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Campus Policing: A Guide for Higher Education Leaders

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

This report is a guide for higher education leaders looking to proactively respond to issues of policing and racism on campus. The institutionalization of policing in higher education involves significant resources in terms of finances, personnel, technology, and equipment.

Up until this moment, critical reviews of campus policing have been absent in the management of campus safety and climate. In fact, most higher education leaders have not considered why the United States is the only system worldwide that has policing on college and university campuses. This is a taken-for-granted assumption and leaders do not realize that it is a more recent evolution.

However, administrators can no longer passively maintain campus police departments without seriously taking into consideration campus constituents' feedback. There are few resources to guide higher education leaders as they develop policies and practices related to campus policing. The limited research available adopts a colorblind perspective that justifies campus policing as the appropriate response to crime without considering its social impact on racial equity and inclusion. In light of social movements across the country that are calling out institutional racism in policing, higher education leaders can benefit from considering the neglected, taken-for-granted aspects of campus policing as they respond to the on-going racial and health crisis.

Our goal was to create a resource for campus leaders to consider the role of policing on campus, particularly in light of concerns related to racial equity and inclusion. We drew upon data from the federal Survey of Campus Law Enforcement Agencies, National Center for Education Statistics, and media coverage, such as The Chronicle of Higher Education and Inside Higher Ed. Our goal was to illuminate the social ramifications of campus policing to assist higher education leaders critically consider how to manage their respective departments.

We sought to aggregate information on how campus policing shapes campus life and students' experiences, which has been neglected in research.

Key Takeaways for Administrators:

- Campus police officers are deployed in capacities beyond their law enforcement mandate, including as a security and crisis response service;
- Campus police officers expose students to potential punishments in the criminal justice system and the campus disciplinary process;
- Administrators increasingly rely on campus police officers to control and regulate political expression;
- Students of color experience racial profiling and harassment by campus police officers;
- Campus policing adversely contributes to the campus racial climate.

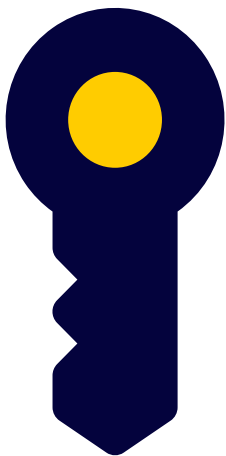




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The report concludes with recommendations for higher education leaders as they grapple with the question of policing on their campus. As campus constituents continue to issue demands on the spectrum of police reform to abolition, we offer higher education leaders a range of actions to consider:

1. Create clear guidance and identify the “upper bounds” for campus policing;
2. Align campus policing with an assessment of campus community safety needs;
3. Reconsider the use of campus policing in non-crime-related situations;
4. Examine how racism is embedded into the functions of campus policing;
5. Divest from campus policing into resources for student wellbeing;
6. Abolish campus policing and create new structures for campus safety.

INTRODUCTION

In the wake of George Floyd's death at the hands of Minneapolis police officers, communities across the nation have been protesting in full force against police brutality and racism in the criminal justice system. Among the catalytic events during the last week of May 2020, Jael Kerandi, a Black woman and president of the undergraduate study body at the University of Minnesota, sent a letter on May 26th to university leadership calling for the university to end its partnership with the Minneapolis Police Department (MPD). The following day, President Joan Gabel announced the end of all contracts and collaboration with MPD. The decision arguably sparked subsequent municipal police partnership terminations as well as demands to defund and abolish policing. Critiques of policing from college student activists included indictments of campus police departments. Similar to the wave of student demands in 2015, college student activists at institutions, including the University of California, Northwestern University, and the University of Southern California, are demanding the divestment and abolition of campus policing.

College student activists bring attention to the normalized scene of uniformed, armed officers on college campuses. Policing has become a taken-for-granted function in higher education. A Department of Justice survey reports that 95% of four-year institutions operate a campus police department (Reaves, 2015). The prevalence of campus police departments can be explained in part by legislation in 44 states that empowers colleges and universities to form their own police force (Nelson, 2015). The University of California Police Department was authorized as a state law enforcement agency in 1947. By 1972, 27 states permitted higher education boards to appoint campus police officers with the power to arrest (Gelber, 1972). Recently, in 2019, Maryland lawmakers approved the Community Safety and Strengthening Act, which permitted Johns Hopkins University to be



Photo Credit: Leslie Cross

the first private institution in the state to have a campus police department. Although based in an educational setting, campus police officers share many of the same powers as their municipal counterparts. Higher education leaders cannot afford to uncritically or passively maintain campus police departments within the current political climate.

Campus crime, violence, and fear of victimization are the main reasons justifying campus police presence. Since the 1980s, public perceptions of college campuses have shifted away from images of idyllic campus quads to the "dark side" of crime and disorderly behavior (Sloan & Fisher, 2010). High-profile incidents, such as student murders and mass shootings, have resulted in families and lawmakers demanding more accountability from higher education institutions in regards to student safety and campus security. Campus police departments are often the central actors who fulfill legal mandates (e.g., Clery Act crime reporting) and respond to crises. While such issues are all too real, the investment in campus policing appears at odds with available data. Overall campus crime rates decreased 32% between 2001 and 2016 (U.S. Dept. of Education, 2019). Research demonstrates that campus security policies developed in response to critical incidents (e.g., a mass shooting) are inconsistently supported between students, staff, and faculty (Kyle et al., 2017). Finally, fear of crime and victimization have been found to be weak predictors of support for campus security policies (Schafer et al., 2016). In contrast to public discourse that frames policing as the necessary response to crime, available evidence suggests campus security measures are developed without an accurate understanding of the concerns and wants among campus constituents.

Leading a college campus and ensuring the safety of thousands is no easy task. Trauma and the loss of life from violence can have deep effects on survivors and the campus community. On top of a moral imperative to attend to the wellbeing of campus members, higher education leaders are legally and financially liable for failures in campus security provisions. However, communities across the nation are questioning the assumption that policing is the only appropriate response to safety concerns. News reports of racial profiling by campus police officers and the demands of college student of color activists speak to the urgency for higher education leaders to ask themselves how their campuses can be both safe and racially inclusive. Administrators, trustees, and lawmakers alike have an opportunity to reflect and consider the social impact of policing on the college environment.

The focus on crime control, while warranted, has resulted in tunnel vision regarding campus police departments. Higher education leaders are without the knowledge to evaluate how campus policing shapes the lives of campus constituents. As many institutions work to create a climate that is welcoming, inclusive, diverse, and supportive of social justice, discussions about campus policing are notably absent. Yet campus police departments do not exist apart from the institution. The considerable amount of resources to maintain a campus police department, as well as the development of various security policies, means resources are lacking in other areas, such as student affairs. Researchers have demonstrated how faculty, peers, and staff can have positive and detrimental effects on minoritized student populations—campus police officers are no exception even if campus climate policy and research minimize their role.

This report is offered as a guide for higher education leaders—those reacting to calls for police reform and abolition, those who work to support racial equity and inclusion on campus, as well as those in the position to proactively initiate change. First, we provide an overview of campus policing to disrupt perceptions that campus police officers serve a benign role to control crime. Next, we highlight three ways policing shapes the campus community in regards to student engagement and racial climate. Throughout we offer reflective questions higher education leaders can use to examine practice and policy in their context. We conclude with recommendations along the spectrum of police reform to abolition with an understanding that campuses vary with regards to the role, organization, and perception of campus police departments.



Photo Credit: Mike Von

CAMPUS POLICING 101

Yale University hired the first two campus police officers in 1894. For the following 50 years, campus police officers were considered watchmen and pseudo-police; essentially, property guards and liaisons between the campus and public police department. Colleges and universities began instituting full-fledged police departments beginning in the 1960s (Sloan, 1992). Although a “specialized” police force, campus police officers are as empowered as their municipal counterparts.

Consider the following:

- *Most officers had arrest (86%) and patrol (81%) jurisdictions beyond campus boundaries*
- *Approximately 75% of institutions permitted officers to carry firearms*
- *94% of officers used a sidearm and chemical or pepper spray (Reaves, 2015)*
- *Since 1990, over 100 institutions have been loaned military-grade weapons from the Department of Defense 1033 program (Weissman, 2020).*

Campus police officers bring the power to arrest and employ deadly force into multiple situations beyond crime intervention. In addition to a law enforcement role, campus police departments fulfill additional responsibilities. These include enforcing physical security measures (e.g., building locks, camera surveillance systems) and crowd control for on-campus events (Fisher & Sloane, 2013; Reaves, 2015). Campus police departments provide public safety services, such as an evening escort program, prevention and safety education, emergency response, and medical services (Reaves, 2015). While these may appear as commonsense functions for a police department, consider how appropriate it is for an armed officer with the power of arrest to be involved in all these activities. Moreover, the use of the police for these various functions exposes students to the criminal justice system. Campus police officers have the discretion to

sanction students with a student conduct referral, arrest, and the use of force.

In light of these common practices and varied roles, how institutions approach policing and safety differ from that of a city or county. Additionally, campus police departments report higher rates (16-34%) of employing community policing tactics compared to municipal departments (Perez & Bromley, 2015). Community policing is a reform strategy to ensure officers are responsive and aware of their constituents’ needs. It is also an approach that is viewed as compatible with the ethos of higher education (Sloan, Lanier, & Beer, 2000). While there are descriptive differences between campus and municipal police departments, some research suggests community policing has not been substantially adopted beyond name in higher education (Hancock, 2016). Higher education leaders need to consider how broad criticisms of police reform are relevant to their context as they manage change efforts to improve campus policing and safety.

Among institutions without a campus police department, 77% contract with a private security firm to provide similar services, and 18% partner with local law enforcement agencies (Reaves, 2015). These institutions demonstrate that it is possible to maintain campus safety without armed officers and with a pared-down police presence. For example, at the University of Maine, Machias, the Dean of Students completes the Clery Act reporting requirements and Residence Life provides crime prevention and awareness services. The local city police provide law enforcement services when needed. In the current political climate, higher education leaders need to be fully apprised of what policing looks like on their campus—what officers are empowered to do, the roles they occupy, and their approach in serving the campus community. They must be able to articulate the precise need for a campus police department, and why no other solution is possible, or be called out to create alternatives. The following sections examine three social impacts of campus policing that merit critical discussion, but have been minimized in higher education discourse. We propose that higher education contemplates the criminalization of political expression, racial profiling, and how their campus constituents conceptualize safety and wellbeing in order to navigate the crisis of police legitimacy on their campuses.

REFLECTIVE QUESTIONS

- 1. Reflect on what you know about your campus' police officers, such as what their responsibilities are and what they are authorized to do.**
- 2. When have you been instructed to call campus police? How appropriate were the campus police as responders in those situations?**
- 3. What is your institution's approach to campus policing? How does that approach align with institutional values?**



Photo Credit: Kalea Morgan

CONTROLLING POLITICAL EXPRESSION

The 1960s was a significant period that saw the transition of campus police officers from watchmen to law enforcement officials. With the advent of the Civil Rights movement and social protest on numerous issues, campus leaders struggled to maintain order over student demonstrations. The military and municipal police were often used to contain student activists. Such clashes were violent with notable events including the repression of the Ethnic Studies Strikes at UC Berkeley and San Francisco State College, and the death of four students at the hands of the Ohio National Guard at Kent State. Police scholar John J. Sloan III (1992) argues that the political climate of the 1960s led to the emergence of the “modern campus police department.” Institutions shaped their police forces to resemble municipal police, from hiring academy-trained recruits to the use of uniforms and weapons. In being able to avoid the use of external law enforcement, the use of campus police departments was framed as a community-oriented approach to safety. From this framing, higher education leaders have been able to use campus police to contain unwanted student activism.

Police discretion empowers campus police officers to position students as targets, rather than as the intended beneficiaries for protection. In 2011, UC Davis students engaged in a non-violent Occupy movement demonstration which also critiqued university fee hikes. Campus police officers were deployed in riot gear to contain the protestors. In an image that went viral, Lieutenant John Pike infamously pepper-sprayed kneeling, unarmed students directly in the face.

Although Pike was subsequently fired, UC Davis spent over \$2 million to scrub negative online search results and improve the portrayal of the institution through its communications (Campbell, 2016). Not only is this case indicative of the extent of campus police power, it also demonstrates how political expression can be criminalized and made deserving of an armed response. Numerous examples abound of issuing campus police officers as a first response to student activists, particularly when demanding institutional accountability for racial inclusion, economic justice, and affordability (Ibarra, 2020; Izadi, 2015; Strong, 2013). While administrators may deploy officers to prevent possible disorder, violence is a common result of campus police involvement rather than de-escalation or an unarmed response.

A final implication of policing political expression in higher education is its extension beyond the campus and police department itself. During the wave of Occupy demonstrations, UC Davis student activists noted the role of UC Berkeley police officers in clearing out encampments in Oakland. Additionally, the UC Office of the President cooperated with the Oakland Police Department, permitting their offices to be used to monitor protests (Maira & Sze, 2012). In addition to participating in political repression off-campus, colleges and universities surveil student activists through student affairs committees, monitoring social media postings, and the use of plainclothes officers to observe student activists (Bauer-Wolf, 2017; Bitker, 2011; Schumer & Xu, 2020). Higher education leaders should consider the chilling effect on campus climate that may result from policing political expression and criminalizing diverse perspectives.

REFLECTIVE QUESTIONS

- 1. When has your institution deployed campus police to regulate politicized events and/or demonstrations? Who are the campus police there to protect? What events had the opposite response?**
- 2. Reflect on how your institution regulates political expression through policy. Is there clear guidance on how to address policy violations? What is the goal in sanctioning campus constituents who violate these policies?**

POLICING RACE ON CAMPUS

Consider the disruption of being stopped on the way to teach or attend a class because a campus officer demands to see your campus ID. You are dressed in business attire, as befits a faculty member, or university apparel and donning a backpack if you are a student. Imagine the stop leads to questions about whether you are truly a campus affiliate and that the officers are looking for a crime suspect. News stories and emerging research suggest such experiences are unique to Black and racially minoritized campus members, particularly students. In 2015, a Yale third-year student, Tahj Blow, was returning to his residential hall from the campus library. Minutes into his walk, Blow, a Black male, was stopped by a university police officer at gunpoint for presumably matching the description of a crime suspect. The incident resonated with fellow Black students at Yale who had similar experiences. In 2018, Lolade Siyonbola, a Black female Yale graduate student, was interrogated by campus police for napping in her residence hall common room (Griggs, 2018). Despite engaging in everyday activities for a university, such as eating, napping, or attending a campus tour, campus police officers habitually stop and question Black and racially minoritized students (Jaschik, 2018; Jenkins et al., 2020; Smith, Allen, & Danley, 2007). Moreover, racially minoritized faculty and staff are similarly profiled by campus police officers (Flaherty, 2014; Jaschick, 2014; Smith, 2009).

Scholarship on public policing demonstrates racial inequities from stops to the use of force to the point of arrest (Goel, Rao, & Shroff, 2016; Kochel, Wilson, & Mastrofski, 2011; Kramer & Remster, 2018). Although campus policing has not been as extensively researched, campus police officers have engaged in negative racialized interactions that escalate beyond questioning. In 2006, UCLA undergraduate Mostafa Tabatabaiejad was stunned multiple times with a Taser by campus police officers when he could not produce his university ID while in the campus library (Thacker, 2006). At Arizona State University, campus police officers body-slammed Professor Ersula Ore, a Black woman, for jaywalking alongside a street under construction (Jaschik, 2014). Campus police officers also impact non-campus members, as when UCLA police officers stopped and arrested David Cunningham, a Black Los Angeles County Superior Judge, for allegedly not wearing a seatbelt (Healy & Lopez, 2013). These examples are reminders that campus police officers have the same powers and authority as their municipal counterparts, on and off-campus.

Racial profiling by campus police officers are taxing encounters for Black and racially minoritized campus members--physically, mentally, and emotionally (Smith et al., 2007; Solorzano et al., 2000; Steele, 1992). Autoethnographic accounts by Black faculty compare the burden of having to prove one's campus affiliation to papers that emancipated slaves carried as evidence of their freedom (Jenkins et al., 2020), an experience unique to the Black community and rooted in the racist history of the United States. Smith and colleagues (2007) frame the physiological and psychological effects of racialized

campus police encounters as racial battle fatigue. The fear, shock, frustration, anger, and other reactions to racial profiling contribute to a racially hostile campus experience and feelings of exclusion (Green, 2016). Akin to the phenomenon of "driving while Black," racial profiling by campus police officers demonstrates the peril of "walking on campus while Black" (Jaschik, 2018).

REFLECTIVE QUESTIONS

- 1. How is campus policing compatible with your institution's commitment to racial equity and inclusion? How is campus policing discussed in strategic plans for diversity and included in initiatives like racial bias training?**
- 2. How do the experiences of racially minoritized campus members with campus police inform institutional security policies? How does the campus police department incorporate feedback from racially minoritized campus members?**

WE DEMAND: INSIGHTS FROM STUDENT ACTIVITIES

Black and racially minoritized students have long been attentive to the social impact of campus policing. Their insights have been given visibility in part due to the Black Lives Matter movement, which has sustained national attention on institutional racism in policing since 2013. In Fall 2015, a series of racist events at the University of Missouri galvanized its students who, in turn, inspired racial justice activism nationally. By December 2015, Black students and their allies at 74 institutions had issued calls for an end to racism on their campuses. Demands relating to campus police included mandatory racial awareness training, the hiring of Black officers, and accountability for racial bias. The demands also critiqued the harassment and surveillance of Black students by campus police officers. Overall, students were concerned with reducing racism and creating inclusive campuses for racially minoritized students. The demands are notable because research and trends in practice to promote racial equity in higher education have largely left out campus police departments. The wave of student activism highlighted the need for higher education leaders to consider how campus safety and racial equity can be interconnected, rather than separated, in university planning and policy development. These efforts can also be considered reform-based as the demands spoke to internal changes, leaving the campus police departments intact.

Five years later, the murder of George Floyd at the hands of a Minneapolis police officer ignited a national wave of protests against racist police violence at the start of

summer 2020. Again, Black and racially minoritized college students joined community mobilizations and held their institutions accountable for upholding racist policing. Within days of George Floyd's death, Jael Kerandi successfully petitioned for the University of Minnesota to cease its contracts and partnership with MPD. The publicized action was followed up with demands by students and faculty for the divestment and abolition of campus police departments, such as at Ohio State, Northwestern, Yale, University of Southern California, UCLA, and Virginia Commonwealth. In a shift away from the reformist demands of 2015, divestment and abolition call attention to the ways institutions can better support campus constituents. For instance, UCLA faculty petitioned for investment in "material support for Black faculty, staff, students, and workers on campus." At Virginia Commonwealth University, students demanded the defunding of the campus police department and the funds reallocated to counseling services. In moving away from wanting campus police officers to be better in their conduct, the campus movements of 2020 have provided a new framework for community safety, wellbeing, and racial justice that does not involve policing. The demands are generative, and administrators can use this opportunity to critically examine their assumptions and views of campus policing in order to meet the needs of students and other campus constituents.

The next section addresses ways to maintain campus safety and wellbeing while striving for police reform and abolition.

REFLECTIVE QUESTIONS

- 1. Compare institutional spending on racial equity activities, student services, and the campus police department. How could partially reallocating funds from policing improve racial equity and student services?**
- 2. In what ways has your institution assessed what safety and wellbeing look like to campus constituents? How does the campus police department directly meet those needs? How does it not?**

MOVING FORWARD

Throughout this report we have highlighted key social impacts of campus policing that we contend are largely neglected in favor of a focus on crime control. Higher education leaders cannot take safety and security lightly, but the reliance on policing is a limited approach to campus wellbeing. Moreover, there are several costs to campus policing that merit attention and can no longer be ignored in the current political climate.

Key Takeaways

- Campus police officers are deployed in capacities beyond their law enforcement mandate, including as a security and crisis response service;
- Campus police officers expose students to potential punishments in the criminal justice system and the campus disciplinary process;
- Administrators increasingly rely on campus police officers to control and regulate political expression, a non-criminal activity;
- Racially minoritized students experience racial profiling and harassment by campus police officers;
- Campus policing adversely contributes to the campus racial climate.



These takeaways, as well as the reflective questions, are meant to generate discussion among campus decision-makers and the development of future policy. In addition, we recognize that campus leaders may be facing demands by their constituents and must provide a set of deliverables in response. To assist in this effort, we provide a set of recommendations that can empower leaders to begin addressing the needs of racially minoritized students and their overall campus communities. The recommendations span the spectrum of reform to abolition as no campus is the same. The current racial crisis in policing is affecting campuses differently depending on location, history, racial climate, campus, and community demographics. The following are starting points for higher education leaders to begin intentional reflection and collaborative efforts to address policing, safety, wellbeing, racial justice and inclusion.

RECOMMENDATIONS

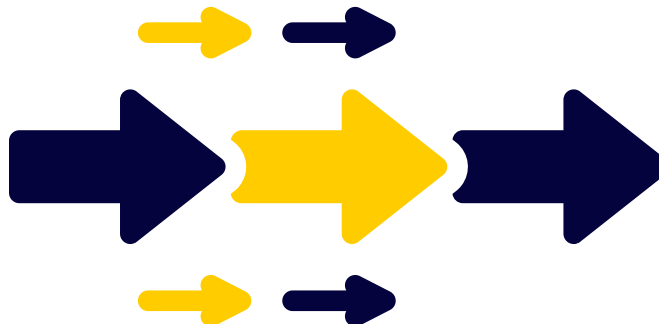
The recommendations are presented as a sequence, however, we readily foresee that higher education leaders may be drawing from all five of these areas of change simultaneously as they respond to the coming demands by campus and community constituents. We also acknowledge that reform and abolition are words that are easy to speak aloud but are implemented through day-to-day work that is challenging, ambiguous, and in which what is “right” is not always evident. The reality is that leaders need to keep up with the dynamic dialogue and changes at all levels of governance and the criminal justice system—city, county, state, and federal. The management of campus policing moving forward must be attentive to what is legally mandated. At the same time, leaders need to examine the gray areas in order to be on the cutting edge with equitable and race-conscious approaches to campus safety. We also were not able to cover all the overlooked consequences of campus policing but in illuminating some of these pressing concerns, we hope that higher education leaders can be innovative and equitable in promoting safety and wellbeing.

1 Create clear guidance and identify the “upper bounds” for campus policing

- Eliminate the use of lethal weapons by campus police officers.
- Limit partnerships with external law enforcement agencies.
- Prioritize de-escalation and limit the use of excessive force.
- Detail campus policies that explain when and how campus police should be called.

2 Align campus policing with an assessment of safety needs within the campus community

- Conduct a campus needs assessment focused on safety and wellbeing, including perspectives towards campus police.
- Generate a community-based definition of safety that serves as the foundation for security policies and procedures, including for campus police officers.
- Reconsider the use of campus policing in non-crime-related situations.
- Ask departments to identify when they call campus police and identify areas for change (e.g., residential life).



3 Examine and address how racism is embedded into campus policing

- Limit the use of racial data in campus crime alerts (e.g., the University of Minnesota only reports a crime suspect's race if it will aid in identification and apprehension).
- Create accountability processes for addressing racial bias and discriminatory actions by campus police officers.
- Train campus police officers and dispatchers to identify racially biased calls before responding to the scene.
- Conduct an internal audit to identify patterns of racial inequities, such as when campus police officers stop and question students, require student groups to have additional security, arrest, and refer to student conduct, etc.
- Create a set of indicators to monitor for racial inequity in campus policing.

4 Divest from campus policing into resources for student wellbeing

- Hire additional mental health counselors and expand counseling services.
- Enhance or create cultural resource centers and curricular/co-curricular programs that examine social identity, power, privilege, and oppression (e.g. ethnic studies, women's studies, etc.).
- Create a critical mass of historically underrepresented populations through student admissions and the hiring of faculty, staff, and administrators.
- Establish professional development for faculty, staff, and administrators to increase their capacity to engage in anti-racist practices.

5 Abolish campus policing and create new structures for campus safety

- Utilize non-armed guards for day-to-day security and establish detailed plans and protocols for when to call external law enforcement (e.g., active shooters, campus-level safety threats) from a prevention approach. Research suggests campuses create emergency protocols as a reaction to crises (Giblin, Buruss, & Schafer, 2008; Shaw, 2016). Crisis management planning identifies key non-police actors and departments necessary for campus safety.
- Integrate racial equity and social justice principles into campus crisis and threat management teams and procedures.
- Create non-punitive responses to student behavior (e.g., some campuses practice the Good Samaritan protocol, which does not penalize students who receive or call for help in alcohol-and drug-related emergencies).
- Incorporative restorative justice frameworks to address conduct and legal violations on campus. Traditional punitive approaches focus on rules that were broken and on authority figures imposing a punishment. A restorative justice approach focuses on harm, reparation, and is collaborative, with those harmed being part of the solution and offenders taking responsibility for their actions and impact (Webber, 2009).
- Invest financial resources into the local community, reducing the conditions of inequality and the town-gown divide.
- Ensure students have resources for a basic livelihood (e.g., food security, on-campus employment).

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