

Law Commission of Canada

A Report on University Campus Policing and Security In Canada

Prepared for

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Table of Contents

Executive Summary.....	1
I. Introduction.....	3
II. Background.....	4
III. Campus Security Models.....	5
A. Service Delivery.....	5
B. Contentious Issues.....	14
IV. Relevant legislation.....	22
A. Provincial Statute.....	22
B. The Patrick Shand Inquest.....	23
C. Bill C-45.....	23
V. Best Practice Recommendations.....	24
A. Community Based Philosophy.....	24
B. Professional Standards.....	25
C. Service Delivery Consistency.....	27
D. Crime Prevention and Safety Programs.....	27
VI. Conclusion.....	28
Appendix A – <i>Use of Force Response Options Model</i>	30
Appendix B – <i>Patrick Shand Inquest Verdict</i>	31
References.....	39
Biography.....	40

Executive Summary

This report examines campus policing and security models that are prevalent at Canadian universities. Significant differences exist among these models. Various service delivery methods are described and outlined; contentious issues addressed; legislative and legal aspects explored; and finally 'best practice' recommendations are presented.

Some universities employ special constables and are guided by provincial statute, guidelines, and agreements with local police boards or commissions. Other universities employ in-house security and are free to set their own standards. For those that do fall under provincial regulations as a result of contracting services, the existing standards for background screening, training, uniforms, vehicles, equipment, and accountability vary significantly from province to province.

Recent global incidents, national events and trends have heightened community expectations for safe and secure public environments. The World Trade Centre attacks, the war in Iraq, SARS and major power blackouts all underscore the important role that professional campus security providers play during significant crises. Student applicants are placing greater relevance on a safe campus environment when selecting a university. As the role of the security watchman has evolved to providing 'policing and security' functions at publicly-funded universities, so has the need to meet community expectations through the establishment of professional standards and recognized best practices.

A number of provinces are considering revisions to their respective security guard legislation to include both in-house and contract security. British Columbia, Ontario and Quebec have issued discussion papers. In Ontario, the Patrick Shand Inquest resulted in twenty-two jury recommendations relating to training standards, use of force, and accountability mechanisms for all security practitioners. Bill C-45 amendments to the Criminal Code of Canada have resulted in greater criminal liability for organizations that fail to protect workers.

It is timely to consider a national standard for university campuses. Recommendations to formalize best practices include:

- Community-based security services;
- Professional standards for campus security officers;
- Crime prevention and personal safety programs;
- Consistent service delivery that will meet community expectations.

The benefits are many – increased professionalism and quality of service, enhanced campus safety and security, and best practices guidelines for university security providers. Formal standards will result in a high degree of professionalism and consistency in meeting public expectations and community needs.

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