding of those that view and do not report preincident behavior, reporting improvement efforts on campus can have increased effectiveness and efficiency. The current findings support a peer education model of reporting improvement efforts with material generating trust in campus police and awareness of campus safety concerns. These efforts could be focused on males, delinquent students, and students with lower class standing. These tech-

niques have related to increased willingness to report in other campus efforts and would assist campus threat assessment teams in identifying and preventing violent concerns.

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(*Appendices follow*)

Appendix A

Observance of Threatening Behavior

Have you ever become aware of an individual who made somebody intimated or fearful for his or her safety while on campus?

❍ Yes (1)
❍ No (2)

Have you viewed an individual that displayed any of the following behaviors while on campus? If more than one observed individual has displayed these behaviors, please focus on the most recent instance in selection.

❑ Repeated unwanted verbal contacts through email or phone (1)

❑ Repeated unwanted face-to-face contact (2)
❑ Physical following (3)
❑ Vandalism or property theft (4)
❑ Surveillance or monitoring (5)
❑ A threatening gesture (6)
❑ A threatening statement (7)
❑ Acquisition or interest in weapons (8)
❑ Physical assault (9)
❑ Sexual assault or touching (10)
❑ Suicidal statements or attempts (11)
❑ None (12)

Appendix B

Vignettes of Concerning Behavior

Please read the following hypothetical situations and select your anticipated action.

You see an expelled student on campus with a weapon. What Action, if any, would You take? Please select all that apply:

❑ None (1)
❑ Have a third party, beside university administration, faculty, or police, talk to the individual (2)
❑ Talk with a friend of the individual (3)
❑ Talk with the concerning individual (4)
❑ Notify the university administration or faculty (5)
❑ Notify police (6)
❑ Other (7) _____

You notice a student who has failed 10 courses over his or her 4 years of college is wearing black and avoids eye contact with other students. What action, if any, would you take? Please select all that apply:

❑ None (1)
❑ Have a third party, beside university administration, faculty, or police, talk to the individual (2)

❑ Talk with a friend of the individual (3)
❑ Talk with the concerning individual (4)
❑ Notify the university administration or faculty (5)
❑ Notify police (6)
❑ Other (7) _____

A student writes a violent paper after a break-up including a scene with somebody stabbing an ex-lover. What action, if any, would you take? Please select all that apply:

❑ None (1)
❑ Have a third party, beside university administration, faculty, or police, talk to the individual (2)
❑ Talk with a friend of the individual (3)
❑ Talk with the concerning individual (4)
❑ Notify the university administration or faculty (5)
❑ Notify police (6)
❑ Other (7) _____

You hear a student state "Professor A is going to get what's coming to him." What action, if any, would you take? Please select all that apply:

(*Appendices continue*)

❑ None (1)
❑ Have a third party, beside university administration, faculty, or police, talk to the individual (2)
❑ Talk with a friend of the individual (3)
❑ Talk with the concerning individual (4)
❑ Notify the university administration or faculty (5)
❑ Notify police (6)
❑ Other (7) _____

A student has become fascinated with weapons. What action, if any, would you take? Please select all that apply:
❑ None (1)
❑ Have a third party, beside university administration, faculty, or police, talk to the individual (2)
❑ Talk with a friend of the individual (3)
❑ Talk with the concerning individual (4)
❑ Notify the university administration or faculty (5)
❑ Notify police (6)
❑ Other (7) _____

A short student with a chilling personality tells a friend an angry story. What action, if any, would you take? Please select all that apply:
❑ None (1)
❑ Have a third party, beside university administration, faculty, or police, talk to the individual (2)
❑ Talk with a friend of the individual (3)
❑ Talk with the concerning individual (4)
❑ Notify the university administration or faculty (5)
❑ Notify police (6)
❑ Other (7) _____

You hear somebody say that he or she is going to buy an AK47 and shoot a certain professor after he or she gets back from lunch on Tuesday. What action, if any, would you take? Please select all that apply:
❑ None (1)
❑ Have a third party, beside university administration, faculty, or police, talk to the individual (2)
❑ Talk with a friend of the individual (3)

❑ Talk with the concerning individual (4)
❑ Notify the university administration or faculty (5)
❑ Notify police (6)
❑ Other (7) _____

You hear a student who is normally kind tell his or her significant other, "I'm going to strangle you." What action, if any, would you take? Please select all that apply:
❑ None (1)
❑ Have a third party, beside university administration, faculty, or police, talk to the individual (2)
❑ Talk with a friend of the individual (3)
❑ Talk with the concerning individual (4)
❑ Notify the university administration or faculty (5)
❑ Notify police (6)
❑ Other (7) _____

You hear a student making delusional statements about being a member in the President of the United State's Cabinet. He or she lost a scholarship recently. What action, if any, would you take? Please select all that apply:
❑ None (1)
❑ Have a third party, beside university administration, faculty, or police, talk to the individual (2)
❑ Talk with a friend of the individual (3)
❑ Talk with the concerning individual (4)
❑ Notify the university administration or faculty (5)
❑ Notify police (6)
❑ Other (7) _____

A student informs you that he or she is going to "teach the administration a lesson" after tuition is raised. What action, if any, would you take? Please select all that apply:
❑ None (1)
❑ Have a third party, beside university administration, faculty, or police, talk to the individual (2)
❑ Talk with a friend of the individual (3)
❑ Talk with the concerning individual (4)
❑ Notify the university administration or faculty (5)

(*Appendices continue*)

❑ Notify police (6)
❑ Other (7) _____

An individual is wearing a long trench coat and baggy jeans. What action, if any, would you take? Please select all that apply:
❑ None (1)
❑ Have a third party, beside university administration, faculty, or police, talk to the individual (2)
❑ Talk with a friend of the individual (3)
❑ Talk with the concerning individual (4)
❑ Notify the university administration or faculty (5)
❑ Notify police (6)

❑ Other (7) _____
You hear a student state "I'm going to kill Professor A." What action, if any, would you take? Please select all that apply:
❑ None (1)
❑ Have a third party, beside university administration, faculty, or police, talk to the individual (2)
❑ Talk with a friend of the individual (3)
❑ Talk with the concerning individual (4)
❑ Notify the university administration or faculty (5)
❑ Notify police (6)
❑ Other (7) _____

Appendix C

Peer Loyalty

Loyalty among friends is the highest form of honor.
○ Strongly disagree (1)
○ Disagree (2)
○ Undecided (3)
○ Agree (4)
○ Strongly agree (5)

My friends are an important part of my well-being.
○ Strongly disagree (1)
○ Disagree (2)

○ Undecided (3)
○ Agree (4)
○ Strongly agree (5)

My friends are one of my most important priorities.
○ Strongly disagree (1)
○ Disagree (2)
○ Undecided (3)
○ Agree (4)
○ Strongly agree (5)

Appendix D

Feelings Toward Campus Police

Please respond to the following items about you general beliefs about campus police on the UNL campus using the scale below.

Campus police do their job well.
- ❍ Not at all true (1)
- ❍ A little true (2)
- ❍ Moderately true (3)
- ❍ Very true (4)
- ❍ Completely true (5)

Campus police are not adequately trained to deal with safety issues. (reverse scored)
- ❍ Not at all true (1)
- ❍ A little true (2)
- ❍ Moderately true (3)
- ❍ Very true (4)
- ❍ Completely true (5)

The basic rights of people like me are well protected by campus police.
- ❍ Not at all true (1)
- ❍ A little true (2)
- ❍ Moderately true (3)
- ❍ Very true (4)
- ❍ Completely true (5)

My confidence in campus police is high.
- ❍ Not at all true (1)
- ❍ A little true (2)
- ❍ Moderately true (3)
- ❍ Very true (4)
- ❍ Completely true (5)

I trust campus police to perform their duties as they should.
- ❍ Not at all true (1)
- ❍ A little true (2)
- ❍ Moderately true (3)
- ❍ Very true (4)
- ❍ Completely true (5)