

**Student Perceptions of Concealed Carry of Firearms (Campus Carry) Policies
at a Large Public Urban University in the Midwest**

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Submitted to the Graduate Department and Faculty of the School of Education of
Baker University in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of
Doctor of Education in Educational Leadership

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Date Defended: January 25, 2021

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Abstract

At the time of the current study, 11 states permitted campus carry at public universities and colleges. Although Missouri has one of the least restrictive gun laws in the United States, state regulations prohibiting campus carry have not been revised. Pro-gun rights legislators in the Missouri General Assembly have continued to introduce bills that would either permit campus carry or prohibit leaders of higher education from restricting campus carry. No studies have examined perceptions of students at any institution of higher education in Missouri about the advantages and disadvantages of campus carry, if permitted, or how campus safety might be impacted. This study used a qualitative phenomenological research design to examine the perceptions of undergraduate juniors and graduating seniors majoring in Urban Studies or enrolled in the pre-law program at the University of Missouri Kansas City (UMKC), a large public urban university in the Midwest, about the impact of carrying concealed firearms on campus safety if campus carry becomes law in Missouri. Five emerging themes were identified after data analysis: rationale for favoring campus carry related to campus safety; apprehensions about campus carry related to campus safety; advantages of campus carry related to safe learning environments; disadvantages of campus carry related to safe learning environments; and assessments of the impact on learning if faculty carried concealed firearms in class. Recommended actions based on findings from the current study include: creating greater opportunities for campus-wide dialogue about the advantages and disadvantages of campus carry, improving awareness about campus safety, and providing mandatory active shooter protocol training on college campuses. In addition, quantitative and qualitative research examining campus carry initiatives in Missouri and campus carry protocols at higher education institutions in U.S. states that permit campus carry should be conducted.

Dedication

To My Granddaughters, Emory and Cora. May Their World be Safer and Kinder.

+++

In Memory of the Victims of School Shootings

Acknowledgments

I chose to pursue a doctorate in higher education to broaden my research activities to include disciplines outside journalism. In my case, this study became a complicated and protracted journey with major professional and personal life changing events. There were many times I sought light at the end of the tunnel and had observed not even a flicker. I did find meaning in two values that do not come naturally to me. During this course of this study, I learned much about patience and humility.

My parents were among the generation of Americans who grew up during the Great Depression and fought in the Second World War. My father joined the Marines and saw combat on Okinawa and other islands in the South Pacific Ocean. My mother may not have been 'Rosie the Riveter' but she worked at a manufacturing plant that produced thousands of gas masks for U.S. troops, and civilians in Europe, China, and the Philippines. Through educational benefits provided by the G.I. Bill, my father was the first of his generation to attend college. My parents' encouragement and hard work meant a college education for each of their children. For one reason or another, earning a degree usually came later in life for the Morello side of the family. My father earned his bachelor's degree late. My sisters earned their professional degrees late, and I earned my doctorate very late.

I would like to thank my son, Justin, who had suggested the idea for this dissertation topic. He earned the title of doctor, as an M.D., a few years before I finished this study. He and his wife, Raulee, also an M.D., were strongly supportive, and I am immensely proud of their achievements in service of others. I would also like to recognize my stepson, Ben, who chose a career where he spends much of his day making clients feel happy.

My colleagues were enthusiastic about my decision to pursue a doctorate. After months turned into years, colleagues and friends stopped asking me about my progress. Toward the end, few believed I was actually working on a doctorate at all. I would like to thank them for their continued encouragement and for not demanding proof that I was writing a dissertation. I appreciated the assistance I received from two undergraduate researchers at UMKC, Zach Linhares and Jefferson Harwood, especially for their help with APA, 6th ed. Both have bright futures ahead of them.

I owe a debt of gratitude to Terri Blake and Dr. Pat Long who while at Baker made this opportunity possible. I cannot say enough about Baker University's academic and financial teams. In every area, from academics, to advising, to financial aid, this university came through for me. Dr. Tes Mehring, truly a standout, served as my advisor and often came up with a solution to an issue before I had a chance to finish my question. In her quiet way, Dr. Peg Waterman edited hundreds of dissertations, including this one, with the patience of Job. I would also like to thank Dr. Barbara Keener and Dr. Alison Banikowski for their contributions as members of my committee.

While I served as a Fulbright Scholar in southern Africa in 2016, I learned about the Zulu philosophy of Ubuntu, a principle I found most apt in summarizing this acknowledgement. "Umuntu ngumuntu ngabantu". A person is a person through other people.

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Chapter 1

Introduction

In 2018, U.S., Missouri, and university flags at the University of Missouri-Kansas City (UMKC), a large urban Midwestern university, had been lowered to half-staff for a total of 67 days to mark national events. Nineteen of those days, flags had been lowered to honor the victims of four mass shootings in the U.S. that year (Steckelberg, 2018). The flags set at half-staff also served as a stark reminder to the campus community that the number of mass shootings at universities, community colleges, and K-12 schools have risen (Katsiyannis, Whitford, & Ennis, 2018). From the mass shootings at Columbine High School in Littleton, Colorado on April 20, 1999, up to the mass shooting at Marjory Stoneman Douglas High School in Parkland, Florida on February 14, 2018, there have been 50 high profile mass shootings in the U.S. involving the deaths of five or more students (Abdalla, 2018). According to (Jones 2018), the mass shooting at Virginia Tech in 2007 was the deadliest on-campus shooting in U.S. history. There were 26 mass shootings on university and college campuses from April 16, 2007 until April 10, 2018. During this time, 320 people (mostly college students), were killed or wounded (Jones, 2018). Statistics compiled by the Center for Homeland Defense and Security (CDHS, 2019) confirmed 2018 was the worst year on record for gun violence in U.S. schools. The CDHS (2019) documented the 97 school shooting incidents in 2018 significantly surpassed the 59 school shootings in 2006, previously the worst year on record. Table 1 identifies 13 high profile mass shootings at both universities and K-12 schools since the massacre at Columbine High School.

Table 1

High Profile Mass Shootings from April 20, 1999 until November 7, 2018

Location	City, State	Date	Number Killed
Columbine HS	Littleton, CO	April 20, 1999	13
Red Lake HS	Red Lake Indian Reservation, MN	March 21, 2005	9
West Nickel Mines Amish School	Nickel Mines, PA	October 2, 2006	5
VT University	Blacksburg, VA	April 16, 2007	32
N. Illinois University	Dekalb, IL	February 14, 2008	5
Oikos University	Oakland, CA	April 2, 2012	7
Sandy Hook Elementary School	Newtown, CT	December 14, 2012	27
Santa Monica College	Santa Monica, CA	June 7, 2013	5
USCB	Isla Vista, CA	May 23, 2014	6
Marysville Pilchuck HS	Marysville, WA	October 24, 2014	5
Umpqua CC	Roseburg, OR	October 1, 2015	9
Marjory Stoneman Douglas HS	Parkland, FL	February 14, 2018	17
Santa Fe HS	Santa Fe, TX	May 18, 2018	10

Note: Adapted from “List of mass shootings since the Columbine massacre”, by Z. Abdalla, 2018, *The Villanovan*, p. 1. Copyright 2018, The Villanovan.

Adapted from “Mass shootings in 2018”. Gun Violence Archive, p. 1. Copyright 2018. Retrieved from <https://www.gunviolencearchive.org/reports/mass-shooting?year=2018>

^aThe data from Marjory Stoneman Douglas HS and Santa Fe HS were retrieved from “Mass shootings in 2018”, all other data was retrieved from “List of mass shooting since the Columbine massacre”. HS = High School; VT = Virginia Tech; USCB = University of South Carolina Beaufort; CC = Community College.

Gun Violence Archive (2018), a non-profit corporation providing online public access to information related to gun violence in the United States, stated there were a total of 1,672 mass shootings (all mass casualty attacks) from January 1, 2014, until December 31, 2018.

Administrators, faculty members, and students at institutions of higher learning have been increasingly confronted with the growing threat of gun violence on college campuses. Cannon's (2016) analysis of college shootings revealed:

Between 2001-02 and 2005-06, there were 61 total casualties during college shootings incidents. During the 2006-07 to 2010-11 school years, casualties nearly tripled, increasing to 168 killed or wounded; 42% of these victims were shot during the mass shootings at Virginia Tech and Northern Illinois University. (p. 3)

Large public universities in the U.S., like UMKC, have historically been open spaces of learning, academic freedom, and the exchange of ideas. These freedoms have, for most institutions of higher learning, meant unfettered physical access to campus. The occurrences of shootings and gun violence, especially on university and college campuses, have changed long-held perceptions of open access and campus safety.

In response to increased safety threats, many state legislators, including lawmakers in the Missouri General Assembly, and pro-gun organizations have advocated for less restrictive gun laws and the elimination of safe zones on campus. Pro-gun national organizations like the National Rifle Association (NRA) and Students for Concealed Carry (SCC) have lobbied "state legislatures to enact laws prohibiting colleges and universities from banning the concealed carrying of handguns on campuses" (Thompson et al., 2013). According to Musa (2016), the

ability of the NRA to persuade states to legislate pro-gun initiatives is a result of the organization's sophisticated national lobbying efforts.

One lobbying technique that the NRA practices is creating a separate organization to lobby on its behalf. The Institute for Legislative Action (ILA), for example, is the lobbying arm for the NRA and it is in charge of the association's political Action Committee (PAC). The ILA [has] played an influential role in passing and stopping many bills; furthermore, NRA-ILA has influenced the outcome of state, local, and national elections. (p. 2)

The SCC has argued students should be allowed to exercise their right to carry a firearm on the grounds of a university or community college. However, Thompson et al. (2013) argued, "University faculty have proffered that university atmospheres conducive to robust academic debate are antithetical to having concealed firearms on campus" (p. 245). LaPoint (2010) and Ewing (2018) used the term 'campus carry' to refer to concealed firearms on college and university campuses. According to Ewing (2018), "Campus carry is the broad term for laws that allow for faculty, staff, students, and individuals other than security or law enforcement to bring [concealable] firearms onto public school property" (p. 1). In the current study, campus carry and concealed carry are synonymous terms when used to refer to concealed firearms on a college or university campus.

Since mass shootings at Virginia Tech and other universities, campus safety programs have come under intense and continuous review by university administrators, police, and faculty and student leaders. State legislatures have become epicenters where advocates and lobbyists for and against campus carry, campus administrators, and faculty and students have voiced strong support or strong opposition to bills that would narrow the reach of regulated safe zones on

university and community college campuses. Jang, Dierenfeldt, and Lee (2014) stated, "In the wake of highly publicized school shooting incidents, lawmakers in several states have proposed legislation that allows the carrying of concealed firearms on college campuses" (p. 304). The rise in the number of mass shootings in schools has led to the enactment of laws in 11 states permitting campus carry on university campuses (National Conference of State Legislatures, 2018). The list did not include the state of Missouri.

The public debate to permit, or to ban campus carry, has been passionate and polarizing. Opposing positions on campus carry as an instrument of campus safety have challenged leaders of higher education to assess safety protocols. University administrators have had to rely on limited research that has been biased or unclear. Grantham (2016) stated, "Relatively little scholarly literature examines the topic of guns on campus in general, and most studies show a lack of support for concealed carry and firearms on college campuses in general among members of the campus community" (p. 17). The state of Kansas has permitted campus carry at public universities and community colleges since 2013. To implement new policy changes on their respective campuses, leaders of higher education in Kansas sought guidance by directly consulting with legal experts and their academic counterparts at schools in other states with campus carry policies. Thompson, Jagannath, Reimal, and Esthappan (2019) surveyed top administrators in Kansas, who emphasized a comprehensive understanding of how new laws would impact their campus, and the changes required to ensure compliance with the law.

Committees sought legal counsel on various issues, including the conditions in which police could intervene in situations involving concealed handgun carrying, the university's role of regulating where, how, and when firearms can be carried, and the

potential for liability issues should gun violence occur. Some public universities used in-house attorneys, whereas others consulted external legal professionals. (p. 6)

Advocates for campus carry on university campuses, such as SCC (2018), have indicated that on campuses where concealed carry has been allowed there have been no increased severe risks of safety or increased incidents of gun violence. SCC (2018) has maintained that rights granted in the Second Amendment to the Constitution also include campus carry.

Recent high profile shootings and armed abductions on college campuses clearly demonstrate that gun-free zones serve to disarm only those law-abiding citizens who might otherwise be able to protect themselves because no other type of location has seen an increased rate of violent crime since concealed carry became legal there; because the eleven U.S. colleges/universities that currently allow concealed carry on campus (and have done so for a combined total of more than eighty semesters) have not seen any resulting incidents of gun violence, gun accidents, or gun thefts; and because college campuses are open environments that lack screening measures such as metal detectors, X-ray machines, and controlled points of entry, SCC feels that there is no pragmatic basis for declaring college campuses off-limits to concealed carry by the same trained, licensed adults (age twenty-one and above in most states) who lawfully and safely carry concealed handguns in locations such as office buildings, movie theaters, grocery stores, shopping malls, restaurants, churches, banks, etc. (p. 1)

To that end, SCC (2018) actively lobbied state legislators to enact laws sanctioning campus carry. SCC stated the primary function of the organization is to “press state legislators and school administrators to grant concealed handgun license holders the same rights on college campuses” (p. 1). The NRA and SCC have argued that permitting concealed carry on college

campuses would not result in an increase of gun violence or compromise campus safety. As the debate over campus carry has intensified, only a few studies have examined the impact of concealed carry on college campuses.

Biastro, Carano, and Larwin (2017) found concealed carry on college campuses led to an increase in sexual assaults.

Most notably however is the significant main effect for the "condition" variable; explicitly, the frequency of sexual assaults where [concealed] carry on campus is permitted relative to the frequency of sexual assaults where carry-on-campus is not permitted. This result suggests that schools with carry-on-campus have a significantly higher incidence of sexual assault crimes when carry-on-campus is permitted. (p. 6)

While pro-gun advocates have argued campus carry would contribute to campus safety, Biastro et al. (2017) found otherwise. "The trends indicate that there has been a significant increase in these crimes once the laws are changed" (p. 7).

The Docking Institute of Public Affairs (2016) found widespread student opposition to campus carry. "More than half of respondents (55%) prefer amending the law so that guns are not allowed on campus" (p. 2). NRA Executive Director, Chris W. Cox (2015), stated university administrators and those opposing campus carry are misinformed because valid concealed carry holders have not been a threat to public safety. "We know that campus carry does not lead to problems, because permit holders have proven time and again to be even more law-abiding than the citizenry at large" (p. 1). SCC (2018) concluded that concealed carry holders pose little to no threat to public safety since "Numerous independent researchers and state agencies agree that concealed handgun license holders are five times less likely than non-license holders to commit violent crimes" (p. 1).

Deliberating over the increase in the number of mass school and university shootings, Legislators in the Missouri General Assembly have introduced bills every session since 2013 that would amend current law prohibiting concealed carry on campus. If enacted into law, Missouri House Bill 575 (2019) would expand the rights of concealed carry holders to include all universities and colleges. House Bill or HB 575 (2019) stated:

Notwithstanding any provision of law to the contrary, public institutions of higher education shall be allowed to construct policies regarding concealed carry permits or endorsements issued under sections 571.101 to 571.121, valid lifetime or extended concealed carry permits issued under sections 571.205 to 571.230, valid concealed carry endorsements issued prior to August 28, 2013, or concealed carry endorsements or permits issued by another state or political subdivision of another state, but such policies shall not generally prohibit or have the effect of generally prohibiting the carrying, chambering, or active operation or storage of a concealed firearm on the campus of such institution. (p. 9)

Studies have documented legislative action on campus carry initiatives in Missouri and other states, but there has been limited qualitative research focusing solely on the perceptions of students. Since students represent the largest group on university and community college campuses, they would likely be the group most impacted by changes in campus carry regulations at public universities in Missouri and elsewhere.

Background

On April 16, 2007, a heavily armed student, Seung-Hui Cho, opened fire on the campus of Virginia Tech University killing 32 students and faculty along with injuring another 24 before he turned the gun on himself (Stanford Geospatial Center & Stanford Libraries, 2018).

According to Jones (2018), the mass shooting at Virginia Tech in 2007 was the deadliest on-campus shooting in U.S. history. Since April 16, 2007 up to April 10, 2018, there were 26 mass shootings at universities and community colleges.

122 people were killed, and 198 people were injured by gunfire in the 11 years since April 16, 2007, mass shooting at Virginia Tech. However, 148 of the 320 people who were shot on college campuses — about 46 percent — were shot in mass shootings. Fifty-three people were killed, and 95 people were wounded in the 26 mass shootings. (Jones, 2018, p. 1)

One of those shootings occurred at Northern Illinois University in DeKalb, Illinois. On February 14, 2008, a student stepped out from behind a curtain in a packed lecture hall and opened fired into the crowd. Six people were killed, and another 17 were injured (Saulny & Davey, 2008). This shooting, similar to those at Virginia Tech and other colleges, took place in an educational setting that was a legally enforced gun-free zone. In the aftermath of these attacks, state legislatures across the U.S. have "considered or passed bills allowing private citizens to carry concealed firearms on campus" (Angelis, Benz, & Gillham, 2017, p. 77). Appendix A lists the deadly college campus shootings that occurred from April 17, 2007 until March 2, 2018, the location, number of persons killed, and number injured.

Kansas, which borders Missouri to the west, has allowed concealed carry on the campuses of universities and community colleges since July 1, 2017. In 2006, The Kansas Personal and Family Protection Act extended the rights of those who hold proper concealed carry permits to bring firearms to schools, churches, and government buildings. In 2013, an amendment prohibited most Kansas state institutions including state universities and colleges from banning concealed carry after the end of a four-year exemption codified in the 2006 law

(Kansas Attorney General, 2018). In 2017, that act was changed again to include most buildings on all university and community college campuses in the state.

Missouri has among the least restrictive gun laws of any state in the United States.

Combs Law Group (2019) specified,

Missouri is a constitutional carry state, which means you don't need a permit to conceal or openly carry a firearm. However, there are some areas where concealed carry is restricted, and you require a CCW permit in these area... You are free to carry your gun in your vehicle, and you don't have to notify an officer if you are approached on official business. (p. 2)

The United States Concealed Carry Association, (USCCA, *Missouri Concealed Carry Gun Laws: CCP & Reciprocity Map 2020*), a pro concealed carry organization, identified Missouri as a state where campus carry is prohibited. The USCCA indicated concealed carry is prohibited in "any higher-education institution or elementary- or secondary-school facility, without the consent of the governing body of the school" (p. 1). In 2019, the Missouri General Assembly considered House Bill 258 and Senate Bill 121 but both bills were tabled. If enacted into law, this legislation would have permitted campus carry at all public institutions of higher learning in the state. Missouri legislators who have supported campus carry stated they have plans to reintroduce similar legislation in future sessions. According to McDonough (2016), campus carry regulations would be forced on public universities and colleges, regardless of support or opposition to campus carry legislation.

Since 2014, Missouri law has allowed weapons to be carried into virtually any building in the state, but not on college campuses unless the schools say so. [In 2019], the Missouri House of Representatives voted 98-52 for a 'guns everywhere' bill that would prohibit

public college presidents and boards from having gun-free policies. The bill stalled in the state Senate but could re-surface upon the legislature's return. (p. 1)

Statement of the Problem

Concealed carry on university and college campuses has become a major challenge for leaders of higher education. Eleven states have enacted laws permitting campus carry since the mass shooting at Virginia Tech in 2007. The Missouri General Assembly has considered various measures that would either directly allow campus carry or would prohibit leaders at public institutions of higher education from banning concealed weapons at colleges or universities. As states have continued to review legislative options, leaders of higher education have strengthened protocols in the event of mass shootings on their campuses. A closer examination of student perceptions about campus carry is an essential addition to the wider body of research on gun control and gun rights, and an analysis of these perceptions could serve as an important source of data in determining the value or the danger of the concealed carry of firearms on university and college campuses.

Purpose of the Study

According to Lunenburg and Irby (2008), the purpose of a study is to solve the stated problem and contribute to the body of knowledge in a particular field. The purpose of this qualitative study was to determine the perceptions of juniors and graduating seniors majoring in Urban Studies or enrolled in the pre-law program at UMKC, a large urban public institution in Missouri, about the impact of campus carry. The first purpose was to determine what juniors and graduating seniors majoring in Urban Studies or enrolled in the pre-law program at UMKC perceived as advantages to campus safety if campus carry becomes a law in Missouri. The second purpose was to determine what juniors and graduating seniors majoring in Urban Studies

or enrolled in the pre-law program at UMKC perceived as disadvantages to campus safety if campus carry becomes law in Missouri. The third purpose was to determine in what ways juniors and graduating seniors majoring in Urban Studies or enrolled in the pre-law program at UMKC perceived how campus carry will result in a safer learning environment on campus if campus carry becomes law in Missouri. The fourth purpose was to determine what juniors and graduating seniors majoring in Urban Studies or enrolled in the pre-law program at UMKC perceived as potential disruptions to a safe learning environment on campus if campus carry becomes law in Missouri. The fifth purpose was to determine what juniors and graduating seniors majoring in Urban Studies or enrolled in the pre-law program at UMKC perceived what impact faculty members carrying concealed firearms on campus would have on the safety of the learning environment on campus if campus carry becomes law in Missouri. According to Urban Studies academic leaders, the program has focused on community issues and the planning of resilient neighborhoods (Department of Architecture, Urban Planning, and Design, 2019).

UMKC is the only Public Research University in the Kansas City region that offers an undergraduate degree program in Urban Studies. Students study the city, processes of urbanization, and how cities are changing. The Kansas City metropolitan region serves as a living laboratory for our classes and curriculum. Students [focus on] community development and housing; community organization and social services; and urban policy (p.1).

Students enrolled in UMKC's pre-law program are expected to demonstrate strong awareness of critical issues that often become central to public discourse. "To garner the skills necessary for success, the pre-law student [chooses] a curriculum that hones and

develops superior writing skills, along with excellent oral communication, logical reasoning, and critical reading skills”. (Pre-Law Program, 2015. p.1)

Significance of the Study

The results of this study may assist university administrators, state legislators, and national policymakers in understanding student perceptions about the impact of concealed carry on campus safety. Biastro et al. (2017) stated, "If able to engage in thoughtful deliberation and debate based on quality research, administrators and policymakers can develop proper rules and regulations to assist in a safer campus environment for all" (Biastro et al., 2017, p. 7). Advocates and opponents of concealed carry, including gun rights organizations, student groups, parents, and others in the university community may find the results of this study of student perceptions about concealed carry on an urban campus useful when developing or defending their respective positions. Finally, the study contributes to the body of literature related to student perspectives about concealed carry on an urban university campus.

Delimitations

“Delimitations are self-imposed boundaries set by the researcher on the purpose and scope of the study” (Lunenburg and Irby, 2008, p. 134). The following were delimitations of the current study:

- The sample group for this study was limited to juniors and graduating seniors majoring in Urban Studies or enrolled in the pre-law program at UMKC, a large urban university in Missouri.
- This study was conducted during a time when the Missouri General Assembly had debated and tabled several bills that would permit concealed carry at institutions of

higher learning. Since 2013, the Missouri General Assembly has considered legislation permitting some form of campus carry during every session.

Assumptions

Assumptions are premises that are accepted as true in a research study. According to Lunenburg and Irby (2008), “Assumptions are postulates, premises, and propositions that are accepted as operational for purposes of the research. Assumptions include the nature, analysis, and interpretation of the data” (Lunenburg and Irby, 2008, p. 135). This study was conducted under the following assumptions:

- All questions were answered to the fullest and best of the respondent’s ability.
- Participants had adequate knowledge of gun laws, legislation, and perspectives on concealed carry in Missouri.
- Concealed firearms were prohibited on all university campuses in the state of Missouri.

Research Questions

Tashakkori and Creswell (2007) stated, “Scholars have reiterated the fact that research questions are shaped by the purpose of a study and in turn form the methods and the design of the investigation” (p. 207). The following five research questions guided the current study:

RQ1. What do juniors and graduating seniors majoring in Urban Studies or enrolled in the pre-law program at UMKC, a large urban public university in Missouri, perceive as advantages to campus safety if campus carry becomes a law in Missouri?

RQ2. What do juniors and graduating seniors majoring in Urban Studies or enrolled in the pre-law program at UMKC, a large urban public university in Missouri, perceive as disadvantages to campus safety if campus carry becomes law in Missouri?

RQ3. In what ways do juniors and graduating seniors majoring in Urban Studies or enrolled in the pre-law program at UMKC, a large urban public university in Missouri, perceive campus carry could lead to a safer learning environment on campus?

RQ4. In what ways do juniors and graduating seniors majoring in Urban Studies or enrolled in the pre-law program at UMKC, a large urban public university in Missouri, perceive campus carry could disrupt a safe learning environment on campus?

RQ5. In what ways do juniors and graduating seniors majoring in Urban Studies or enrolled in the pre-law program at UMKC, a large urban public university in Missouri, perceive faculty members carrying concealed firearms on campus could impact a safe learning environment on campus?

Definition of Terms

The following terms were used throughout this study. The definitions assigned to these terms create a common understanding for readers.

Campus Carry. LaPoint (2010) and Ewing (2018) used the term campus carry to refer to state laws permitting faculty, staff, and students to carry concealable firearms on university and college property.

Concealed Firearm. Any firearm with a barrel less than sixteen inches in length, measured from the face of the bolt or standing breech, is defined as a concealable firearm (Crimes and Punishment: Peace Officers and Public Defenders Act, 2018).

Firearm. Any weapon that is designed or adapted to expel a projectile by the action of an explosive is considered to be a firearm in Missouri (Crimes and Punishment; Peace Officers and Public Defenders Act, 2018).

Handgun. Kegler (2017) defined a handgun as a pistol or revolver which is designed to be fired by the use of a single hand and which is designed to fire or capable of firing cartridge ammunition. Kegler also indicated a handgun could be any other weapon which will or is designed to expel a projectile by the action of an explosive and which is designed to be fired by the use of a single hand.

Mass Shooting. According to the Gun Violence Archive (2018), a mass shooting is any single shooting where four or more persons are shot or killed not including the shooter.

Rifle. The Crimes and Punishment; Peace Officers and Public Defenders Act (2018) described a rifle as any firearm designed or adapted to be fired from the shoulder and to use the energy of the explosive in a fixed metallic cartridge to fire a projectile through a rifled bore by a single function of the trigger.

School Shooting. The Gun Violence Archive (2018) defined a school shooting as an incident that occurs on property of the elementary, secondary, or college campus where there is a death or injury from gun fire, including the “school proper, playground, “skirt” of the facility which includes sidewalks, stadiums, parking lots” (p. 1).

Organization of the Study

The current research study is divided into five chapters. Chapter 1 included an introduction, background, statement of the problem, purpose statement, significance of the study, delimitations, assumptions, research questions, and definitions. Chapter 2 provides a review of relevant literature related to arguments that support and oppose concealed carry on campuses of institutions of higher learning, campus safety, U.S. and Missouri laws related to concealed carry as well as University of Missouri System policies related to campus carry, perspectives of university administrators, faculty, and staff related to campus carry, and perspectives of student

organizations and students about campus carry. Chapter 3 describes the research methodology used in current research including the research design, setting, sampling procedures, instruments, data collection procedures, data analysis and synthesis, reliability and trustworthiness, the researcher's role, and limitations. Results of the study are presented in Chapter 4. Chapter 5 provides an interpretation and recommendations for the study that includes a study summary, description of how significant findings correspond to the literature, and conclusions that describe implications for action, recommendations for future research, and concluding remarks.

Chapter 2

Review of the Literature

This qualitative study explored the perceptions of juniors and graduating seniors majoring in Urban Studies or enrolled in the pre-law program at UMKC, a large urban public institution in Missouri about the impact of campus carry. Student perceptions about advantages and disadvantages of campus carry as well as the impact of campus carry on the safety of the learning environment were examined. This chapter provides a review of literature that includes arguments that support and oppose concealed carry on campuses of institutions of higher learning, campus safety, U.S. and Missouri laws related to concealed carry as well as University of Missouri System policies related to campus carry, perspectives of university administrators, faculty, staff, related to campus carry, and perspectives of student organizations and students about campus carry.

Arguments For and Against Campus Carry

During the past three decades, pro-gun ownership advocacy groups have successfully lobbied legislatures in states known to be receptive to the loosening of gun regulations. The NRA has been at the forefront of developing strategies to expand the rights of gun owners across the country. In California, the NRA supported a lawsuit filed by a local gun-rights group that opposed a county ordinance banning concealed carry in parks and areas of recreation (*Calguns Foundation v. County of San Mateo*, 2013). The NRA's position was that state legislatures, not counties, should regulate gun ownership or oversee licensing matters. The NRA argued the county ordinance was an infringement of the rights guaranteed in the 2nd Amendment to the U.S. Constitution. The NRA's position in an amicus brief filed in that case stated, "The state has impliedly occupied the entire field of Carry License issuing and regulation and County

Ordinance section 3.68.080 is thus preempted by state law" (Calguns Foundation Inc. v. County of San Mateo, 2013, 672).

Expanding on the successful strategies used in the Calgon case, the NRA has focused its lobbying efforts on states the organization believes would be favorable to enacting laws permitting concealed carry. Reich and Barth (2017) underscored that,

As opposed to the federal level, NRA legislative influence at the state level is likely to be more conditional on exploiting the right combination of favorable state environments and/or intermittent alliances that provide opportunities for the organization to affect state legislation. (p. 487)

A key objective of the NRA's overall national strategy includes promoting concealed carry on the campuses of universities and community colleges. According to Hawkins (2017), the NRA has long argued that Virginia Tech, Northern Illinois University, Umpqua Community College, and other higher education institutions where there were multiple killings as a result of mass shootings, would have been safer if concealed carry had been allowed on those campuses. "In a classroom of disarmed, law-abiding citizens, the criminal with a gun is king. However, campus carry takes the advantage away from the criminal by giving students with concealed carry permits a means to fight back" (Hawkins, 2017, p. 1).

The Giffords Law Center to Prevent Gun Violence, founded in 1993 as the Legal Community Against Violence, merged with a pro-gun control organization led by former Congresswoman Gabby Giffords in 2016. Representative Giffords survived an assassination attempt in 2011 after a gunman shot her at a public meeting in Tucson, Arizona. The Giffords Law Center has opposed most gun rights policy initiatives launched by the leadership of the

NRA (Giffords Law Center to Prevent Gun Violence, 2019). Instead, the organization has advocated for increased background checks and a further tightening of gun regulations.

Giffords Law Center works at the local, state, and national levels by providing technical assistance, free of charge, to lawmakers, advocates, legal professionals, law enforcement, and citizens who seek to make their communities safer from gun violence. By providing critical support for the enactment of valid and defensible legislation at the state and local levels, we fill gaps in federal policy and demonstrate that we can enact gun safety measures that save thousands of lives and do not threaten Second Amendment rights.

(Giffords Law Center to Prevent Gun Violence, 2019, p. 1)

On April 11, 2018, Vermont Governor Phil Scott signed a package of three bills into law that included background checks on private gun sales, the prohibition on the possession of bump-fire stocks, and a law prohibiting firearm sales to minors under the age of 21 unless the individual buyer had completed a hunter safety course approved by the state (Giffords Law Center to Prevent Gun Violence, 2018b). The decision was challenged in Vermont's Superior Court by Gun Owners of Vermont, Inc. In February 2020, a stay in the case had been granted upon review by the Supreme Court of Vermont. In this case, the Giffords Law Center amicus brief argued,

Plaintiffs' claims fail as a matter of law because any reasonable interpretation of Article 16 permits background checks that ensure felons and other dangerous persons do not purchase firearms, as well as reasonable restrictions on gun access by minors under 21. Besides, Vermont's prohibition of lethal bump-fire stocks complies with Article 16 because bump-fire stocks are not 'arms' protected Plaintiffs' claims fail as a matter of law because any reasonable interpretation of Article 16 permits background checks that

ensure felons and other dangerous persons do not purchase firearms, as well as reasonable restrictions on gun access by minors under 21. Besides, Vermont's prohibition of lethal bump-fire stocks complies with Article 16 because bump-fire stocks are not 'arms' protected by the state's constitution. (Giffords Law Center to Prevent Gun Violence, 2018a)

Following the strategy of creating a broad national pro-gun safety policy network, the Giffords Law Center advocated against allowing concealed carry on university campuses. The center cited increased safety risks such as campus homicides, suicides, and violent gun-related behavior. The organization's position is that campuses in the U.S. are generally safe from gun violence due to restrictive protections and legislation preventing concealed carry and firearms on university campuses (Giffords Law Center to Prevent Gun Violence, 2019).

The implementation of policies allowing campus carry continues to be a divisive and challenging debate among university administrators, students, and federal and state legislatures (Jang et al., 2014). Much of the current research on the concealed carry of handguns or firearms on campus has not provided clear and concise perspectives of students, administrators, and lawmakers. Grantham (2016) found that current research has often been unbalanced and has tended to rely on results that do not support the legislation. The argument for allowing or prohibiting campus carry has often led to on-campus polarization with one side actively opposing concealed carry and the other side strongly supporting concealed carry.

Proponents for campus carry such as the United States Concealed Carry Association (USCCA) and the NRA have stated that the introduction of concealed carry on campus and elsewhere will keep the public safe from potential violence. Gun advocates have argued that

campus constituents have the potential to deter violent crime and prevent mass shootings (SCC, 2018). USCCA (2019) stated,

College campuses, though typically safe, do play host to every type of violent crime found in the rest of society, from assault to rape to murder. Recent high-profile shootings and armed abductions on college campuses demonstrate that "gun-free zones" serve to disarm only those law-abiding citizens who might otherwise be able to protect themselves. (p. 1)

Central to gun advocates arguments for concealed carry on campus is their opposition to what they consider the stripping of rights from law-abiding citizens by creating 'gun free' zones. Concealed carry proponents believe these zones will create more potential for mass shootings. In addition, advocates have argued that universities that do not allow campus carry disarm law-abiding citizens and put innocent people at risk (Students for Concealed Carry, 2018). The NRA's position is that the fear surrounding concealed carry on campuses is baseless because those who have a concealed carry permit are responsible citizens. Cox (2015) stated,

College administrators and faculty members have joined the fray, claiming that campus carry will lead to all manner of criminal and negligent misuse of firearms. However, you and I know better. We know that campus carry does not lead to problems, because permit holders have proven time and again—in state after state—to be even more law-abiding than the citizenry at large. (p. 1)

Organizations opposing concealed carry on campus have argued that introduction of more guns will increase the likelihood of violence on campus including accidental shootings, accidental discharges, suicide, and sexual assault (Biastro et al., 2017). A majority of faculty and administrators at higher education institutions have insisted that firearms on campus could also

compromise the mission to discuss delicate and sensitive subjects (Wilkins, 2016). Webster et al. (2016) analyzed the implementation of concealed firearms on university campuses and reported,

85 incidents of shootings or undesirable discharges of firearms on college campuses occurred in the U.S. from January 2013 through June 2016. Only two of these 85 incidents (2.4%) involved a shooter on a rampage. The most common incidents were interpersonal disputes that escalated into gun violence (45%), premeditated acts of violence against an individual (12%), suicides or murder/suicides (12%), and unintentional shootings or discharges (9%). (p. 3)

Webster et al. (2016) also noted that if campus police assume all students may be armed, it may impact law enforcement's ability to respond to dangerous situations and to de-escalate threats to campus security effectively.

Organizations like the Campaign to Keep Guns on Campus, and Gun Free University of Texas (Gun Free UT), have argued legislation allowing concealed carry on campus and preventing universities from banning guns would not stop or deter mass shootings but make them even more likely. The Campaign to Keep Guns Off-Campus (2016) stated,

The gun lobby's proposed legislation would preempt an academic institution's current policies restricting firearms on campus and allow students to possess and carry concealed handguns – in classrooms, at sporting events, and other school activities – and to keep guns in their dormitory rooms. The gun lobby's legislation would not stop college shootings: allowing guns on campus could make mass shootings even worse. (p. 1)

Gun Free UT formed after the decision to allow concealed carry on the campus of the University

of Texas-Austin. The organization stated, "Failing to ban guns in classrooms and other areas not only makes our places of work and study more dangerous, but it also threatens academic freedom and free speech, compromises our educational mission, and diminishes the university's reputation" (Gun Free UT, August 4, 2016, p. 1).

Webster et al. (2016) analyzed concealed carry and its implementation on university campuses. These researchers found that only "12% of mass shootings took place in a truly gun-free zone (no armed security or police or armed civilians) and 5% in a gun-restricting zone (civilian gun prohibited)" (p. 2) in the United States from 1966 through June of 2016. In addition, casualties on college campuses caused by firearms have increased dramatically in recent years (Cannon, 2016).

Qualitative research on the impact of campus carry on students at a large public urban university, UMKC, and how that impact could affect student learning outcomes has been limited. Most researchers examining concealed carry as it relates to violent crime have focused on the general public students at urban institutions of higher education. In addition, research on concealed carry and its impact on violent crime lacks consistency and precise results. The body of research devoted to concealed carry has produced various and sometimes conflicting results. Lott (2010) found concealed carry laws that favor right-to-carry (RTC) legislation or permitless carry led to a decrease in violent crime. Conversely, Webster, Crifasi, McCourt, and Vernick (2017) noted that concealed carry like right-to-carry or permitless carry increases violent crime.

Research by Lott and Mustard (1997) and Bronars and Lott (1998) have been the most widely cited sources in advocating for and defending concealed carry initiatives and state law. The data from these sources are the primary research results that demonstrate a correlation of state concealed carry laws to a reduction in violent crime. In *More Guns, Less Crime*, Lott

(2013) argued that state right-to-carry legislation has contributed significantly to the reduction of violent crimes. Lott (2010) compared crime statistics in 3,054 U.S. counties from 1977 to 1992 using data from states with concealed carry laws, described as non-discretionary law, and states without concealed carry laws, described as discretionary law.

Lott (2010) examined the impact right-to-carry laws had on violent crime and as a deterrent to potential criminals. Lott (2010) determined arrest rates for each type of crime, population density, income, unemployment, and poverty. A vital correlation between nondiscretionary laws and reduction in violent crime and was identified.

The results are also significant, indicating how relevant the laws can be. When state concealed- handgun laws went into effect in a county, murders fell by about 8 percent, rapes fell by 5 percent, and aggravated assaults fell by 7.5 percent. In 1992 the following numbers were reported: 18,469 murders; 79,272 rapes; 538,368 robberies; and 861,103 aggravated assaults in counties without nondiscretionary laws. The estimated coefficients suggest that if these counties had been subject to state concealed- handgun laws and had thus been forced to issue handgun permits, murders in the United States would have declined by about 1,400. (p. 59)

Lott (2010) stated, "As with murders, the results indicate that the number of rapes in states without non-discretionary laws would have declined by 4,200. Aggravated assaults would have declined by 60,000 and robberies by 12,000" (p. 59).

Lott (2010) found that despite significant reductions in violent crimes, there were increases in property-related crimes such as auto theft and larceny. Lott (2010) stated, "If states without concealed-handgun laws had passed such laws, there would have been 247,000 more property crimes in 1992 (a 2.7 percent increase)" (p. 59). Lott (2010) noted while there had been

an increase in property crimes, that rise was minimal compared with the reductions in violent crimes including murder, rape, and aggravated assaults.

Lott (2010) also stated that citizens who had concealed carry permits seldom committed acts of violent crime. In Arizona, “there were 99,370 active permits as of December 1, 2007. During 2007, 33 permits were revoked for any reason - a 0.03 percent rate. There was one case where a permit holder was murdered with a gun in 2002” (p. 244). In Missouri, Lott (2010) found, “Ninety-six of the 50,507 permit holders had their permits revoked in 2008—a 0.19 percent rate” (p. 245). Lott (2010) summarized the most significant data supporting his argument were statistics compiled in Texas.

In 2006, there were 258,162 active permit holders. Out of these, 140 were convicted of either a misdemeanor or a felony, a rate of 0.05 percent. That is about one-seventh the conviction rate in the general adult population, and the convictions among permit holders tend to be for much less serious offenses. The most frequent type of revocation, with 33 cases, involved carrying a weapon without their license with them. The next largest category involved domestic violence, with 23 cases. (p. 247)

Lott and Mustard (1997) also found that concealed carry permit holders seldom commit acts of violent crime. “The rarity of these incidents is reflected in Florida statistics: 221,443 licenses were issued between October 1, 1987, and April 30, 1994, but only 18 crimes involving firearms were committed by those with licenses” (p. 3). Lott (2010) found that from January 1990 through July 2008 in the U.S., the rate of violent crime committed by concealed carry permit holders has remained significantly low.

From 1990 through July 2008, I found twenty- three cases where a permit holder murdered with a gun (twenty of those cases resulted in convictions, and in the other three

murderers died at the scene). Seven permit holders committed murder in Texas; three in Ohio; two in Florida, Pennsylvania, and Utah; and one permit holder murdered with a gun in each of the following states: Arizona, Alabama, Indiana, Maine, North Carolina, Tennessee, and Virginia. (p. 248)

Though Lott (2010) found that U.S. states with nondiscriminatory or right-to-carry gun laws experienced a marked decrease in violent crime, a previous study conducted by Bronars and Lott (1998) recognized that while the introduction of right-to-carry laws reduced violent crime in many surveyed counties, other counties and communities had suffered from a spillover effect of crime. A spillover effect occurs when a criminal moves from states or counties permitting the right-to-carry to states or counties that do not. Bronars and Lott (1998) concluded if all states enact right-to-carry laws, there would be reductions in spillover effects and violent crime.

The benefits that a county obtains from its state passing a shall-issue concealed handgun law are generally stronger than those found in previous work. Spillover effects on neighboring areas are almost always deleterious. Criminals tend to move across communities more readily in response to changes in concealed handgun laws than in response to changes in arrest rates. The spillover effects are surprisingly large, especially for property crimes, thus challenging existing research, which ignores these considerations. The spillovers are immediate and increase over time (except assaults and auto theft). Except for rapes, the adverse effects of a neighbor's law are mitigated by the adoption of the law by one's state. Taken together, these results imply that concealed handguns deter criminals and that the most significant reductions in violent crime will be obtained when all the states adopt these laws. (Bronars & Lott, 1998, p. 479)

Plassman and Tideman (2001) stated that research conducted by Lott and Mustard (1997) has been weakened by methodological flaws that compromise their research because,

The arrest rate is calculated as the ratio of arrest to the number of crimes, and it is not defined when the number of crimes is zero in a county-year. This leads Lott and Mustard to exclude all county-years without any murders, or more than 40 percent of all observations. Once the arrest rate is excluded and all available observations are used, a least-squares analysis of murder no longer yields a statistically significant estimate. Rape and robbery are two other crimes that have zero reported occurrences in a large proportion of counties each year, but exclusion of the arrest rate and use of all available observations does not change the statistical significance of the least-squares estimate for these crimes. Lott and Mustard, as well as Dan Black and Daniel Nagin and Bartley Cohen use weighted least squares to explain the impact of right-to-carry laws on county crime rates. These analyses ignore the fact that crime rates cannot fall below zero. We argue that this practice makes their results unreliable for crimes with low occurrence rates. (p. 772)

While Plassman and Tideman (2001) found flaws in Lott and Mustard's (1997) research they concurred with some findings,

Our analysis suggests that right-to-carry laws have statistically significant deterrent effects on crimes in the categories in at least half of the 10 states that have adopted such laws, but it also indicates that in some states the effect of adopting a right-to-carry law may be an increase in crimes in some categories. (p. 773)

Dieterle and Koolage (2014) found methodological flaws with Lott's (2010) research and stated, "We thus have no reason to believe that allowing legal gun owners to carry their weapons

on the campuses of public colleges and universities will have any deterrent effect on-campus crime" (p. 117). Dieterle and Koolage (2014) suggested that Lott (2010) ignored cycles of crime, did not adequately control for poverty in the research and could not produce empirical data required to substantiate his conclusion that crimes including robbery and auto theft had decreased because of concealed carry laws. Lott (2010) argued that state legislation permitting the right-to-carry would deter and prevent an active shooter event in public places including universities where an armed citizen would be able to stop a shooter. Dieterle and Koolage (2014) observed even the New York Police Department struggled with properly subduing targets using firearms. "In the years 1996-2006, their accuracy rate was roughly 34 percent" (p. 118). Dieterle and Koolage (2014) also stated, "It is unlikely that armed civilians would have a better accuracy rate in a stressful situation" (p. 119).

Webster et al. (2017) evaluated the effects concealed carry legislation has had on public and violent crime. They noted, "In just 23 of the 30 RTC states are permit applicants required to complete any training. Moreover, in 13 of those states, the permit applicants need not demonstrate any hands-on firearm use" (p. 5). Webster et al. (2017) noted that even if applicants were required to demonstrate hands-on firearm use, there would be no guarantee that a permit holder would be a sound decision-maker during a shooting event or be proficient in firearm usage and safety. Webster et al. (2017) found their evidence puts into question the conclusions drawn by Lott (2010). They stated, "These facts run counter to the claim that armed civilians are adequately trained and able to successfully deter or interrupt various types of crimes or even mass shootings" (p. 5). Webster et al. (2017) also found not all concealed carry legislation keeps guns out of the hands of violent offenders. In Missouri, a state that does not require a permit for concealed firearms, "does not prohibit individuals convicted of domestic violence misdemeanors

from purchasing or possessing firearms or ammunition" (Giffords Law Center to Prevent Gun Violence, 2018a).

Webster et al. (2017) also found significant methodological flaws in Lott's approach. They argued that even after Lott (2010) updated his data, results did not demonstrate that right-to-carry laws mean less crime. To the contrary, Webster et al. (2016) found that increased violent crime rates could be attributed to more people concealed carrying guns on their person and in their vehicles. If right-to-carry laws are adopted,

By years 7 through 10 following the adoption of an RTC law, violent crime rates were 11% to 14% higher than predicted had such law not been in place. After controlling for changes in incarceration rates and the number of police per capita, RTC laws were associated with 10% higher murder rate ten years following the adoption of RTC laws.

(Webster et al. 2017, p. 7)

Webster et al. (2017) found, unlike Lott (2010), that concealed carry permit holders do commit violent crimes. "The Violence Policy Center (VPC) documented that since May 2007, more than 1,000 people have died at the hands of persons with concealed carry permits" (p. 6).

Gresenz (2018) ,who researched concealed carry laws and the effects on violent crimes stated, "Shall-issue concealed carry laws have uncertain effects on total homicides, firearms homicides, robberies, assaults, and rapes" (p. 1). Gresenz added, "Evidence for this relationship is inconclusive" (p. 1). Gresenz further posited, "Shall-issue concealed carry laws may increase violent crime," but "evidence for this relationship is limited" (p. 1). Although latitude exists in the perspectives of groups who are either for or against concealed carry on campus, the fundamental arguments have remained static.

Campus Safety

University campuses have been traditionally viewed as safe spaces with relatively low crime rates and as nurturing academic environments that embrace inclusion and support learning. In recent years, gun violence at institutions of higher education has increased (Cannon, 2016). However, overall crime on campus remains relatively low, as noted by Biastro et al. (2017). According to Cannon (2016), from 2010 to 2011, there were only 12 incidents of gun violence on campuses of higher learning. Since 2011 those figures have risen. Cannon's study analyzed the number of incidences of violence caused by guns on university campuses in recent years. From 2001-2016 there were 190 shooting incidents on campuses with a total of 437 individuals shot, 167 killed, and 270 wounded (Cannon, 2016). As noted in her report, casualties caused by guns on college and university campuses increased by 241% from the 2001-2006 school years to the 2011-2016 school years (Cannon, 2016). Shooting incidents increased by 153% during the same periods (Cannon, 2016). Cannon stated that the higher the number of gun purchases in a state, and the easier it is to access them, correlates with the number of shootings at universities. Southern states that traditionally have more relaxed gun laws showed an increase of 64% of on-campus shootings from 2001-2016 (Cannon, 2016). Tennessee and Georgia, states that allow campus carry, experienced more than 10 incidents of gun violence on campuses from 2001-2016 (Cannon, 2016).

Cannon's research found that in states where it is easier to obtain guns, the prevalence of shootings at institutions of higher education increased. It is also important to note that California has some of the strictest gun laws in the nation, but also has had very high rates of gun violence on college campuses (Cannon, 2016). It is essential to note that empirical data do not show that

an increase of shootings is connected with the passage of laws permitting concealed carry on campus.

Although Cannon's study pointed to disturbing trends of increased gun violence at universities, data gathered by The Federal Bureau of Investigation, National Crime Victims' Rights Week, and the U.S. Department of Education have indicated violence on university campuses across the United States has remained relatively low (Biastro et al., 2017). According to Thompson et al. (2013), the U.S. Department of Education found that homicide rates on college campuses were only 0.07 per 100,000 of enrolled students for universities compared to the average rate of homicides for individuals aged 17-29 in the United States, which averaged 14.1 per 100,000.

The Clery Act, a law passed in 1990, mandated "colleges and universities that receive federal funding to disseminate a public annual security report to employees and students" (Clery Center for Security on Campus, 2018, p. 1). Consistent with crime rates on university campuses across the United States, universities in Missouri have also reported relatively low rates of violent crime on campuses. Table 2 summarizes the number of sexual offenses (forcible and non-forcible), robbery, aggravated assault, burglary, domestic violence, and dating violence committed on campuses, non-campus buildings or property, public property, and residential facilities (on and off campus) from 2015 through 2017.

Table 2

Clery Act Crime Data 2018

Schools	Sexual Assault	Robbery	Burglary	Aggravated Assault	Date/Domestic Violence
MU	94	6	30	13	74
UMKC	13	12	54	6	21
UCM	37	4	29	4	27
UMSL	10	5	17	10	10
MST	19	3	46	17	12
MSU	46	3	13	12	18

Note. MU = University of Missouri; UMKC = University of Missouri – Kansas City; UCM = University of Central Missouri; UMSL = University of Missouri – St. Louis; MST = Missouri University of Science and Technology; MSU = Missouri State University. Adapted from “University of Missouri Annual Fire Safety and Security Report” by the University of Missouri (MU), 2018, *University of Missouri*, p. 68-70; Adapted from “University of Missouri-Kansas City Campus Crime and Safety Report” by The University of Missouri Kansas City (UMKC), 2018, *University of Missouri-Kansas City*, p. 67-68; Adapted from “Annual Security and Fire Safety Report” by University of Central Missouri (UCM), 2018, *University of Central Missouri*, p. 27; Adapted from “Campus Crime Act and Fire Safety Report For 2018” by University of Missouri-St. Louis (UMSL), 2018, *University of Missouri-St. Louis*, p. 46; Adapted from “2017 Annual Campus Security and Fire Safety Report” by Missouri University of Science and Technology (MST), 2017, *University of Missouri Science and Technology*, p. 57; Adapted from “2018 Combined Annual Security Report and Fire Safety Report” by Missouri State University (MSU), 2018, *Missouri State University*, p. 36-37.

U.S. and Missouri Laws

In 2007, the Missouri General Assembly repealed the state’s permit-to-purchase statute that had been in effect since 1921 (Webster, Crifasi, & Vernick, 2014). The statute required individuals who were purchasing firearms from a licensed dealer, unlicensed seller, or private individual, to have a valid permit-to-purchase (PTP) license. The repealed PTP system had required a background check of those wanting to buy a firearm, including handguns. At that

time, dealers were only allowed to sell to individuals with a PTP license. To obtain a PTP license, individuals had to apply in person at a sheriff's office where the background check was conducted (Webster et al., 2017). A Johns Hopkins University study, detailed in Webster et al. (2017), analyzed the effects of the PTP repeal in Missouri and found a strong correlation between the repeal of the law, an increase of firearm related homicides, and an increase in firearm trafficking. Webster (2017) found,

Immediately following the repeal of Missouri's PTP handgun law, there was a twofold increase in the percentage of guns that had unusually short intervals between the retail sale and the recovery by police, an indicator of firearm diversion or trafficking. The repeal also coincided with a sharp increase in the percentage of crime guns recovered by police in Missouri that had been originally sold by in-state retailers, from 56.4 % in 2006 to 71.8 % in 2012. (p. 1)

Table 3 provides data from 2014-2017 in the state of Missouri on the number of handguns and unknown firearms used by offenders in murders.

Table 3

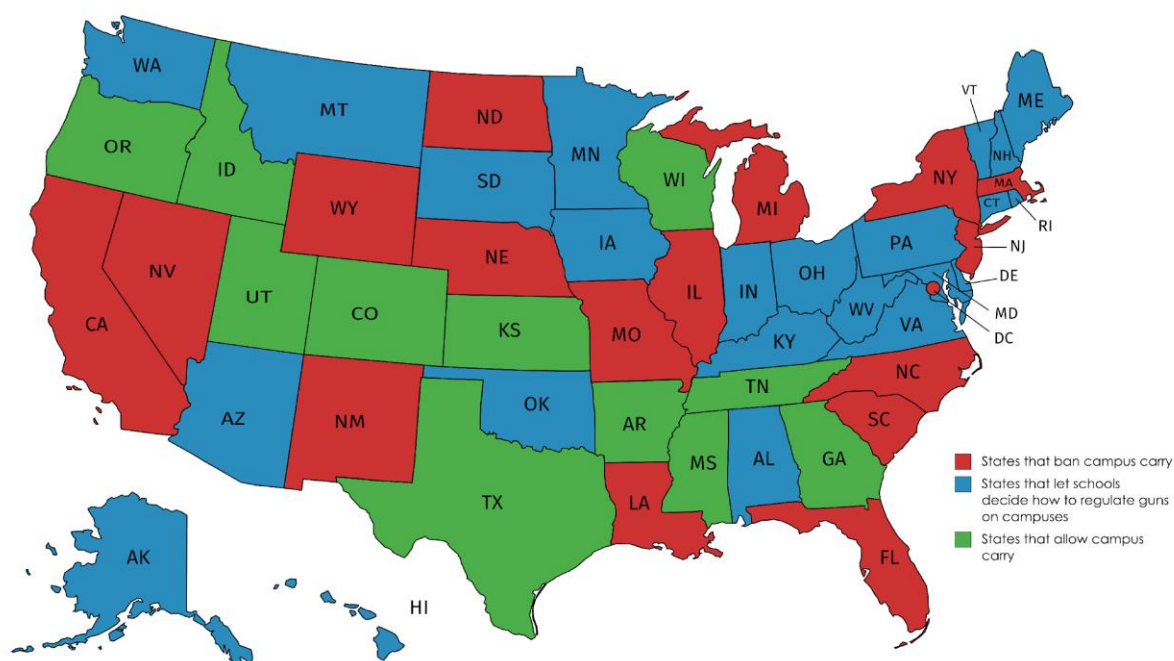
Number of Handguns and Firearms Used by Offenders in Missouri Murders, 2014-2017.

Year	Unknown Firearm	Handgun
2014	169	219
2015	246	268
2016	277	236
2017	332	262

Note: Adapted from "Crime in Missouri. Missouri Detail Crime Index Analysis- Murder" by Missouri State Highway Patrol, 2017, p. 1. Copyright 2017, Missouri State Highway Patrol.

Campus carry policies across the United States have not been uniformly implemented.

Laws passed by state legislatures regulate campus carry in various ways. State laws on campus carry range from outright bans, to allowing leaders of higher education to develop their own policies for their respective campuses, or to restrict university and college administrators from regulating campus carry. Figure 1 identifies states where campus carry is banned, states that allow leaders of higher education to decide on how to regulate conceal firearms on their respective campuses, and states that permit campus carry or prevent schools from banning campus carry.



Created with mapchart.net ©

Figure 1. Concealed carry laws on university campuses in the U.S. Adapted from the National Conference of State Legislatures, by National Conference of State Legislatures, August 14, 2018, National Conference of State Legislatures. Retrieved September 18, 2018, from Copyright 2019 by National Conference of State Legislatures.

In 2017, regulations in Missouri that had previously prevented individuals from carrying a concealed handgun were eliminated. Missouri Revised Statutes Title XXXVIII, Crimes and Punishment; Peace Officers and Public Defenders (2018), was amended to allow almost all individuals in Missouri, from 18 years old and older, the right to carry concealed firearms without a permit. “Per the RSMo, there is no restriction on the concealed carry of long guns or any other weapons in Missouri” (2018 Missouri Title XXXVIII Crimes and Punishment; Peace Officers and Public Defenders, Rev. Stat § 571.030, 2018).

Table 4 lists differences between concealed carry with a permit and constitutional/permitless concealed carry in Missouri including the locations where concealed carry is specifically prohibited (2018 Missouri Title XXXVIII Crimes and Punishment; Peace Officers and Public Defenders, Rev. Stat § 571.107, 2018). The new statute revised a long-standing definition of lawful use of a weapon to allow concealed carry without a permit.

Table 4

Differences between Concealed Carry with a Permit and Constitutional/Permitless Concealed Carry in Missouri

Location	Concealed	Constitutional/Permitless
Carry Throughout the State.	Legal	Legal
Open Carry	Legal	Only in Municipalities Where Open Carry is Banned.
Police Depts., Polling Stations, Prisons, Courthouses, Day Care Centers, Bars, Airports, Casinos, Amusement Parks, Churches, Sports Arenas, Hospitals	Not Authorized Not a Criminal Offense.	Illegal
Federal Buildings	Illegal	Illegal
Schools	Illegal	Illegal
Posted Private Property	Not Authorized Not a Criminal Offense	Not authorized. Not a Criminal Offense.
Carry on Buses	Illegal	Illegal
Carry on Metro Trains	Illegal	Illegal
Carry Outside of Missouri	Missouri Permit Valid in 34 Other States	
Training Requirement	Yes	No

Note: Adapted from “Breakdown of Senate Bill 656 (Constitutional Carry) Provisions and Effective Dates” by Lincoln County Sheriff’s Office, 2016, September 28. Retrieved October 19, 2019, from <http://lcsomo.com/breakdown-of-senate-bill-656-constitutional-carry-provisions-and-effective-dates>.

Missouri Revised Statutes Title XXXVIII, Crimes and Punishment; Peace Officers and Public Defenders also included a provision that granted legal protection to a long-standing state tradition that is known as Constitutional carry or permitless carry. That protection allows the carry of concealed firearms throughout the state without a concealed carry permit (Missouri Title

XXXVIII Crimes and Punishment: Peace Officers and Public Defenders, Rev. Stat § 571.030, 2018). Permitless carry was expanded to include all but a few locations in Missouri. Appendix B provides a summary of Missouri locations where concealed carry is prohibited.

In Missouri, concealed carry on university and colleges campuses, regardless of valid concealed carry permit, has remained illegal (Missouri Title XXXVIII Crimes and Punishment; Peace Officers and Public Defenders, Rev. Stat § 571.107, 2018). Missouri law grants individuals who are affiliated with one of the four universities in the University of Missouri System the right to petition the system's Board of Curators. Missouri Title XXXVIII Crimes and Punishment; Peace Officers and Public Defenders, Stat § 571.107, took effect on January 1, 2018, and does not authorize campus carry in

any higher education institution or elementary or secondary school facility without the consent of the governing body of the higher education institution or a school official or the district school board, unless the person with the concealed carry endorsement or permit is a teacher or administrator of an elementary or secondary school who has been designated by his or her school district as a school protection officer and is carrying a firearm in a school within that district, in which case no consent is required. Possession of a firearm in a vehicle on the premises of any higher education institution or elementary or secondary school facility shall not be a criminal offense so long as the firearm is not removed from the vehicle or brandished while the vehicle is on the premises. (Mo. Rev. Stat § 571.107, p. 1)

However, campus carry has remained prohibited on all of the systems campuses. The University of Missouri System (2019) stated, "The possession of and discharge of firearms, weapons and explosives on University property including University farms is prohibited except in regularly

approved programs or by University agents or employees in the line of duty” (p. 1). Table 5 summarizes what is and what is not required by Missouri law when carrying a concealed firearm in the state.

Table 5

Concealed Carry Checklist for the State of Missouri

Requirements	Permitted by Statute
Carry in Vehicle	Yes
Must Notify Police About Gun Possession	No
Concealed Carry and Carry in State Parks	Yes
Open Carry	Yes
Carry in Restaurant	Yes
Constitutional Carry	Yes
Permit Required to Concealed Carry	No

Note: Adapted from “Missouri gun laws: Get the latest info.” by Guns to Carry, 2018, p. 1. Copyright 2018, Guns to Carry. Retrieved from: <https://www.gunstocarry.com/gun-laws-state/>

Although Missouri prohibits concealed carry on university campuses, all universities and colleges in the state have strict protocols. Officer Jalonn E. Gordon, Community Engagement Officer at UMKC, the urban university where the current study was conducted, stated that UMKC has provided non-mandatory training for students, and mandatory training for faculty, staff, and administrators. Campus police regularly review and update safety procedures, and training methodologies. They have also maintained a communications network with regional and national peers about safety improvements (J. E. Gordon, personal communication, January 4,

2019). Officer Gordon stated that student welfare and safety is the primary concern for campus police:

We offer run, hide, and fight presentations and training at the police station several times throughout the year. Various departments and organizations throughout campus will also host run, hide, and fight trainings for their employees every year. Some departments and organizations have made it mandatory for staff to make sure all faculty and students are prepared. If there is an active shooter on campus the training and alert system will assist them on making the best decision on the nature of the incident at that time. (J. E. Gordon, personal communication, January 4, 2019)

Royce Barondes, a University of Missouri law professor, sued the University of Missouri System in 2015 over policies banning concealed carry of firearms on system campuses throughout the state. Barondes argued the University of Missouri System effectively violated his constitutional rights by preventing him from bringing a firearm to campus. The disputed Missouri State Statute that was disputed stated:

Notwithstanding any provision of this section to the contrary, the state shall not prohibit any state employee from having a firearm in the employee's vehicle on the state's property provided that the vehicle is locked, and the firearm is not visible. (2018 Missouri Title XXXVIII Crimes and Punishment; Peace Officers and Public Defenders, Rev. Stat § 571.030, 2018).

Barondes stated that by not allowing him to have a firearm in his vehicle, the University of Missouri System violated both state statute and his constitutional rights. In September 2018, Judge Jeff Harris, Circuit Court in Boone County, Missouri, sided with the University of Missouri. Judge Harris ruled University of Missouri System's policies did not conflict with

Missouri law because the case at hand “only addresses criminal conduct not what the UM system can regulate as a civil matter on their property” (Quinn, 2018). Although the judge stated University of Missouri System policy did not violate state statute, the court did not address whether or not Barondes’ constitutional rights had been violated (Quinn, 2018).

In February 2018, the Missouri State House of Representatives passed House Bill 1936. If it had been enacted into law, the bill would have broadened the legal rights of an individual carrying a concealed handgun with or without a concealed carry permit. The proposed statute would have reduced the number of state-designated gun-free-zones. The proposed legislation would have allowed an individual to carry a concealed handgun in daycare centers, schools, churches, and bars. It would also have prohibited universities, colleges, and community colleges from creating gun-free zones that were outside these limitations.

No institution of higher education shall impose any contractual requirement or condition of employment upon any employee, faculty member, or student that generally prohibits or has the effect of generally prohibiting the lawful possession or carry of firearms by such persons, nor shall such institution impose any taxes, fees, or other monetary charges as a condition for the lawful possession or carry of firearms under the provisions of this chapter. (MO. House Bill 1936, 2018, p. 12)

The statute would also have allowed individuals to carry a concealed handgun without a permit on college campuses. At the large urban higher education institution where the current study was conducted, the entire campus, with the exception of inside the campus police station, would have been open to both concealed carry with a permit and permitless carry. Although Missouri House Bill 1936 died in committee, pro-gun legislators were successful in amending Missouri House Bill 575 (2019) to include a provision allowing campus carry.

The public position of administrative leaders at UMKC is to remain neutral on any campus carry legislation. Campus police, however, have been charged with developing strategies to maximize campus safety with the aim of mitigating the effects of a mass shooting.

Active shooter events are unpredictable and evolve quickly. We don't believe that trying to prevent the likelihood of the event is relevant to what we do. Our job is to train and be ready to respond and we are ready. (J. E. Gordon, personal communication, January 4, 2019)

Perceptions of Campus Carry: Administrators, Faculty, and Staff

University campuses are expected to be safe havens for the expansion and transfer of ideas that further societal progress (Thompson et al., 2013). Although the academy provides the educational mission and the academic foundation for students at institutions of higher learning, only a limited body of research has examined student perspectives on firearms on campus (Angelis et al., 2017). University faculty and administrators have generally been resistant to allowing concealed carry of handguns on a university campus. Thompson et al. (2013) found, "University faculty have proffered that university atmospheres conducive to robust academic debate are antithetical to having concealed firearms on campus" (p. 243).

With implementation of campus carry laws in states across the U.S., faculty have remained uneasy and hesitant to show support for laws that allow campus carry (Thompson et al., 2013; Angelis et al., 2017). In a comprehensive survey of perceptions at all state universities in Kansas that were conducted prior to laws permitting campus carry in 2017, researchers found that 503 of the 698 faculty, staff, and administrators favored amending laws to prevent guns on campus (Docking Institute of Public Affairs, 2016). Faculty have insisted that the introduction of firearms on campus could threaten the safety of students and faculty, particularly during

classroom discussions of divisive political or social issues (Wilkins, 2016). The Docking Institute of Public Affairs (2016) also found 14.64% of respondents agreed that guns in the classroom would negatively impact the course (Docking Institute of Public Affairs 2016). Another 11.27% agreed they would need to change the way they taught sensitive information and 13.71% of respondents in the study agreed that implementation of guns inside the classroom would limit the “academic freedom to teach the material and engage with students in a way that optimizes learning” (p. 14). Wilkins (2016) described faculty concerns that increased levels of fear inside the classroom could hinder learning because a student may be concealing a firearm during lectures. Wilkins (2016) referenced one faculty member whose student not only made threatening comments but took threatening actions toward others in class (Wilkins, 2016). Although many faculty members have expressed consternation about concealed firearms in a classroom, Gilbert (2016) found that in very few cases have students carried concealed firearms on campus. Regardless of how many students on campus actually carry a concealed firearm, the perception of a student suddenly brandishing a gun, previously concealed, increases the fear many in the higher education community have about campus carry. This has raised concerns if that fear is really justified. A finding in Gilbert’s (2016) research was that “119 4-year colleges found that 4% of college students reported having a firearm at college, approximately 700,000 firearms based on the size of the current college population in the United States” (p. 133). Though Gilbert’s 2016 survey results pointed to a relatively low percentage of students who carry guns on campus, an estimated cumulative 700,000 concealed firearms brought to campus each day has increased fears of a mass shooting on any university or college campus at any time. In a study examining faculty and staff perspectives at institutions of higher learning, Angelis et al. (2017) examined fear relative to opinions on campus carry policies. They concluded the fear

of a mass shooting on campus may not be the determining factor in support for or opposition to campus carry. Faculty and staff who supported campus carry were motivated more by political views than a concern about safety (Angelis et al., 2017). Those who were victims of crime and those who were more politically conservative tended to share similar views.

Respondents who indicated they had been a crime victim were much more likely to indicate support for concealed firearms on campus and respondents who indicated they held a conservative political outlook were much more likely to indicate support for concealed firearms on campus. (p. 85)

Gilbert (2016) stated concealed carry permit holders in Texas committed crimes at a far lower rate than the public as a whole.

The perceptions of university administrators about campus carry do not differ greatly from university faculty and staff. In a study aimed at understanding perspectives of university leaders on campus carry, administrators were found to be overwhelmingly opposed to legislation that would introduce concealed carry to college campuses (Price et al., 2014). These researchers surveyed more than 400 university leaders from public and private higher institutions across the U.S. and found “95% were opposed to campus carry and were alarmed by the potential dangers of concealed carry” (p.463). However, the overwhelming majority of these same higher education leaders had little to no experience with firearms themselves and almost none had a conceal carry permit (Price et al., 2014). According to Price et al., a majority of university faculty who opposed campus carry had minimal experience with firearms and even fewer had taken part in concealed carry training. The same researchers found that faculty who are male, more politically conservative, or who had been victims of crime, tended to be supportive of concealed carry. About leaders of higher education, Price et al. (2014) concluded,

Those who owned 2 or more firearms and who grew up in homes where firearms were present were significantly more likely than those who did not own a firearm or who grew up in homes without firearms present to support carrying concealed handguns on campus. (p. 465)

Perceptions of Campus Carry: University Student Organizations

Students for Concealed Carry (2018), a national student organization that has lobbied for concealed carry on campus, cited safety, rather than the politics of the 2nd Amendment, as the primary reason for the organization's support of campus carry. SCC's goal is to work with state legislators and to persuade leaders of higher education to allow law-abiding students to carry a concealed firearm in defense against violent crimes that occur on or near campus (SCC, 2018). SCC was formed as a result of the mass shooting that occurred at Virginia Tech in 2007. With 33 students and faculty members killed, it was the deadliest on campus shooting in U.S. history (Biastro et al., 2017). The SCC has been the lead student organization advocating for laws that would prohibit institutions of higher learning from banning campus carry (Thompson et al., 2013). SCC stated the organization's main function is to educate, dismiss, and eliminate preconceived notions, misconceptions, and misinformation surrounding concealed carry at institutions of higher education. A second function is to encourage state legislatures and university administrators to grant individuals the same rights on a college campus as they have in other locations (SCC, 2018).

The Associated Students of the University of Missouri (ASUM) is by far the largest student organization in the four campus University of Missouri System. "ASUM is an entirely student-led organization advocating for positive outcomes for the 76,000 students of the UM

System” (ASUM, 2019, p. 1). The organization has been strongly opposed to the introduction of campus carry on any of the system’s four campuses.

ASUM (2019) stated that campus carry initiatives in Missouri have undermined the organizations’ objectives in preventing suicide and sexual assault.

Research demonstrates that access to firearms substantially increases suicide risks ... as firearms are the most common method of lethal self-harm. This is particularly harrowing for a population in which suicide is the second leading cause of death, and in which 39 percent of Missouri college students have reported considering in their lifetime. We are also concerned by disagreement about the true impact of firearms on other dangerous scenarios, such as domestic and sexual assault. While anecdotes abound about using firearms for self-defense, research suggests that merely having access to a weapon increases the probability of violence. In states where guns are allowed on campus — Colorado and Utah — incidents of forcible rape have increased at a higher rate than the national average. (p. 1)

ASUM’s (2019) argument about increases in sexual assaults on campuses where concealed carry is permitted has been supported by national research (Biastro et al., 2017).

Perceptions of Campus Carry: Students

While there is a growing body of research on concealed carry legislation and the impact on the general population, specific qualitative data on student perceptions of campus carry are limited. University and college students are the primary group affected by concealed carry policies and have been the primary victims of mass shootings at institutions of higher learning (Jang et al., 2014). Leaders of higher education have aimed to create university and college campuses that are bastions of openness, tolerance, and inclusion. Many campuses have

characteristics, like the ease of access, that are often not compatible with policies that allow campus carry (Price et al, 2014). As a group, university and college students are increasingly exposed to stress in their academic life (Price et al., 2014).

The Docking Institute of Public Affairs (2016) surveyed students at six Kansas public universities to analyze their perspectives on Kansas law permitting campus carry. Researchers found the majority of students were opposed to the concealed carry of handguns. Researchers noted, “Overall, more than half of the respondents (55%) prefer amending the law so that guns are not allowed on campus” (p. 2). In the same study, students rejected the argument they would feel safer with the introduction of campus carry, with 42% of respondents saying, “They would feel less safe” (p. 3) with concealed carry on campus. The Docking Institute of Public Affairs (2016) pointed to differences in opinions of those students who attended schools in the more urban areas of Kansas and those attending colleges in rural areas of the state. The Institute maintained:

There was a tendency for schools to either be consistently opposed to or in favor of allowing concealed carry in the various areas of campus, with FHSU, PSU and WSU most likely to favor, and KU, KUMC, and ESU most likely to oppose. (p. 2)

The majority of students who participated in the survey indicated they felt safe on campus and did not believe campus carry would further improve safety (Docking Institute of Public Affairs, 2016).

A previous study by Thompson et al. (2013) analyzed student opinions at higher education institutions across the U.S. and nationwide survey results were similar to Docking Institute’s findings in the state of Kansas. “The vast majority of students felt safe on their campuses (93%), were not concerned about becoming a victim of violence on their campus

(81%) and did not avoid places on or around campus out of concerns for their safety” (Thompson et al., 2013, p. 2). Thompson et al. (2013) also found students were much more likely to be victims of crime off campus and that, “The type of crime they were most likely to experience was property crime” (p. 245). Students who opposed concealed carry on campus cited concerns about accidental discharges resulting in injury or death, and fears of an increased chance of suicide and homicide (Thompson et al., 2013).

The Docking Institute of Public Affairs (2016) survey revealed that students favored strict safety protocols regulating campus carry at universities and colleges where it is allowed. The Docking Institute of Public Affairs (2016) stated that students at Kansas universities were in favor of requiring a permit for anyone wanting to conceal and carry. “The vast majority of respondents (91%) favored requiring a permit for anyone wanting to carry a concealed handgun on campus” (p. 3). In the same study, two-thirds of students responded favorably to the secured storage of personal shotguns and hunting rifles monitored by police and campus security (Docking Institute of Public Affairs, 2016). Students, who were opposed to campus carry, were somewhat more likely to support campus carry for trained faculty than for trained students (Docking Institute of Public Affairs, 2016). Thompson et al. (2013) concluded students attending public universities and colleges in Kansas were generally opposed to campus carry. However, students would be more accepting of campus carry if firearm safety training measures such as mandatory training courses and shooting range time were introduced.

Grantham (2016) argued the majority of research examining student views on campus carry had given much weight to the opinions of students who opposed campus carry, while these same studies had minimized the concern of students who have supported concealed carry. The Docking Institute of Public Affairs (2016) elaborated on the views students who have favored

campus carry. The authors stated the minority of students who support campus carry is statistically significant. “More than one-third (36%) of respondents indicated they would feel safer if they carried a concealed gun” (p. 3).

Summary

Chapter 2 provided a review of relevant literature examining arguments that support and oppose concealed carry on campuses of institutions of higher learning, campus safety, U.S. and Missouri laws regulating concealed carry as well as University of Missouri System campus carry policies, perspectives of university administrators, faculty, staff about campus carry, and perspectives of student organizations and students about campus carry. Chapter 3 details the methods used in this study. This chapter includes a description of the research design, setting, sampling procedures, instrumentation, data collection procedures, data analysis and synthesis, reliability and trustworthiness, researcher’s role, and the limitations of the study.

Chapter 3

Methods

This qualitative study was designed to analyze perceptions of students attending UMKC, a large urban public university in Missouri, about permitting individuals to carry concealed firearms on campus (campus carry). The first purpose of this study was to determine what juniors and graduating seniors majoring in Urban Studies or enrolled in the pre-law program at UMKC, a large urban public university in Missouri perceived as advantages to campus safety if campus carry becomes a law in Missouri. The second purpose was to determine what juniors and graduating seniors majoring in Urban Studies or enrolled in the pre-law program at UMKC, a large urban public university in Missouri perceived as disadvantages to campus safety if campus carry becomes law in Missouri. The third purpose was to determine in what ways juniors and graduating seniors majoring in Urban Studies or enrolled in the pre-law program at UMKC, a large urban public university in Missouri perceived as advantages to a safe learning environment on campus if campus carry becomes law in Missouri. The fourth purpose was to determine what juniors and graduating seniors majoring in Urban Studies or enrolled in the pre-law program at UMKC, a large urban public Missouri university perceived as potential disruptions to a safe learning environment on campus if campus carry becomes law in Missouri. The fifth purpose was to determine what juniors and graduating seniors majoring in Urban Studies or enrolled in the pre-law program at UMKC, a large urban public Missouri university perceived the impact of faculty members carrying concealed firearms on campus would have on the safety of the learning environment on campus if campus carry becomes law in Missouri. Chapter 3 is organized into the following sections: research design, setting, sampling procedures, instruments, data collection procedures, data analysis and synthesis, reliability and trustworthiness, researcher's role, and limitations of the study

Research Design

A qualitative phenomenological research design was chosen for the current study. According to Krathwohl (2009), this methodology allows researchers to examine topics, particularly controversial ones, when quantitative methods are not sufficient because:

The problem involves complex interactivity and feedback loops/systems. The process does not have quantitatively identifiable outcomes. The focus of the study is mainly on a process and its internal dynamics or its strengths and weaknesses rather than on its product or effect. Detailed, in-depth information is sought (e.g., on the implementation or quality of a program or process) as well as a description with many nuances and details.

A holistic picture of phenomena will restore perspective on the phenomenon. There are too few cases or too little data to handle the problem quantitatively. (p. 237)

Phenomenology, as noted by Lunenburg and Irby (2008), is concerned with the study of experience. “In a phenomenological research design, the researcher is concerned with clarifying the specific and recognizing phenomena through the eyes of the participants” (Lunenburg & Irby p. 90). The specific phenomenon in this study was student perceptions about the impact of concealed carry on campus safety if Missouri enacts legislation allowing guns on campus. Phenomenological inquiry liberates or shields the researcher from conveying personal opinion or bias in the study of a controversial issue by requiring the researcher to focus on the perspectives of those most impacted. It is an approach that supports a researcher’s goal to set aside personal bias. Flynn and Korcuska (2018) stated, “Researchers using phenomenological research methodology endeavor to discern the essence of participants’ lived experiences and to lay aside

their prevailing understandings of a phenomenon to authentically explore the participants' experiences" (p. 35).

The use of qualitative phenomenological research allowed for the examination and understanding of the perceptions of juniors and graduating seniors majoring in Urban Studies or enrolled in the pre-law program at UMKC, a large urban public university in Missouri about concealed carry of guns on campus. To examine specific phenomena, the researcher utilized the interview technique to acquire essential insights, subjective experiences, and to gain in-depth and intimate perspectives from students about campus carry. Lunenburg and Irby (2008) stated, "The interview, both factual and meaningful, seeks to describe the meanings of central themes in the life world of the subjects. The main task in interviewing is to understand the meaning of what the interviewees say" (p. 91).

Setting

The University of Missouri, Kansas City (UMKC) served as the site for this study. This institution is classified as an urban research institution with more than 16,300 full-time undergraduate and graduate students (UMKC, 2018c). Through student self-identification surveys conducted in 2018, 60% of UMKC students were identified as Caucasian and 25% as African American, Latino, Asian or mixed race. Fifty-seven percent of all students were female. The university had also enrolled 1,500 international students that same year. UMKC scored in the top 20% of all public institutions nationally in the ethnic, racial, age, and gender diversity of its student population (UMKC, 2018c). UMKC's Strategic Plan, 2018-2028, included the university's mission as an urban center for research and learning.

As an urban research university, the mission of UMKC is to promote learning through the discovery, preservation and dissemination of knowledge of public value across a broad

spectrum of disciplines and fields of study. UMKC celebrates the individual and embodies diversity and inclusion by intertwining these goals with innovation to enable transformational societal impact aimed at bringing cultural, social, health and economic prosperity to the metropolitan, regional and global communities it serves. (UMKC, 2018a, p. 1)

As a large public university in a large Midwestern city, UMKC was chosen as the site for this study because it is representative of many urban public universities in the Midwestern region of the United States.

Sampling Procedures

According to Hays, Wood, Dahl, and Kirk-Jenkins (2016), a rigorous sampling of participants through qualitative study involves standards of research that require “the systematic approach to research design and data analysis, interpretation, and presentation” (Hays et al., p. 173). This study used purposive sampling.

The purposive sampling technique, also called judgment sampling, is the deliberate choice of a participant due to the qualities the participant possesses. It is a nonrandom technique that does not need underlying theories or a set number of participants.

Simply put, the researcher decides what needs to be known and sets out to find people who can and are willing to provide the information by virtue of knowledge or experience. (Hays et al., 2016, p. 173)

UMKC undergraduates majoring in Urban Studies and enrolled in the pre-law program were purposely selected to participate in the study because these two academic fields include scholarly assessments of various state gun policies and their impact on diverse communities. In addition, because of the academic curriculum, it was assumed study participants from these two majors would be knowledgeable about campus carry. Participants’ views represented the broad political

spectrum - moderate, liberal, and conservative. Students majoring in Urban Studies or enrolled in the pre-law program at UMKC tend to be active in their communities, are knowledgeable about current affairs, and are well informed about divisive issues like gun control and gun rights. Participants included four juniors and two seniors majoring in Urban Studies. Three juniors and one senior taking courses required by the pre-law program also participated in interviews. All participants were attending UMKC. During the 2020 academic year, 127 students majored in Urban Studies or were enrolled in the pre-law program. Lunenburg and Irby (2008) stated, “Nonprobability sampling involves selecting a sample based on the researcher’s experience or knowledge of the group to be sampled,” (p. 175). The researcher has been a faculty member in the Department of Communication Studies at UMKC and was granted permission by the Director of Urban Studies at UMKC and the registrar’s office to access student contact information.

Instrument

The interview protocol used for the current study included six background questions and seven semi-structured interview questions aligned with five research questions. The responses to the background questions helped build a deeper understanding of overall student perceptions of concealed carry and the impact on campus safety if concealed carry was allowed. Creswell (2014) described the interview protocol as an outline of background and structured questions to ensure participants remain on topic and give substantive replies to the researcher’s questions. This procedure established a common standard for participants to share their perceptions about personal safety on campus, and if campus carry would either enhance or worsen their perception of safety. The background questions included the following:

1. Tell me about the area (urban, suburban, or rural) you grew up in.

2. How safe is the area you live while attending UMKC?
3. What kinds of experiences have you had with firearms?
4. What kinds of firearms have you owned?
5. What can you tell me about Missouri's concealed carry laws?
6. If you have a concealed carry permit, why did you decide to get it?

The research questions and structured interview questions included the following:

RQ1. What do juniors and graduating seniors majoring in Urban Studies or enrolled in the pre-law program at UMKC, a large urban public university in Missouri, perceive as advantages to campus safety if campus carry becomes a law in Missouri?

1Q1a. What are the advantages to campus safety at UMKC if campus carry becomes a law in Missouri?

1Q1b. What impact do you feel campus carry would have on crime at UMKC if campus carry becomes a law in Missouri?

RQ2. What do juniors and graduating seniors majoring in Urban Studies or enrolled in the pre-law program at UMKC, a large urban public university in Missouri, perceive as disadvantages to campus safety if campus carry becomes law in Missouri?

1Q2. What are the disadvantages to campus safety at UMKC if campus carry becomes law in Missouri?

RQ3. In what ways do juniors and graduating seniors majoring in Urban Studies or enrolled in the pre-law program at UMKC, a large urban public university in Missouri, perceive campus carry will result in a safer learning environment on campus if campus carry becomes law in Missouri?

1Q3. In what ways could campus carry lead to classrooms, lecture halls, labs,

libraries, and resident halls being safer places to learn or study?

RQ4. In what ways do juniors and graduating seniors majoring in Urban Studies or enrolled in the pre-law program at UMKC, a large urban public Missouri university, perceive as disruptions to safe learning environments if campus carry becomes law in Missouri?

1Q4. In what ways could campus carry lead to disruptions in classrooms, lecture halls, labs, the library, and resident halls?

RQ5. In what ways do juniors and graduating seniors majoring in Urban Studies or enrolled in the pre-law program at UMKC, a large urban public university in Missouri, perceive faculty members carrying concealed firearms on campus could impact a safe learning environment on campus?

1Q5a. In what ways would a safe learning environment on campus be impacted if faculty members carry concealed firearms on campus?

1Q5b. In what way would your response to the last question differ if faculty members who would carry concealed firearms on campus were highly select and well-trained?

Follow-up questions were asked when the researcher determined they were necessary.

Data Collection Procedures

Prior to data collection, a request to conduct the study was submitted to the Baker University Institutional Review Board (IRB) on February 10, 2020. Approval to conduct the study was received from the Baker University IRB on February 14, 2020 (see Appendix C). After IRB approval was received from Baker University, an IRB was submitted to the University of Missouri-Kansas City IRB for approval to conduct the research interviews with students on February 17, 2019. The University of Missouri-Kansas City IRB approved the study on April 24, 20 (see Appendix D). After receiving the required IRB approvals, the researcher contacted

the directors the of Urban Studies and pre-law programs, department faculty members, and staff requesting a list of names and contact information for students who met the criteria for participation in the study (juniors and graduating seniors majoring in Urban Studies or enrolled in the pre-law program). An invitation to participate (see Appendix E) in the study was sent via email to 15 potential participants. The invitation to participate in the study provided an overview of the study, an explanation of how anonymity would be maintained, the right to not respond to any question or withdraw from the study at any time during the interview, and the opportunity to review the transcription of the interview for accuracy. It was also explained that there were no risks or discomforts associated with participation in the study, no incentives would be provided for participation and that the interview would be audio recorded. Interview questions were also included with the invitation to participate in the study.

Prior to conducting the interviews, the researcher provided the research questions and interview questions to two peer reviewers to verify the accuracy and the credibility of the interview questions and process for this study. The reviewers were asked to provide the researcher feedback on the wording of the questions, if the information from participants would be relative to the research questions, and if the questions were clear and understandable. The peer reviewers provided input on the questions and other points for researcher consideration. Both peer examiners were familiar with qualitative research. Examiner One conducted qualitative research at a renowned public research institute in the South and currently teaches at a public university in the Midwest. Examiner Two earned a Ph.D. at a large public research university in the Midwest and teaches at a public university in the Midwest. No revisions in the interview questions were made by the two peer reviewers. The interviewer completed a simulated interview with Examiner One and a second simulated interview with

Examiner Two to ensure the interview process would be conducted in a controlled and structured environment.

The students who agreed to participate in the study were contacted by email and face-to-face interviews were scheduled. Prior to the interview, each participant emailed, or mailed, a signed consent form (see Appendix F) to the researcher. The consent form restated information provided in the invitation to participate. Students were advised that their participation was voluntary, they could refuse to answer any question, and they could stop the interview at any time. The consent form reiterated that no risks or discomfort was associated with participation in the study and that no compensation would be provided. Included on the consent form was the researcher's request for permission to record the interview using a digital audio device. The interviews were initially scheduled to take place on campus in small seminar rooms reserved by the researcher. However, the outbreak of the COVID-19 pandemic in the U.S. starting in late winter 2020 necessitated a change from individual face-to-face interviews to individual interviews conducted live using Zoom video conferencing software. In addition to a signed consent form, participants gave verbal consent prior to their interviews.

Brennan (2013) stated that listening is central to qualitative interviewing and emphasized the importance of the researcher expressing genuine interest in the opinions of the respondent. "The initial small talk and icebreaking questions that are used at the beginning of qualitative interviews help the interviewer get to know the interviewee, as well as to gain trust, build a rapport, and establish the tone of the conversation" (Brennen, 2013, p. 33). To establish rapport, prior to asking the background questions, the researcher asked participants about how the school year was going, courses they were enrolled in, and what they were looking forward to doing during the summer break. The interviews were held from March 2, 2020 through March 20,

2020. The average interview lasted 30 to 40 minutes. Each transcript was assigned an identification code (e.g., Student 1, Student 2, etc.) to preserve anonymity during the interview, analysis of data, presentation of findings, and summary of results.

Data Analysis and Synthesis

Smith et al. (2009) described the exploratory and reflective nature of interpretative phenomenological analysis (IPA) as a research methodology well-suited to the study of the human predicament.

IPA is concerned with the detailed examination of human lived experience. And it aims to conduct this examination in a way which as far as possible enables that experience to be expressed in its own terms, rather than according to predefined category systems. This is what makes IPA phenomenological and connects it to the core ideas unifying the phenomenological philosophers. (p. 32)

Creswell (2009) recommended a comprehensive analysis of qualitative data using a methodology requiring a three-step process: (1) organize and prepare data, (2) read and/or review all data, and (3) code all data. To prepare and organize the data, the researcher transcribed each interview using Otter.ai, a software transcription service. The researcher then carefully reviewed each software transcription with the audio recording twice, compared notes for accuracy, and double checked if any discrepancies occurred before the final transcript was produced. The researcher then provided each participant with a transcription of his or her own interview. This member checking (Bloomberg & Volpe, 2019) gave participants the opportunity to review the transcript for omissions or corrections. No corrections were received from participants. The process of analyzing the data was initiated after the transcripts were returned. Creswell (2009) recommended using Tesch's Eight Steps for analyzing interview transcripts by dividing data into

categories or themes. This method is particularly useful when coding the often large amounts of data compiled when conducting qualitative interviews.

The researcher implemented Tesch's first step by reading all of the transcripts. The second step required selecting each transcribed interview and reflecting on the indispensable question, "What is this about?" (Creswell, 2009, p. 186) to determine the underlying meaning of responses to interview questions. Tesch's third step was accomplished by creating a list of topics based on the reviewed transcribed interviews. In formulating this list, the researcher created headings for major topics, unique topics, and other topics. Major topics identified in multiple interview transcripts were highlighted using a blue highlight. The researcher then created a matrix to determine the key topics identified across each of the transcripts. In step four, coding was used to group similar major topics identified in step three. Applying step five, the researcher chose a descriptive word or phrase to represent the topics that were grouped together in step four. The process used in step five led to the elimination of a few topics as they were combined. The remaining topics were labeled as major themes derived from the analysis of the interview transcripts. To apply step 6, each theme was alphabetized. Step seven involved preliminary analysis of the themes which was part of the researcher's discovery phase. The researcher identified themes that connected all interviews. In step eight, the researcher interpreted the identified themes. The foundation of qualitative research, according to Creswell (2009), is for the researcher to draw conclusions and responses to that indispensable question – "What were the lessons learned?" (p. 189). According to Creswell (2009), "These eight steps engage a researcher in a systematic process of analyzing textual data" (p. 186).

Kvale (1996) stated, "The researcher presents examples of the material used for the interpretations and explicitly outlines the different steps of the analysis process [to readers or

auditors]. The readers could then retrace and check the steps of the analysis” (p. 209). The researcher provided Examiners One and Two with the method of data analysis including how coding was used to identify the major themes derived from the interviews. The examiners both confirmed the researcher was thorough during the coding and theme identification process, and that the identified themes accurately reflected the information given by the participants

Reliability and Trustworthiness

Qualitative research demands the establishment of trustworthiness and reliability of the methods of the study. This is accomplished by employing highly ethical standards when carrying out qualitative research. In conducting the current research study, the researcher adhered to what Creswell (2009) described as a “postpositive worldview” because that opinion “represents the thinking after positivism, challenging the traditional notion of the absolute truth of knowledge and recognizing that we cannot be positive about our claims of knowledge when studying the behavior and actions of humans” (Creswell, 2009, p. 7).

After a review of the interview questions, the procedures used to conduct the interviews, and the data analysis, Examiners One and Two attested to the trustworthiness and reliability of the current study. The examiners also verified the validity of the identification of the themes derived from the interviews. Member checking, as previously noted, verified the accuracy of the transcriptions.

Researcher’s Role

Creswell (2009) stated the process of sound qualitative study is also an exercise in objectivity, credibility, and self-reflection. “Reflectivity has been mentioned as a core characteristic of qualitative research” (Creswell, 2009, p. 192). This core characteristic requires the researcher to acknowledge personal bias and for the researcher to be vigilant in determining

that personal bias played no role in the study. The researcher of the current study is a tenured faculty member at the University of Missouri, Kansas City. However, the researcher had not taught courses in the fields of study chosen by the participants. In addition, the researcher did not personally know any of the students who agreed to participate in the study.

The researcher, during his 18-year career as a reporter and correspondent, was often witness to tragedies where concealed firearms were used. A member of the researcher's family has had a concealed carry permit. Before the study, the researcher, who was aware of his own bias about campus carry, sought a variety of viewpoints on campus carry legislation. The researcher also sought the expertise of individuals with a wide range of opinions and insights about campus carry and legislative initiatives. The researcher maintained strict adherence to objectivity and neutrality about the research topic throughout the study.

Limitations

“Limitations are factors that may have an effect on the interpretation of the findings” (Lunenburg & Irby, 2008, p. 133). The researcher noted the following limitations in the current study:

- The current study focused only on the perceptions of juniors and graduating seniors majoring in Urban Studies or enrolled in the pre-law program at UMKC about campus carry. The results of the current study may not be representative of the perceptions of undergraduate students in other fields at UMKC or representative of the perceptions of undergraduate students attending other public institutions of higher education in Missouri.

- Heated debate and divisiveness at the site of the study over the issue of campus carry and the polarization of national discourse on gun control may have influenced student perceptions either for or against campus carry.
- All student participants were encouraged to be forthcoming and to go into detail when answering questions. However, Creswell (2014) stated, “not all people are equally articulate and perceptive” (p. 190). Some participants may not have clearly understood the interview questions or been able to verbally articulate their responses.

Summary

Chapter 3 described the qualitative research methods used in individual face-to-face interviews with 10 student participants. Five research questions were developed to examine perceptions of juniors and graduating seniors majoring in Urban Studies or enrolled in the pre-law program at UMKC about campus carry. This chapter detailed the methods used in the current study including the research design, setting, sampling procedures, instruments, data collection procedures, data analysis and synthesis, reliability and trustworthiness, researcher’s role, and limitations of the study. Chapter 4 presents the results of the data analysis and synthesis.

Chapter 4

Results

This study examined the perceptions of students attending UMKC, a large urban public university in Missouri, about the concealed carry of firearms on campus. Five purposes guided this study. The first purpose was to determine what juniors and graduating seniors majoring in Urban Studies or enrolled in the pre-law program at UMKC, a large urban public university in Missouri, perceived as advantages to campus safety if campus carry becomes a law in Missouri. The second purpose was to determine what juniors and graduating seniors majoring in Urban Studies or enrolled in the pre-law program at UMKC, a large urban public university in Missouri, perceived as disadvantages to campus safety if campus carry becomes law in Missouri. The third purpose was to determine in what ways juniors and graduating seniors majoring in Urban Studies or enrolled in the pre-law program at UMKC, a large urban public university in Missouri, perceived as advantages to a safe learning environment if campus carry becomes law in Missouri. The fourth purpose was to determine what juniors and graduating seniors majoring in Urban Studies or enrolled in the pre-law program at UMKC, a large urban public Missouri, university perceived as potential disruptions to a safe learning environment on campus if campus carry becomes law in Missouri. The fifth purpose was to determine what juniors and graduating seniors majoring in Urban Studies or enrolled in the pre-law program at UMKC, a large urban public university in Missouri, perceived the impact of faculty members carrying concealed firearms on campus would have on the safety of learning environments on campus if campus carry becomes law in Missouri.

To address the five purposes of the study, the researcher conducted interviews with six juniors and graduating seniors majoring in Urban Studies and four students enrolled in the pre-

law program. The respondents shared their perceptions about campus carry if Missouri law is changed to permit the carrying of concealed firearms at institutions of higher learning in the state, specifically at the UMKC. The interviews were conducted during spring and summer of 2020. As noted previously, the outbreak of the COVID-19 pandemic in the U.S. Midwest, starting late winter of 2020, necessitated a change from individual face-to-face interviews to individual interviews conducted live using Zoom video conferencing software.

Descriptive Demographics and Participant Background

This section details background information shared by students during the interviews conducted for the study. Five respondents grew up and continued to live in the urban core while studying at UMKC including one respondent from St. Louis. Two respondents grew up and continued to live in Kansas City suburbs while studying at UMKC. Three respondents grew up in rural Missouri and lived either on campus or in a neighborhood close to campus while studying at UMKC. Four participants were female and six were male. Four participants were African-American, two were Latino, and four were Caucasian. Six participants said they considered the area where they currently lived as relatively safe while four described their neighborhoods as unsafe. During the interviews, the participants articulated their perceptions about safety on campus at UMKC and detailed their experiences with firearms. Six participants indicated they felt generally safe on campus during the day, and four participants felt somewhat unsafe on campus during the day. However, all ten participants perceived the campus and surrounding area as unsafe at night. Seven participants had experience with firearms and three had no experience. Six participants have owned a firearm and four have never owned a firearm. Seven participants were familiar with Missouri concealed carry laws and three were less familiar

with state regulations. Two participants said they had concealed carry permits (CCW) issued by the state of Missouri and eight did not have concealed carry permits.

Fundamental to understanding the complexities of student perceptions about campus carry is an evaluation of the experiences six participants have had with firearms and their exposure to gun violence in their communities. The six participant responses to descriptive demographic questions indicated that their knowledge of firearms, or the level of gun violence in their neighborhoods, factored greatly in their perceptions of campus carry at UMKC. A synopsis of participant experiences with gun use and with crime in their communities is provided for Student 1, Student 4, Student 5, Student 6, Student 8, and Student 9. Student 2, Student 3, Student 7, and Student 10 had little or no familiarity with guns.

Student 4 said he grew up in two different neighborhoods. He considered his mother's neighborhood safe, but he described his father's neighborhood as dangerous and a hostile place for a child.

All the houses around us were either boarded up or were used as drug houses. One across the street was raided by the FBI because the occupants were cooking meth. The city boarded up windows and no one lived there anymore. There was a crack house on the other corner. When I walked the dog around the block, there were houses that had five foot tall grass because nobody mowed the lawn for like a year.

Student 4 said his interest in firearms grew while living with his father. "My dad gave me my first gun when I was 16. It was a 22 Winchester, long rifle. I got my first handgun when I was 18. It was a Ruger P95, nine millimeter and I still have that one". Student 4 noted while in public he had often carried his Ruger P95 semi-automatic pistol where legally permitted. However, he said he has grown increasingly uncomfortable carrying his handgun openly in

public places because of stares and other reactions. “I have always open carried, but I didn't like the attention it brought, and I didn't want to just walk around with a gun on my hip”. Student 4 stated that he has never brought a handgun on campus and has kept it locked in the trunk of his car while taking classes or studying in the library. Both practices of leaving a firearm locked in the trunk of a vehicle parked on campus and openly carrying a holstered firearm in public are legal in the state of Missouri. Although Student 4 was not required to have a CCW permit in Missouri, he had taken courses on concealed carry offered by state certified CCW instructors. He said he decided to apply for a permit primarily because Missouri has concealed carry reciprocity with 34 other states (Concealed Carry Reciprocity, 2020), and the high level of training he had wanted.

I liked the advantages of being well trained and knowing how to break down a firearm. They teach you everything about it. And they teach you all the safety precautions that you need to take when handling and storing, and carrying a handgun concealed or openly. (Student 4).

Student 8, who grew up in a rural area, stated that at home a gun was considered a tool like a rake, hammer, or chainsaw. Like any tool, she said, a gun had to be used carefully and responsibly.

My dad is a Marine. So okay, I know how to garden and I know how to survive in the woods using a shotgun. I've done a lot of hunting in the past. I also know for a fact that a gun in the hands of the wrong people is dangerous. In Missouri, it's way, way, too easy to get a gun.

Student 5 said shootings occurred regularly in her neighborhood. She stated gun violence as the reason for her initially strong reservations about campus carry.

I've heard a lot of gunshots, and people have had many conflicts in our apartment complex. Someone did get shot in my parking lot once. I have the mentality that growing up in Kansas City and living here my whole life, that if you know how to stay out of trouble, you'll stay out of trouble.

Student 5 indicated that her opposition to campus carry has become somewhat less fervent since the day her fiancé showed her his collection of firearms. She said she was uncomfortable when her fiancé demonstrated his capabilities using rifles and handguns. She said that she has grown more accustomed to her fiancé's handling of them. However, she stated that she would never use a gun herself and is still opposed to campus carry.

Student 9, an avid hunter who grew up in rural Missouri, stated she has had mixed feelings about campus carry. "I own a couple shotguns and small caliber rifle. I'm not very comfortable with concealed carry myself, but I know a lot of people who carry".

Student 6 grew up in St. Louis, a city that "has had the nation's highest big-city murder rate every year since 2014" (Gramlich & DeSilver, 2018). He recalled the kinds of training he received from his father and what went through his own mind when handling guns.

My dad and I went to the gun range a lot, and he taught me all the proper ways to handle a gun. It gave me a sense of power to have such a powerful machine in my hands. So, the idea of having a gun at your waist at all times and thinking that one can either commit or prevent a crime with a gun is both a risk and a responsibility.

Student 1 grew up in a neighborhood with a high crime rate, but he said his family knew how to avoid crime and stay safe.

My family just minded their own business a lot. That's what made us all feel safe when we were younger. We did have someone who tried to break into our house once. The

neighborhood was okay if you knew your way around. But, if you were out at a certain time of night, or if you were female walking alone, or if you looked like you had money, it wasn't safe.

Student 1 remembered learning about guns from his cousin at an early age. "I was 11 when I first picked up a firearm and started shooting. I was really nervous. I was even scared to hold a gun because I didn't want to mess up". Student 1 said once he grew used to firearms, he purchased several, including an AR 15, a semi-automatic rifle, and a Glock 43 X, a subcompact semi-automatic pistol that he carries as a his handgun. "I got them for home defense and to practice at the shooting range. I never fire them in the neighborhood. They're pretty cool honestly".

The 10 students who participated in this study indicated their awareness of the ongoing arguments for and against campus carry in Missouri and elsewhere in the United States. Although eight of the students stated they found the national debate on campus carry highly charged and divisive, their own perceptions of campus carry indicated a general tolerance of opinions expressed by students on campus who have opposing viewpoints. All seven of the students in this study who said they had experience with firearms stated they had never fired a gun illegally or carried a concealed firearm on campus.

The following section provides an explanation of themes derived from responses to the interview questions. Five major themes drawn from student perceptions about campus carry were identified from the analysis of the data: rationale for favoring campus carry related to campus safety, apprehensions about campus carry related to campus safety, advantages of campus carry related to safe learning environments, disadvantages of campus carry related to a safe learning environment, and assessments of the impact on learning if faculty carried concealed

firearms in the classroom. Direct quotations are included to establish and underscore the interview respondent's perceptions of campus carry.

Rationale for Favoring Campus Carry Related to Campus Safety

Regardless of their own positions on campus carry, all 10 students were asked to articulate what might be a rationale for favoring campus in terms of campus safety. Excerpts from the interviews of seven participants are provided as examples of responses favoring campus carry related to campus safety.

Student 4, as noted previously, stated he has a CCW. He emphasized that if students were trained and capable, mass shootings like the massacre at Virginia Tech in 2007 could be prevented. He reflected on the events at Virginia Tech and the possibility that someone on campus with a concealed carry firearm may have contained the shooter before he killed so many students and faculty.

People would have been armed for protection if campus carry had been allowed. They would have responded faster than the police, potentially saving lives. When Seung-Hui Cho killed 33 people at Virginia Tech, I felt if one of those students who was sitting at a desk had a weapon on them, they would have been able to stop him. I know if I were one of those students, I would rather have been able to protect myself.

Student 1, who has supported campus carry, stated that a CCW permit and the training that was part of the certification process, left him with a great awareness of just how devastatingly quick a concealed handgun can be used to discharge multiple rounds.

It takes time for police to arrive. It's a five minute thing, depending how far [away] they are. But, it's never under five seconds. And you know, for a school shooter, it takes less

than a second to pull the trigger. On top of that, maybe 30 seconds to shoot a lot of rounds, especially with an automatic firearm or something with high capacity.

In contrast, Student 2, who had never used a gun and opposed campus carry, indicated campus carry might add to campus safety in certain cases. “Concealed handguns can protect people who can't rely on someone else at that moment. Let's say they don't have enough time to call campus police and there's a situation where they need to defend themselves”.

Student 3 grew up in a small town in rural Missouri and has not had any experience with firearms. He said he has avoided firearms and has felt uncomfortable being around those who have them. Although he has opposed concealed guns on campus, he stated that campus carry could be a life saver in the event of a mass shooting

I think for people who carry a handgun, it could give them a sense of clarity considering the shootings that have happened near campus. But I say it's double edged sword because for other people who aren't carrying and won't, they don't know who has a gun. God forbid, if there was a shooter at UMKC, there's the potential that the shooter could be stopped if somebody carries a concealed weapon. So, I feel like it can give potentially an added level of security that maybe the police could not provide.

Although her background is similar to Student 3, Student 9, is an experienced hunter and comfortable when using firearms. She said that she has remained opposed to campus carry. Student 3, however, described what she believes could be compelling reasons for students to carry a concealed firearm.

I know there's been some trouble on the Volker [main] campus with armed robberies later in the evenings. I think there's quite a few advantages. It [campus carry] could provide personal protection for people who live on campus.

Student 7, like Student 3, grew up in a rural area outside Kansas City and has never used a firearm. Student 7 indicated while living on campus she has often felt unsafe, especially when walking alone. She added that although opposed to campus carry, she can imagine how it might work.

I mean, it [the campus] is a large area surrounded by neighborhoods with a lot of crime. I guess, you can control your own safety if you need to. You don't have to rely on campus police to make you feel comfortable walking to your residence hall at night, or you know, walking to your car, wherever it's parked.

As noted previously, Student 5 has stated her opposition to campus carry. She perceives campus carry to be a bit risky to campus safety if it becomes law. However, she said that she has found some common ground with other students at UMKC who have argued for campus carry. "As long as I trust the people who I know have and use guns, I feel okay about it. As with anything, you know, it's all about how responsible you are with it". Student 5 also indicated that Kansas City police and university reports of assaults and shootings near campus and robberies on campus have begun to influence her views about campus carry.

Apprehensions about Campus Carry Related to Campus Safety

Regardless of their own positions on campus carry, all ten respondents were asked to describe their apprehensions about campus carry in terms of campus safety. Excerpts from the interviews of nine participants are provided as examples of apprehensions about campus carry related to campus safety.

Student 2, who has opposed campus carry, suggested that much of the fear about campus carry has been, what he observed, as an increase in mass shootings in the United States and how much media coverage they have received nationally.

I feel like our generation specifically has seen what gun violence can do to a nation and the amount of things that we've experienced. I have friends at UMKC who are scared to go to movie theaters, or a club, or even a restaurant without feeling the possibility of somebody coming in and shooting up the place. So, we have that kind of PTSD. When it comes to guns on campus, I feel it would just create more tension.

Student 9, who has opposed campus carry, said she would not trust any student who would carry a concealed handgun on campus. "I think it could be a big disadvantage. All sorts of accidents could happen even if students have proper training".

Like Student 9, Student 6 expressed profound concern about campus safety. However, Student 6's main apprehension about campus carry is one that was similarly stated by Student 2. Student 6 said he believes campus carry could create hostilities between students or student groups. "Our campus is pretty diverse. If we put in place something like weapons on campus, rather than bringing us closer together as a community, it can separate us even more and cause problems within our community". Student 6 noted other examples where campus carry could cause harm to university life.

I believe it could limit your speech on campus. If you have a problem with someone and you want to talk it out, you don't know how that person is going to react, and they can pull out their gun if they want to. This could happen anywhere like forums, sporting events and even at a student organization meeting.

Student 7, as noted previously, grew up in a rural area outside Kansas City and has never used firearms. She thinks there would be little impact on making UMKC safer if campus carry were permitted. "People on campus [campus police] can't be relied on in a risky situation and I don't think statistically it [campus carry] would make much of a difference.

Student 1, who stated previously that he has a CCW permit, believes an argument or debate between two parties on campus has the potential of escalating into a deadly shooting if one or both are armed.

Let's say a little fight breaks out. Maybe, someone has a bad temper. Not thinking, he pulls out his gun. That's where problems start. Concealed carry can be good but not everyone is able to conceal carry. People have bad tempers or don't know how to control their anger. That's when stuff can happen. Or, someone thinks someone's pulling out a firearm out a backpack. It's not a firearm he pulls out. It's too late, someone else starts shooting.

Similar to Student 1, Student 10 has supported campus carry. However, Student 10 has indicated that his initial enthusiasm for campus carry had begun to waver. He mentioned that his close friend, who attended another public university in Missouri, knew a student who was killed when a handgun accidentally discharged.

My friend told me about it, and it was like the guy was trying to show off. It was like; 'Oh, I have this gun. Well cool'. He bragged about his gun and a student died. That's going to be a focal point for some people bring a gun to school. Bragging a gun about could get out of hand.

Student 8, who as noted previously is skilled in the use of firearms, has questioned that if campus carry were to become law, it may not work the way advocates have claimed it would.

If something happens that requires you to react in self-defense, you use your gun. Are you going to accurately target the person who is doing harm to students, or do you wind up shooting some random person who had nothing to do with it? You have to think about the possibility of someone comes on campus and starts shooting, or

attacking people. The ones with campus carry start shooting the wrong people and you cause even more injuries.

Student 4, who was in his final year of UMKC's pre-law program, indicated that he has closely followed legislative initiatives permitting campus carry. He said he is convinced that legislators in the Missouri General Assembly who have supported campus carry will continue to introduce bills during every session until one is passed. Student 4 also emphasized concerns about safety if a new campus carry law had too few restrictions and no requirements for training.

It could be seen as an incentive for some students to bring weapons to school, maybe students who are not properly trained or who are unable to handle and use them [in the event of a school shooting]. This could also potentially lead to accidental discharges and accidental shootings. It would be a huge disadvantage to have just a bunch of random people thinking now it's okay to bring guns to school.

Student 10 added that if campus carry policies were implemented, the biggest issue among students would be trust. "I'm not sure students would be able to trust each other to carry. And, I think it could lead to some major accidents if students are not properly trained". All of the participants in the study who stated they would feel threatened by concealed firearms on campus expressed a range of opinions about the level of threat. Student 2, who has lived in a suburb and is opposed to campus carry, predicted difficulties within the student community if campus carry becomes part of campus life.

People like their guns. They really like their guns. It's a personality trait. So, I feel like a lot of that could lead into classroom debates, and eventually it can create tensions within the school. I feel like it creates a bigger divide because some people won't feel safe while others will feel really attached to their handguns.

Student 3 shared a similar view. He said he is convinced that campus carry would cause major disruptions to learning all over campus, especially if it becomes known who in class is carrying a concealed firearm.

I know it strikes fear in a lot of students, because many students, like myself, are not familiar with guns. So, if I know somebody beside me has a gun, I'm going to be more concerned whether I'm going to get shot rather than what my professors in front of me are lecturing. I feel the classroom atmosphere will drastically change if people can conceal and carry on campus. What if somebody has a concealed gun and doesn't have the safety on, and in the middle of class, it goes off and accidentally kills somebody? Even if the safety is on, there are students who are terrified of weapons and rightfully so.

Student 6 listed his fears about campus carry at UMKC and said he believes it could cause havoc both on and near campus.

Anyone with a gun could shoot and murder anyone. There are the issues with suicide. You don't know how many are failing their classes and are overwhelmed. They could pull out a gun and shoot others and then shoot themselves. And, we all know there are lots of parties that happen on campus and around campus. Students who have guns party and drink too. I think it could turn into a little Wild West.

Advantages of Campus Carry Related to Safe Learning Environments

Regardless of their own positions on campus carry, all ten respondents were asked to describe the advantages of campus carry related to safe learning environments. Excerpts from the interviews of five participants are provided as examples of responses favoring campus carry related to safe learning environments.

Student 4 stated he would feel far safer at UMKC if campus carry were permitted. He said he believes it is impossible for the university to protect all classrooms, lecture halls, campus laboratories and libraries from a mass shooting.

Right now, all the buildings on campus [without individuals carrying concealed firearms] are soft targets. If that were to change and campus carry became law, each one of those buildings [with individuals carrying concealed firearms] would be a hard target. So, a shooter going in one of those buildings doesn't know how many people in there are carrying weapons. Without campus carry, nobody has a weapon. With campus carry, the shooter can't be sure. Campus carry would really strengthen the security of those buildings and the feeling of safety.

Student 2 said the one big advantages of campus carry in protecting safe learning might be what he had described as a deterrence affect. "It could potentially prevent a potential mass shooter from planning an attack, knowing that there are students in my class and faculty members who are armed and would be ready to stop and disband them".

Student 8, indicated that concealed firearms in the hands of the right people would make her feel safer in class.

I am ok with it if a student had been in the military, maybe an ex-cop or someone else who trained really hard how to shoot the right way and who could stay calm. If a crazy guy was running down the hall, a student who has skills could aim accurately and shoot in a high stress situation. It would stop a mass shooting.

Student 1, who has had a concealed carry permit, shared a similar view. He stated a new law would need to include training that is specifically geared toward students with an emphasis on personal conduct.

Campus carry would make UMKC safer if students who want to carry get really good training. [Well-trained] students might be able to stop a mass shooting because students are everywhere, in class and on the quad. I think it would make it easier to study knowing someone had my back.

Student 7 said if university regulations allow for campus carry, she believed that it might foster a sense of self-reliance among students about their own safety. “The way to disable depends on your own ability to defend yourself, like having a gun for personal security versus relying on employees or other enforcement”.

Disadvantages of Campus Carry Related to Safe Learning Environments

Regardless of their own positions on campus carry, all ten respondents were asked to describe the disadvantages of campus carry related to safe learning environments. Excerpts from the interviews of four participants are provided as examples of responses opposing campus carry related to safe learning environments.

Student 9 has been an active hunter and opposes campus carry. She said that if she knew someone sitting next to her in class had a concealed weapon, she would not be thinking about lectures.

The gun is what will be on my mind and the minds of others in class, instead of focusing on learning. It’s not the same as seeing a student with a laptop. You are going to think about the gun concealed under a shirt.

Student 8, who is opposed to campus carry, stated that during her years of experience with firearms, she had seen how guns could alter the mental behavior of owners who are immature or emotionally challenged. She said normal classroom situations can be tense at times, and wondered how these kinds of students with concealed firearms in class might act out.

They get trigger happy. They get itchy. They like it. They are always on edge because they think like, am I actually going to use this today? These are people with very short tempers, have little patience if things aren't going a hundred percent their way. In cases like that, it would not be possible to stop a mass shooting.

Student 7, who has supported campus carry, stated she believes classroom learning might become more difficult for a few students if it were known someone in class was carrying a concealed weapon.

I don't think students would automatically become fearful of others in class, but some would definitely be more cautious because they're not exactly sure who has a gun.

There's the trust issue and I think there'll be a little bit more tension.

Student 1, as noted previously, has a concealed carry permit. He expressed deep concern about the possibility of individuals with emotional disorders, who through a potentially weak campus carry law, would be able to carry a concealed weapon on campus. He stated that without strong provisions and background checks, UMKC could experience a mass shooting similar to the tragedy at Virginia Tech.

Not everyone is able to conceal carry. It takes a lot of practice. Psychologically and mentally, you have to be in a good state of mind. We can't just hand out firearms to anyone on campus. It would really be difficult for me to study in the library if I saw someone hanging out staring at me and everybody. There should be classes at UMKC for those who want to carry a concealed firearm on campus. They would have to be taught everything they need to know about firearms, practice using them, learn what it feels like holding one, learn how to disarm someone, how to be mentally fit, knowing a firearm from head to toe.

Assessments of the Impact on Learning if Faculty Carried Concealed Firearms in Class

Regardless of their own positions on campus carry, all ten students were asked to assess the impact on learning if faculty carried concealed firearms in the classroom. Excerpts from the interviews of six participants are provided as examples of responses about faculty carrying concealed firearms in the classroom.

Student 3 said he would not be comfortable at all if he knew his lecturer might be walking around class with carrying a loaded pistol.

There's already a high level of intimidation as it is, because they're older and they obviously know more than you do. If they are carrying a weapon? Hmmm. It would change the vibe. For students wanting to maybe build a relationship with a professor or ask questions of the professor, that would make them feel anxious or even nervous to approach them.

Student 5 expressed strong objections to permitting members of the faculty to carry concealed weapons on campus. "I wish you could see my teachers. Can't really picture any of my teachers carrying a firearm."

Similar to Student 5's observations about her instructors, Student 2 wondered if a faculty member could manage to carry a concealed firearm and to teach class at the same time. "I've seen certain instances where professors can barely open up the YouTube application. So, it would scare me knowing they would have immediate access to a gun."

However, Student 9 said he believes that most of the instructors he has known would be capable of acting in a stressful situation. He also stated that since faculty are perceived as authority figures, an armed instructor might serve as a deterrent to someone contemplating

committing a violent act. “I definitely think professors are the most trusted figures on campus. If they were allowed to carry, it could benefit everyone on the campus.”

Student 6 indicated that an armed instructor would be viewed as more than an authority figure and the classroom dynamic would change.

They would not be teachers. It creates an environment where they are overseers. That's not the environment you want to have with students and faculty. You want it to be a friendly place where you can ask a question and they can explain. It could be intimidating for a lot of students.

In contrast to Student 6's opinion, Student 4 indicated that it would be hard to gauge how much the classroom dynamic would change if a faculty member carried a concealed firearm.

It could be effective because students really would not know if there was a teacher in class with a gun. But, you don't know what the impact on safety would be unless an incident occurred. Then everyone could see how it was managed. If a teacher responded quickly, it would increase the perception of safety.

Student 8 stated she would support an armed faculty only after completing the most stringent training steps. She said she doubted most would not even want to try.

If you don't know how to break apart your weapon and put it back together blindfolded, you have no business with a gun in the classroom. If you don't have the training to be able to shoot accurately, where are you going to shoot if you have to. There's no reason for faculty to have guns, no need for any of them.

Summary

This chapter included descriptive and demographic information about the sample and the results of an analysis of interviews conducted with 10 juniors and graduating seniors majoring in

Urban Studies or enrolled in the pre-law program at UMKC. The research questions focused on student perceptions of the advantages and disadvantages to campus safety and safety of the learning environment if campus carry becomes law in Missouri. In addition, respondents shared perceptions about the impact of an armed faculty on a safe learning environment on campus. Chapter 5 provides a summary of the study, findings related to the literature, and conclusions.

Chapter 5

Interpretation and Recommendations

Chapter 5 presents an interpretation and recommendations for the study. This study analyzed the perceptions of a select group of students at a large urban public institution in the Midwest about the potential impact of campus carry. The chapter is organized in three sections. The first section includes a study summary with an overview of the problem, purpose statement and research questions, review of the methodology, and major findings. The second section contains findings related to the literature. The final section is the conclusion with implications for action, recommendations for future research, and concluding remarks.

Study Summary

This qualitative study explored the perceptions of juniors and graduating seniors majoring in Urban Studies or enrolled in the pre-law program at UMKC about campus carry and the potential impact on campus safety.

This section provides a summary of the study including an overview of the problem. The purpose statement and research questions utilized in the study are identified. This section concludes with a review of the methodology and the major findings of the study.

Overview of the problem. Campus carry has become a major challenge for leaders of higher education. Eleven states have enacted laws permitting concealed carry on universities and colleges since the mass shooting at Virginia Tech in 2007. At the time of this study, Missouri had not changed statutes that would allow for the carrying of concealed weapons on campuses of the state's public universities and colleges. However, legislators in The Missouri General Assembly have continued to introduce various bills that would either directly allow campus carry or would prohibit leaders of higher education from banning concealed weapons at public

universities and colleges. At the time of the current study, no qualitative research had been conducted to identify Missouri university student perceptions about campus carry.

According to the National Conference of State Legislatures (2019), two states have allowed college boards to make their own decisions on campus carry, and 10 had provisions allowing individuals to carry concealed weapons on public campuses. The Missouri General Assembly has considered various forms of legislation that would prohibit the University of Missouri Board of Curators from enforcing a ban on concealed firearms on the four campuses the board oversees, including UMKC. State legislators in Missouri declared they would continue to introduce bills and amend gun laws until campus carry for students, faculty, and staff is permitted.

Bacharier and Jackson (2019) reported,

HB 575, proposed by Rep. Dean Dohrman, R-La Monte, began as legislation to allow schools to assign faculty or staff members as “campus protection officers,” who would carry concealed firearms and be appropriately certified. “We need immediate response in a dangerous situation where lives are threatened,” Dohrman said. The nature of the legislation changed, however, when it was amended by Rep. Jered Taylor, R-Republic, to allow all students, staff and faculty to carry concealed firearms on campus. Taylor said that his amendment wasn’t simply a matter of campus safety but also protecting students’ civil liberties. “My legislation might help in a mass shooting situation, but that’s not necessarily what it’s aimed at,” Taylor said. “We don’t remove any other constitutionally secured right when an individual walks on a college campus, and we shouldn’t be removing their right to defend themselves”. Taylor dismissed the argument from opponents that more guns on a campus would make it less safe, citing

other states that have passed similar policy and not seen significant change. “We’re told that we’re going to see the wild, wild West,” Taylor said, “that people are going to go out and have a simple argument, guns are going to be drawn, and people are going to get shot. And that just doesn’t happen. If it did, we’d be hearing about it in the news”. After initially passing the House in early April with a 98-52 approval vote, the bill went to the Senate, where it received a public hearing in front of the Senate Committee on Transportation, Infrastructure and Public Safety. A week later, the committee met and passed the legislation, which meant the next step was for the Senate to debate it on the floor. However, the bill was never reported from the committee to the Senate, meaning that it could not be brought up for reading and debate. Both Taylor and Dohrman pledged to try again next year. (p. 1)

Assessing the many debates in state legislatures throughout the United States, including deliberations in the Missouri General Assembly, Brandt (2016) reasoned, “it seems likely that more states will pass campus carry measures in the future” (p. 68). Furthermore, Brandt (2016) underscored the great obligations leaders of higher education have to campus communities in compiling relevant statistical data focused on both the merits and flaws of campus carry.

A robust data gathering process will allow campus administrators to closely monitor how the environment on campus responds to the implementation of concealed carry. By doing so, administrators can track potential crises, should they arise, and intervene appropriately (p. 69).

Purpose statement and research questions. Five purposes and five research questions guided this study. The purpose of this qualitative study was to determine the perceptions of juniors and graduating seniors majoring in Urban Studies or enrolled in the pre-law program at

UMKC, a large urban public institution in Missouri, about the impact of campus carry. The first purpose was to determine what juniors and graduating seniors majoring in Urban Studies or enrolled in the pre-law program at UMKC perceived as advantages to campus safety if campus carry becomes a law in Missouri. The second purpose was to determine what juniors and graduating seniors majoring in Urban Studies or enrolled in the pre-law program at UMKC perceived as disadvantages to campus safety if campus carry becomes law in Missouri. The third purpose was to determine in what ways juniors and graduating seniors majoring in Urban Studies or enrolled in the pre-law program at UMKC perceived how campus carry will result in a safer learning environment on campus if campus carry becomes law in Missouri. The fourth purpose was to determine what juniors and graduating seniors majoring in Urban Studies or enrolled in the pre-law program at UMKC perceived as potential disruptions to a safe learning environment on campus if campus carry becomes law in Missouri. The fifth purpose was to determine perceptions of juniors and graduating seniors majoring in Urban Studies or enrolled in the pre-law program at UMKC about the impact faculty members carrying concealed firearms on campus would have on the safety of the learning environment on campus if campus carry becomes law in Missouri. Five research questions were aligned with the purposes of the study.

Review of the methodology. A phenomenological qualitative research design was used in the current study. This method provided the opportunity for the researcher to examine the perceptions of students at UMKC, a large urban public institution in Missouri, about the potential impact of campus carry. The researcher purposely chose UMKC undergraduates from Urban Studies and the pre-law program because these two fields of study include scholarly assessments of various state gun policies and their impact on diverse communities. The qualitative

phenomenological research design required the researcher to focus on the participants' experiences and perceptions without inserting personal experiences, views or biases.

Upon receipt of approval for the study by Institutional Research Boards at Baker University and the University of Missouri System, the researcher asked faculty who taught in the Urban Studies and Pre-Law programs at UMKC to recommend students who might be interested in participating in the study. Emails were sent to 15 students and 10 students agreed to participate. An interview that included six descriptive and demographic questions and seven semi-structured questions, was conducted. Each participant was originally scheduled for a private interview in a small seminar room on the campus of UMKC. However, the outbreak of the COVID-19 pandemic in the spring of 2020 necessitated a change from individual face-to-face interviews to individual interviews using Zoom video conferencing software. This change was approved by institutional research boards at both universities.

All interviews were conducted in spring and summer of 2020 and were 30 to 40 minutes long. Audio recordings of the interviews were transcribed using Otter.ai, a software transcription service. Each transcript was assigned a code (e.g., Student 1, Student 2, etc.) to protect anonymity.

Creswell's (2009) three-step process was followed in analyzing the data: (1) organize and prepare data, (2) read and/or review all data, and (3) code all data. To prepare and organize the data for subsequent analysis, the researcher transcribed each interview using Otter.ai, a software transcription service. The researcher then carefully reviewed each software transcription with the audio recording twice, compared notes for accuracy, and double checked if any discrepancies occurred before the final transcript was produced. Once the transcriptions were completed, member checking was used to have respondents provide any corrections, additions, or deletions

from the transcripts. No corrections were received from participants. Tesch's eight steps were applied to code the data and determine themes. The final step was completed when two peer reviewers checked coding and theme identification.

Major findings. Analysis of data collected from participant responses resulted in the identification of five emerging themes:

1. Rationale for favoring campus carry related to campus safety.
2. Apprehensions about campus carry related to campus safety.
3. Advantages of campus carry related to safe learning environments.
4. Disadvantages of campus carry related to safe learning environments.
5. Assessments of the impact on learning if faculty carried concealed firearms in class.

All respondents stated a rationale for campus carry related to campus safety with four participants strongly favoring campus carry. According to study participants, UMKC could prevent mass shootings like the tragedy at Virginia Tech if enough people on campus, trained in the proper use of firearms, are able to contain a shooter in the shortest time possible. UMKC and Kansas City police would take too long to respond to a shooting on campus. Students could protect themselves, especially when walking alone on campus at night, if carrying a concealed firearm they have been trained to use. Campus carry would increase campus safety and safe learning environments to levels campus police cannot provide. Neighborhoods surrounding UMKC are dangerous and armed robberies and assaults have spilled on to campus.

Eight respondents, including two supporters of campus carry, indicated their apprehensions about campus carry related to campus safety and safe learning environments. With a rise in mass shootings across the U.S., and heavy media coverage of them, there has been growing fear among students that mass shootings could happen anywhere at any time.

According to study participants, campus carry would only exacerbate these fears and cause tensions among students and faculty. Students would grow more distrustful of each other if campus carry was permitted. Bravado among those students carrying concealed firearms could lead to accidental shootings. A 'chilling effect' on campus free speech would be very real, especially if discourse turns into disputes and threats resulting in gun violence. If a shooting event did occur at UMKC, an individual pulling out a concealed handgun and returning fire might kill or disable individuals other than the shooter.

Respondents emphasized several advantages of campus carry related to safe learning environments. Buildings on campus are soft targets and campus carry would turn these buildings into hard targets. Students would have a greater sense of self-reliance knowing they or others around them in class would have the ability to disable a shooter. Armed students who have served in the military or have had police training would be the best first line of defense in a classroom, library, or study hall. If a shooter knows there are a significant number of students in any given lecture hall who might have a concealed firearm, that realization could dissuade the shooter from carrying out an attack. Students in class would feel more secure and less distracted if they believe they could be protected during a lecture or while studying on campus.

Respondents also pointed out the disadvantages of campus carry related to safe learning environments. The mental health of an individual carrying a concealed firearm was cited as the greatest concern among all 10 study respondents. An individual who is emotionally immature, impatient, and short tempered or trigger happy would add a dangerous element to classroom learning. If students knew someone in class had a concealed firearm, particularly someone deemed emotionally unstable, they would be more concerned about the firearm and less focused

on the lecture. Gun possession can alter the mental state of the individual carrying a concealed firearm causing greater concern about that individual's behavior.

Respondents assessed the impact on safe learning environments if faculty carried concealed firearms in the classroom. Only one respondent fully believed it might have a favorable impact. Other respondents questioned the value of armed faculty. Respondents indicated they would feel anxious around a faculty member carrying a concealed firearm and would be afraid to seek clarification or pose questions during lectures. The level of intimidation could rise. Interview respondents indicated that most faculty members at UMKC would prove incapable of handling a firearm in an emergency. An armed instructor would be viewed as an overseer rather than a teacher. These perceptions could change if a shooting event occurred and an effectively armed faculty intervened. The outcome of the incident could result in more favorable views about faculty who carry a concealed firearm on campus. An armed faculty member could then be viewed by students as a line of defense against a mass shooting.

Findings Related to the Literature.

Existing literature has examined the impact of the carry of concealed firearms on crime and public safety, state laws governing campus carry, legislative initiatives for or against campus carry, the legal status of campus carry at colleges and universities, and the positions of administrators, faculty members, and students on campus carry. The current study added to the body of research about the perceptions of students, particularly those at a large urban public institution, about campus carry.

Quantitative research by Thompson et al. (2013) analyzed student opinions at universities nationwide and found, "The vast majority of students felt safe on their campuses (93%), were not concerned about becoming a victim of violence on their campus (81%) and did not avoid places

on or around campus out of concerns for their safety” (p. 2). The Docking Institute of Public Affairs (2016) survey of students at six public universities in Kansas concurred with the findings of the Thompson et al. study. Although Kansas law permits campus carry at public universities and colleges, the Docking Institute of Public Affairs (2016) stated that the majority of Kansas students remained opposed to campus carry and felt safe on campus. Perceptions of students in the current study included both concerns and rationale in favor of campus carry. Campus safety was the determining factor in the reasons students in the current study expressed both opposition to and support of campus carry. In contrast to the Thompson et al. and the Docking Institute of Public Affairs studies, the majority of participants in the current study felt unsafe on UMKC’s campus at night. Seven were concerned about becoming a victim of violence on campus, and eight avoided places on and around campus out of concerns for their safety.

Gifford's Law Center (2019) predicted increased safety risks to students if U.S. states bar governing boards and academic leaders of higher education from prohibiting or regulating campus carry. The organization's position is that U.S. campuses are generally safe from gun violence due to protections and legislation that bans campus carry. Respondents in the current study did not fully concur with this finding. All 10 students who participated in the current study expressed concerns about violent crimes committed in neighborhoods adjacent to UMKC and its impact on campus safety. Eight respondents stated they felt UMKC was particularly unsafe in the evenings. Statistics published in UMKC’s Campus Crime and Fire safety Report (2018b), have indicated that gun violence on UMKC’s campus is rare. However, these statistics also detailed a high number of burglaries, robberies, sexual assault, and domestic violence on campus or in neighborhoods adjacent to UMKC. The frequency of crime and fear of a mass shooting on campus are the primary reasons participants in this study gave as their rationale in support of campus carry.

A Johns Hopkins study, as detailed in Webster et al. (2017), analyzed the effects of the Missouri General Assembly's repeal of a permit-to-purchase (PTP) license in 2007. The PTP system required background checks of individuals wanting to buy firearms, including handguns. The results of the Johns Hopkins study indicated a strong correlation between the repeal of the law and an increase in firearm trafficking. With concerns about handgun trafficking on campus and an increase of campus gun violence, The University of Missouri System (2019) codified its regulations prohibiting campus carry. UM System administrators have argued that campus safety at the system's four universities, including UMKC, would be compromised if Missouri legislators strip them of their authority to ban or to regulate campus carry. An analysis of findings in the current study found that participants held diverging viewpoints on just how compromised campus safety and safe learning environments would be if campus carry became law. Six respondents indicated that campus safety and safe learning environments would be compromised. Four respondents indicated that campus safety and safe learning environments would be enhanced.

Cox (2015) stated, "Campus carry does not lead to problems, because permit holders have proven time and again—in state after state—to be even more law-abiding than the citizenry at large" (p. 1). Results from the current study did not support this finding. Although respondents expressed their views on the advantages and disadvantages of campus carry, their perceptions did not focus on the rights of law-abiding citizens, or if CCW permit holders are more law-abiding than those who do not have CCW permits. Nine respondents expressed deep concerns about the mental health of an individual who would carry a concealed firearm on campus. Four respondents, who support campus carry, indicated potential risks to campus safety if those with mental illness carried concealed firearms. Five respondents, who oppose campus carry, stated they would feel extreme discomfort if they knew a student or faculty member whom they perceived as

emotionally unstable had a concealed firearm in a classroom situation. The perceptions of respondents in the current study supported Wilkins' (2016) report that faculty were deeply concerned about distractions to learning if students knew an individual in class carried a concealed firearm.

Conclusions

According to Brandt (2016), national debates about campus carry that are often acrimonious and divisive have become part of the historic discourse about the interpretation of the 2nd Amendment to the U.S. Constitution.

Campus carry might therefore be seen as one facet of the nation's larger, ongoing effort to determine the extent of an individual's right to access firearms, particularly in public spaces. Advocates for and against campus carry have often taken arguments developed from this wider debate on handguns and applied them to the narrow context of college and university settings. As such, it is not that campus carry represents a unique discussion per se, but rather a focused version of the debate on gun rights and the public consequences of these gun rights (p. 3).

As noted previously, universities in the United States have been open spaces of learning and academic freedom. These freedoms to a large extent have meant unrestricted access to campus grounds. Mass shootings at universities and colleges, like Virginia Tech, have changed long-held perceptions about open access and campus safety.

Implications for action. Six actions are recommended based on results of the current study. The first action is to increase campus-wide discourse on the impact of campus carry on campus safety. Leaders of higher education should consider developing methodologies that would guide these conversations in ways university stakeholders might find beneficial and evenhanded. A second action is to improve awareness about campus safety through the online

publication of semi-annual reports related to campus safety indicators provided by campus police and local law enforcement. Each publication would include a link to discussion groups where the university community could comment and share insights. The third action is to require designated coursework that would include a section focusing on the implications of campus carry on campus safety. Students could examine comparative data from states allowing and prohibiting campus carry, crime statistics specific to campus and surrounding communities, and current state concealed carry laws and university regulations on guns. The fourth action is to mandate annual training workshops for administrators, faculty, and students on safety measures during an active shooter event. University administrators could initiate forums on campus safety and campus carry that include an equal number of legislators, student organizations, and experts who support or oppose campus carry. The fifth action is to encourage administrative leaders to examine campus safety policies in states where campus carry is permitted and in states where it is prohibited to promote the development of varied campus policies and procedures related to campus carry. The sixth action is the implementation of campus safety measures, services and training workshops that are similar to those instituted at the University of Iowa. Detailed in Iowa Now (2020), campus safety measures included:

- Free late-night transportation service for all genders.
- A free mobile application that allows students to select a virtual guardian to escort them during their walk home...with a panic button.
- Alerts triggered by an event [that are] threatening the UI campus.
- Violent incident survival training.
- Trained student ambassadors who patrol campus during student-sponsored events.

- Threat Assessment Programs [dedicated to] early identification, assessment, and management of incidents and behaviors (p. 1).

The researcher plans to share the results of this study with the Office of the Provost and the Office of the Chancellor at UMKC, the Student Government Association at UMKC, the director of Urban Studies at UMKC, the director of UMKC's pre-law program, the UMKC Campus Police and with curators who represent Kansas City on the University of Missouri System Board of Curators. The researcher will also share these results with community associations that represent neighborhoods near UMKC and with the legislators of the Missouri General Assembly.

It is anticipated that the research conducted for the current study will encourage similar studies focused on the perceptions of undergraduate and graduate students enrolled at UMKC, particularly undergraduate students in the Departments of Criminal Justice, Political Science, Sociology, Psychology, and Communication Studies, and graduate students in law, education, and business

Recommendations for future research. The current qualitative study focused on the perceptions of a select group of students from two disciplines at UMKC. Of the 10 students who participated in the study, four were female and six were male. Four participants were African-American, two were Latino, and four were Caucasian. The researcher recommends future qualitative studies, similar to the current study, that would include a broader constituency of undergraduate students from varying majors and disciplines at UMKC. Future qualitative studies focusing exclusively on the perceptions of specific communities of UMKC undergraduates; i.e., female students, students of color, international students, LGBTQ students, ROTC students, and adult students would add critical data to this body of research.

Qualitative studies similar to the current study could be conducted at the other public and private institutions in the state of Missouri. The Docking Institute of Public Affairs (2016) conducted a quantitative survey about concealed carry on campus with students, faculty, staff, and administrators. The researcher recommends conducting a quantitative study to survey similar constituents at all Missouri public institutions of higher education. Likewise, qualitative studies examining the perceptions of students and other university stakeholders in Kansas and other states would broaden research on campus carry.

Concluding remarks. As more state legislatures, including the Missouri General Assembly, introduce bills and pass laws prohibiting leaders of higher education from outright banning or regulating campus carry at their perspective colleges and universities, administrators will need to consider the broader aspects of campus carry as they develop safety protocols. Campus carry legislation may include a limit on gun free zones, restrictive interpretations of university open space regulations, and may impact concealed carry reciprocal agreements between states. Academic leaders may find themselves more involved in the shaping of legislative initiatives on campus carry.

Morrall et al., (2018) detailed a few of the various concealed carry initiatives that have been added to legislative calendars in states throughout the U.S.

States have passed laws requiring college and university campuses to allow concealed carry, although some of these states still prohibit, or allow schools to prohibit guns in particular locations on campus. Idaho removed the authority of the governing bodies of colleges or universities to regulate or prohibit gun possession on campus. Tennessee allows nonstudents to carry concealed weapons on campus. In Colorado, the courts found that only the General Assembly can regulate firearm possession on any college

campus, and according to statute, concealed weapons are allowed on campus. Schools may regulate but not ban guns. Similarly, Oregon's Court of Appeals ruled that public colleges and universities may not ban weapons on campus grounds. In contrast, Oklahoma recently granted schools and universities authority to make their own policies concerning guns on campus. (p. 200)

Missouri gun laws, including regulations that govern the concealed carry of firearms, are among the least regulated in the nation, and legislators in the Missouri General Assembly have continued to introduce bills permitting campus carry. The perceptions of students who participated in the current study can be viewed as a central resource for campus administrators and leaders as they determine how best to keep their campuses safe from a mass shooting.

The researcher plans to share the results of this study with the Office of the Provost and the Office of the Chancellor at UMKC, the Student Government Association at UMKC, the director of Urban Studies at UMKC, the director of UMKC's pre-law program, the UMKC Campus Police and with curators who represent Kansas City on the University of Missouri System Board of Curators. The researcher will also share these results with community associations that represent neighborhoods adjacent to UMKC and with legislators of the Missouri General Assembly.

It is anticipated that the research conducted for the current study will encourage similar studies focused on the perceptions of undergraduate and graduate students enrolled at UMKC, particularly undergraduate students in the Departments of Criminal Justice, Political Science, Sociology, Psychology, and Communication Studies, and graduate students in law, education, and business.

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Appendices

**Appendix A: High Profile Shootings on College Campuses From April 17, 2007 Through
March 2, 2018**

High Profile Shootings on College Campuses from April 17, 2007 through March 2, 2018

Campus	Location	Date	Deaths	Injuries
Central Michigan University	Mount Pleasant, MI	March 2, 2018	2	0
Southeastern Louisiana University	Hammond, LA	February 23, 2018	1	0
Wake Forest University	Winston-Salem, NC	January 20, 2018	1	0
Penn State Beaver	Beaver, PA	December 13, 2017	2	0
East Stroudsburg University	East Stroudsburg, PA	December 11, 2017	1	0
University of Utah	Salt Lake City, UT	October 30, 2017	1	0
Grambling State University	Grambling, LA	October 25, 2017	2	0
Texas Tech University	Lubbock, TX	October 9, 2017	1	0
Georgia Tech	Atlanta, GA	September 16, 2017	1	0
North Lake College	Irving, TX	May 3, 2017	2	0
Warren County Career Center	Lebanon, OH	January 5, 2017	1	0
University of Utah	Salt Lake City, UT	December 29, 2016	2	0
Ohio State University	Columbus, OH	November 28, 2016	1	0
El Centro College	Dallas, TX	July 7, 2016	6	10
University of California – Los Angeles	Los Angeles, CA	June 1, 2016	2	0
Kansas State University	Manhattan, KS	April 2, 2016	1	0
Aims Community College	Greeley, CA	December 29, 2015	1	0
Ohio State University	Columbus, OH	November 29, 2015	1	0
Purdue University	West Lafayette, IN	January 21, 2014	1	0
South Dakota Mines	Rapid City, SD	November 21, 2013	1	0
Savannah State University	Savannah, GA	September 21, 2013	1	0
Santa Monica College	Santa Monica, CA	June 7, 2013	3	3
Massachusetts Institute of Technology	Cambridge, MA	April 18, 2013	1	0
University of Central Florida	Orlando, FL	March 18, 2013	1	0
Coastal Carolina University	Conway, SC	February 27, 2013	1	0

Tarrant County College- Southeast Campus	Arlington, TX	January 24, 2013	1	0
Chicago State University	Chicago, IL	January 16, 2013	1	0
Hazard Community College	Hazard, KY	January 15, 2013	1	0
Aurora Community College	Denver, CO	November 10, 2012	1	0
University of South Alabama	Mobile, AL	October 6, 2012	1	0
Virginia State University	Petersburg, VA	April 18, 2012	1	1
Oikos University	Oakland, CA	April 2, 2012	7	3
Mississippi State University	Mississippi State, MS	March 24, 2012	1	0
Temple University	Philadelphia, PA	February 2, 2012	1	0
Virginia Tech	Blacksburg, VA	December 8, 2011	2	0
University of California Berkeley	Berkeley, CA	November 16, 2011	1	0
San Jose State University	San Jose, CA	May 10, 2011	3	0
Southern Union Community College	Opelika, AL	April 6, 2011	1	2
California State-Bakersfield	Bakersfield, CA	October 21, 2010	1	0
Mid-Atlantic Christian University	Elizabeth City, NC	October 3, 2010	1	0
University of Texas	Austin, TX	September 28, 2010	1	0
Harvard University	Cambridge, MA	September 18, 2010	1	0
Ohio State University	Columbus, OH	March 9, 2010	2	1
University of Alabama in Huntsville	Huntsville, AL	February 12, 2010	3	3
Arizona State University	Phoenix, AZ	October 26, 2009	1	0
Clark Atlanta University	Atlanta, GA	September 3, 2009	1	1
Texas State Technical College	Waco, TX	July 31, 2009	1	1
Texas Southern University	Houston, TX	July 10, 2009	1	1
Harvard University	Cambridge, MA	May 18, 2009	1	0
Henry Ford Community College	Dearborn, MI	April 10, 2009	2	0
University of Central Arkansas	Conway, AK	October 26, 2008	2	1
Northeast Lakeview College	San Antonio, TX	October 13, 2008	1	0
Northern Illinois University	DeKalb, IL	February 14, 2008	6	17

Louisiana Technical College	Baton Rouge, LA	February 8, 2008	3	0
Stetson University	DeLand, FL	January 17, 2008	1	0
Louisiana State University	Baton Rouge, LA	December 13, 2007	2	0
Virginia Tech University	Blacksburg, VA	April 16, 2007.	32	24

Note: Adapted from “After Virginia Tech shooting, gun violence still claims victims on college campuses.” by Jones, M., 2018, *Collegiate Times*, p. 1. Copyright 2018, Collegiate Times.

Appendix B: Missouri Locations Where Concealed Carry is Prohibited

Missouri Locations Where Concealed Carry is Prohibited

1. Police, sheriff, or highway patrol station.
2. Within twenty-five feet of any polling place of any election day.
3. Detention institution, correctional facility, prison or jail.
4. Any courthouse occupied by the circuit appellate, supreme court and any juvenile, family, drug, or other court offices, and any room or office where any of the courts or offices are temporarily conducting business.
5. Any governing body or local government or general assembly or committee of the general assembly (Unless you are a member of the body with valid concealed carry permit).
6. The general assembly, supreme court, county or municipality may by rule, administrative regulation, or ordinance prohibit or limit the carrying of concealed firearm by permit or endorsement holders in that portion of a building owned, leased or controlled by that unit of government
7. Any establishment licensed to dispense intoxicating liquor for consumption on the premises, which portion is primarily devoted to that purpose, without consent of the owner or manager.
8. Any area of an airport to which access is controlled by the inspection of persons and property.
9. Any place that federal law prohibits carry of a concealed firearm.
10. Any higher education institution or elementary or secondary school facility without the consent of the governing body.
11. Any portion of a building used as a childcare facility without consent of the manager.

12. Any riverboat gambling operation accessible by the public without the consent of the owner or manager pursuant to rules promulgated by the gambling commission.
13. Any gated area of an amusement park.
14. Any church or other place of religious worship without the consent of the minister or person or persons representing the religious organization that controls the place of religious worship.
15. Any private property whose owner has posted the premises as being off-limits to concealed firearms by means of one or more signs displayed in a conspicuous place of a minimum size of eleven inches by fourteen inches with the writing thereon in letters of not less than one inch.
16. Any sports arena or stadium with a seating capacity of five thousand or more.
17. Any hospital accessible by the public.

Note. Adapted from “2018 Missouri Title XXXVIII Crimes and Punishment; Peace Officers and Public Defenders Mo. Rev. Stat § 571.107.1-18” by Missouri Legislature, 2018, *Missouri Legislature*, p. 1. Copyright 2019, Missouri Legislature.

Appendix C: Baker University IRB Approval



Baker University Institutional Review Board

February 17th, 2020

Dear Peter Morello and Tes Mehring,

The Baker University IRB has reviewed your project application and approved this project under Expedited Status Review. As described, the project complies with all the requirements and policies established by the University for protection of human subjects in research. Unless renewed, approval lapses one year after approval date.

Please be aware of the following:

1. Any significant change in the research protocol as described should be reviewed by this Committee prior to altering the project.
2. Notify the IRB about any new investigators not named in original application.
3. When signed consent documents are required, the primary investigator must retain the signed consent documents of the research activity.
4. If this is a funded project, keep a copy of this approval letter with your proposal/grant file.
5. If the results of the research are used to prepare papers for publication or oral presentation at professional conferences, manuscripts or abstracts are requested for IRB as part of the project record.
6. If this project is not completed within a year, you must renew IRB approval.

If you have any questions, please contact me at npoell@bakeru.edu or 785.594.4582.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Nathan D. Poell".

Nathan Poell, MLS
Chair, Baker University IRB

Baker University IRB Committee
Scott Crenshaw
Sara Crump, PhD
Jamin Perry, PhD
Susan Rogers, PhD

Appendix D: UMKC IRB Approval



Institutional Review Board
University of Missouri-Kansas City

5319 Rockhill Road
 Kansas City, MO 64110
 816-235-5927
 umkcirb@umkc.edu

May 01, 2020

Principal Investigator: Peter Morello
 Department: Communications Studies

Your IRB Application to project entitled "Student Perceptions of Campus Carry Handgun Policies at a Large Midwest Urban University (Dissertation)" was reviewed and approved by the UMKC Institutional Review Board according to the terms and conditions described below:

IRB Project Number	2020292
IRB Review Number	260508
Initial Application Approval Date	April 30, 2020
IRB Expiration Date	N/A Revised Common Rule
Level of Review	Expedited
Application Status	Approved
Project Status	Active - Open to Enrollment
Expedited	45 CFR 46.110.a(f)(7) 45 CFR 46.110.a(f)(6)
Risk Level	Minimal Risk
Type of Consent	Consent with Waiver of Documentation
HIPAA Category	No HIPAA
Approved Documents	Approved Consent Version Date 04.25.20 Updated Protocol, Interview Scripts and Questions, Participation Scripts

The principal investigator (PI) is responsible for all aspects and conduct of this study. The PI must comply with the following conditions of the approval:

1. No subjects may be involved in any study procedure prior to the IRB approval date or after the expiration date (if applicable).
2. All unanticipated problems must be reported to the IRB on the Event Report within 5 business days of becoming aware of the problem. Unanticipated problems are defined as events that are unexpected, related or possibly related to the research, and suggests the research places subjects or others at a greater risk of harm than was previously known or recognized. If the unanticipated problem was a death, this is reportable to the IRB within 24 hours of notification of occurrence/becoming aware of occurrence.
3. On-site deaths that are not unanticipated problems must be reported within 5 days of awareness on the Death Report, unless the study is such that you have no way of

knowing a death has occurred, or an individual dies more than 30 days after s/he has stopped or completed all study procedures/interventions and required follow-up.

4. All deviations (non-compliance) must be reported to the IRB on the Event Report within 5 business days of becoming aware of the deviation.
5. All changes must be IRB approved prior to implementation unless they are intended to reduce immediate risk. All changes must be submitted on the Amendment Form.
6. All recruitment materials and methods must be approved by the IRB prior to being used.
7. For studies requiring a Continuing Review Report (CRR) must be submitted to the IRB for review and approval at least 30 days prior to the project expiration date. If the study is complete, the Completion/Withdrawal Form may be submitted in lieu of the CRR.
8. Securely maintain all research records for a period of seven years from the project completion date or longer depending on the sponsor's record keeping requirements.
9. If applicable, utilize the IRB stamped consent documents and other approved research documents located within the document storage section of eCompliance. These documents are highlighted green.

If you have any questions, please contact the IRB at 816-235-5927 or umkcirb@umkc.edu.

Thank you,

UMKC Institutional Review Board

Appendix E: Invitation to Participate

Participant Invitation

Date
Individual
University of Missouri, Kansas City

Dear XXX:

My name is Peter Morello and I am a doctoral candidate at Baker University in Overland Park, KS. For my dissertation I am conducting a qualitative study titled, Student Perceptions of Concealed Carry Handgun Policies at a Midwest Urban University. You were identified as someone who may be interested in participating in my study.

Your participation is voluntary and will include a 30 to 45-minute interview (which will be audio recorded) to discuss your perceptions about concealed carry handgun policies at UMKC. The questions will focus on your opinions about:

- advantages to campus safety if campus carry becomes a law in Missouri
- disadvantages to campus safety if campus carry becomes law in Missouri,
- whether or not campus carry will result in a safer learning environment if campus carry becomes law in Missouri,
- whether or not there could be disruptions to a safe learning environment if campus carry becomes law in Missouri,
- the impact faculty members carrying concealed firearms on campus will have on the safety of the learning environment if campus carry becomes law in Missouri.

After the interview, I will email you a copy of your interview transcript. You will have an opportunity to review your transcript to make any clarifications, additions, or omissions. You will also be sent a summary of the findings. You will have an opportunity to review the findings and share comments with the researcher. Your participation in this study is completely voluntary. Should you choose to participate in the study, you may withdraw your consent and cease participation at any point in the process. If you choose to participate, your interview will be assigned an anonymous code (e.g., Participant 1) to insure confidentiality. During the interview, you may choose to withdraw from the study or indicate that you prefer not to respond to a question. There are no risks or discomfort associated with this study. You will not receive any compensation or benefits for participation.

Your participation would add to research on this critical and understudied topic. If you are willing to participate or have any questions about the study, please feel free to contact me at PeterFMorello@stu.bakeru.edu. Thank you for your consideration.

Best,

Peter Morello

For Questions Regarding This Study. Contact:

Principle Investigator:

Peter Morello

PeterFMorello@stu.bakeru.edu

913-558-2831

5105 W 131 Street, Leawood, KS 66209

Academic Advisor:

Tes Mehring, Ph.D.

School of Education, Baker University

P.O. Box 65

Baldwin City, KS 66006-0065

785-594-8312

tmehring@bakeru.edu

Appendix F: Consent Form

Study Title:

Student Perceptions of Concealed Carry (Campus Carry) Handgun Policies at a large Midwest Urban University

Authorized Study Personnel

Principal Investigator: Peter Morello

Principal Investigator: Peter Morello, MS Office: (913) 558-2831

KEY INFORMATION

You are being asked to take part in this research study because you are majoring in Urban Studies or enrolled in the pre-law program at UMKC.

Research studies are voluntary and include only students who choose to take part.

The purpose of this research is to gather perceptions of students at UMKC who are familiar with national, state or local politics. The total amount of your time will be 30-to-40 minutes.

Participation in the study involves a personal interview using Zoom technology to discuss your perceptions of the possible introduction of concealed carry handgun policies at UMKC. If you agree to participate, your interview will be recorded to facilitate the transcription of the interview and analysis of the interviews of all participants. Your answers will be confidential and you will not be named in this study.

The questions you will be asked will focus on issues related to campus carry:

- advantages to campus safety if campus carry becomes a law in Missouri
- disadvantages to campus safety if campus carry becomes law in Missouri,
- whether or not campus carry will result in a safer learning environment if campus carry becomes law in Missouri,
- whether or not there could be disruptions to a safe learning environment if campus carry becomes law in Missouri,
- the impact faculty members carrying concealed firearms on campus will have on the safety of the learning environment if campus carry becomes law in Missouri.

Please read this consent form carefully and take your time making your decision. After you review this consent form, please contact me if there is any information you do not understand. Feel free to talk with your family and friends before deciding to take part in this research interview.

Purpose of the Study: This qualitative study will explore student perceptions of concealed carry handgun policies at a large urban university in the Midwest, (UMKC). The study is guided by the following five purposes:

- to determine what students majoring in Urban Studies or enrolled in the pre-law program at a large urban public university in Missouri perceive as advantages to campus safety if campus carry becomes a law in Missouri.
- to determine what majoring in Urban Studies or enrolled in the pre-law program at a large urban public university in Missouri perceive as disadvantages to campus safety if campus carry becomes law in Missouri
- to determine in what ways students majoring in Urban Studies or enrolled in the pre-law program at a large urban public university in Missouri perceive campus carry will result in a safer learning environment on campus if campus carry becomes law in Missouri.
- to determine what students majoring in Urban Studies or enrolled in the pre-law program at a large urban public Missouri university perceive as potential disruptions to a safe learning environment on campus if campus carry becomes law in Missouri.
- to determine majoring in Urban Studies or enrolled in the pre-law program at a large urban public Missouri university perceive the impact faculty members carrying concealed firearms on campus will have on the safety of the learning environment on campus if campus carry becomes law in Missouri.

Participants: Approximately 15 UMKC students will take part in this study. All will be interviewed individually (using Zoom technology) and all participants will remain anonymous to each other. Only the researcher will know your identity.

As a voluntary participant, you will answer questions about your experiences on campus and your perceptions about campus carry. Your responses will further research on student perceptions of campus carry as described in the five purposes of the study listed above.

Procedures: The interview, using Zoom technology and recorded, will begin with demographic questions. For transcription and verification purposes, an audio recording is required. The interview will last no more than 30 to 35 minutes. Interviews will be recorded, transcribed, and uploaded to a secure database. Once your interview has been transcribed, I will share your transcription with you via email and you will have the opportunity to review your responses in written format. Additionally, after I have compiled all themes and findings, I will share the overall results, and you will have the opportunity to provide a final comment.

Risks: Taking part in this interview involves minimal risk. You may refuse to answer any of the questions and you may take a break at any time during the study. You may stop your participation in this study at any time.

Benefits: There are no direct benefits to you as a participant in this study. However, the results of this study may be of interest to college and university leaders, faculty, staff, and students. You will receive no compensation for participating in this study.

Confidentiality: Any feedback you provide in this study will be handled confidentially. Your data will remain confidential which means your name will not be linked to data that is compiled for this study. Your name will be coded to ensure this confidentiality. Your interview will be

assigned a confidential code (e.g., Participant 1). Audio-recordings of interviews and transcriptions of the interview will be stored electronically through a secure server and will only be seen by me or a research assistant during the study. UM System mandates that all data be stored for seven years after the completion of the dissertation. All recordings will be deleted as soon as the transcriptions have been reviewed. All transcripts will be kept on a single secured hard drive. That hard drive will be placed in a bank safety deposit box, accessible only by me and stored for seven years. All transcripts will be destroyed at the end of the seven-year period.

Participant's Well-Being: As stated previously, your participation in this study is strictly voluntary. Your well-being is a paramount concern. If a problem should arise as a direct result of your participation in this study, please contact me immediately.

Right to Withdraw from the Study: You have the right to withdraw from the study without penalty. At any point during the interview you may opt out of responding to any question and you may terminate the interview at any time. Should you decide to withdraw from the study, your recorded interview will be erased.

How to Withdraw from the Study: If the interview is in progress and you wish to withdraw, tell the researcher to stop the interview. If you would like to withdraw before the interview or after completion of your interview, please contact me at [pfmorello@stu.bakeru.edu](mailto:pamorello@stu.bakeru.edu). There is no penalty for withdrawing.

Consent: You will be asked to grant verbal consent just prior to the beginning of the interview.

For Questions Regarding This Study, Please Contact:

Principle Investigator:

Peter Morello
913-558-2831
5105 W 131 Street, Leawood, KS 66209
PeterFMorello@stu.bakeru.edu

Academic Advisor:

Tes Mehring, PhD
School of Education, Baker University
P.O. Box 65
Baldwin City, KS 66006-0065
785-594-8312
tmehring@bakeru.edu

Your signature on this form indicates consent to participating in the interview and to audio recording of the interview.

Participant Signature

Date