

FACULTY BELIEFS, EXPERIENCES, AND INTERACTIONS WITH  
STUDENTS IN THE CONTEXT OF CAMPUS CARRY

by

JOSLYN KRISMER

Presented to the Faculty of the Graduate School of  
The University of Texas at Arlington in Partial Fulfillment  
of the Requirements  
for the Degree of

DOCTOR OF PHILOSOPHY

THE UNIVERSITY OF TEXAS AT ARLINGTON

May 2018

Copyright © by Joslyn Krismer 2018

All Rights Reserved



## Acknowledgements

Earning a Ph.D. is not a solitary endeavor and I was lucky to have a fantastic support system throughout this journey. Special thanks to my husband, Jeff, for all the times you stepped in and took up the slack while I was pursuing my degree. You always came through for me and the kids and I will be forever grateful.

Dr. Maria Adamuti-Trache always believed in me, and allowed me to cut my own path through the doctoral program. Thank you for supporting my interest in campus carry early on and for encouraging me to push the limits of my potential. I also wish to thank my committee members, Dr. Barbara Tobolowsky, and Dr. Leaf Zhang for all your time, wisdom, and guidance throughout the process. And to all the faculty members who so generously shared their thoughts and perspectives about campus carry with me - without you, this dissertation would not have been possible.

I cannot forget to thank my children for their patience and understanding while I pursued my own dreams. Vanessa Louise and Evan Reese, you are my heart and soul. Finally, thank you to my family and friends for surrounding me with love throughout this process and always.

Abstract

FACULTY BELIEFS, EXPERIENCES, AND BEHAVIOR IN THE  
CONTEXT OF CAMPUS CARRY

Joslyn Krismer, Ph.D.

The University of Texas at Arlington, 2018

Supervising Professor: Maria Adamuti-Trache

Although gun possession has traditionally been prohibited at higher education institutions, several states have passed legislation in recent years allowing guns to be carried on college campuses. The so-called “campus carry” policy took effect in Texas on August 1, 2016. In this dissertation, I present my research that explores the beliefs and experiences of faculty in the context of campus carry at a public university in Texas, how these beliefs and experiences about campus carry are related to faculty identity, and the ways in which faculty beliefs, experiences, and identity in this context may impact faculty-student interaction behaviors.

This article-based dissertation is structured around three articles that addressed several research objectives and employed survey and

interview data I collected between 2016 and 2017. In the first article in the series, survey results were analyzed to explore faculty beliefs about campus carry and investigate the impact campus carry may have on faculty student interaction behaviors using a comparative design. The second study takes a deeper dive into the same survey data, using a correlational design to model faculty responses to uncover how experiences and beliefs around campus carry influence the way faculty approach interactions with students in class, especially discussions around controversial topics. The third and final study was designed to probe beyond the statistical data to explore the individual perspectives and lived experiences of female faculty on a campus with an enacted campus carry policy through in-depth, semi-structured interviews.

The overarching findings of this body of work indicate that faculty have very personal and nuanced views about campus carry that are shaded by their beliefs, experiences, and personal and professional identity. Faculty beliefs, experiences, and identity in the context of campus carry also influence faculty-student interaction behaviors. While some faculty are at risk of altering their teaching practice in the context of campus carry, others may be able to adapt in ways that mitigate any negative effects of campus carry on teaching practice.

## Table of Contents

Acknowledgements .....	iii
Abstract .....	iv
List of Figures.....	x
List of Tables.....	xi
Chapter 1 Introduction.....	1
Statement of the Problem.....	5
Purpose and Objectives of the Study .....	6
Background to the Problem .....	6
American Gun Culture .....	7
Brief History of University Gun Policy .....	9
Faculty and Campus Carry .....	11
Faculty-Student Interactions .....	17
Conceptual Framework .....	20
Belief .....	21
Experience .....	22
Identity.....	23
Behavior .....	26
Conceptual Model .....	28
Research Methodology.....	29
Research Site .....	30
Research Population.....	31
Survey Data Collection .....	31

Qualitative Data Collection.....	34
Empirical Studies .....	36
Limitations/Delimitations of the Research.....	38
Significance of the Research.....	39
References .....	41
Chapter 2 Comparative Study of Faculty Beliefs and Behaviors in the Context of Campus Carry .....	53
Literature Review.....	55
Background of Campus Carry in Texas.....	55
Faculty Attitudes about Campus Carry.....	57
Faculty Interactions with Students in the Classroom.....	59
Method.....	61
Research Design .....	61
Data Collection.....	62
Research Sample .....	64
Findings .....	64
Faculty Beliefs about Campus Carry .....	64
Impact of Campus Carry on Teaching Approach of Controversial or Sensitive Issues.....	68
Discussion .....	74
Conclusion .....	76
References .....	78
Chapter 3 Exploring Faculty Commitment to Teaching Controversial Topics at a “Campus Carry” Institution .....	83
Literature Review.....	86

Campus Carry Law .....	86
Academic Freedom .....	90
Theoretical Framework .....	93
Beliefs .....	93
Experience .....	94
Methods .....	94
Data Collection and Research Sample .....	95
Variables .....	96
Findings .....	98
Comparing Faculty Intentions to Maintain Teaching Practices.....	98
Modeling Faculty Intentions to Maintain Teaching Practices.....	101
Discussion and Conclusion .....	103
Significance of the Study .....	106
References .....	108
Chapter 4 Female Faculty Beliefs, Experiences, and Behaviors in the	
Context of Campus Carry: A Qualitative Study.....	116
Literature review .....	120
Faculty Professional Identity .....	122
Method.....	124
Findings .....	127
Faculty Understanding and Action .....	128
Good Guy with a Gun .....	131
Threat of Violence .....	133
Arming Oneself .....	135
Past Experiences .....	136



Texas .....	141
Women and Guns .....	142
Interacting with Students.....	144
Discussion .....	146
Conclusion and Implications.....	149
References .....	151
Chapter 5 Conclusion.....	157
Synthesis of Results .....	158
Research Objective 1.....	159
Research Objective 2.....	162
Research Objective 3.....	163
Contributions to Research and Theory.....	165
Implications for Higher Education Policy and Practice .....	166
Faculty Perspective.....	166
Institutional Perspective .....	168
National Context .....	169
Final Thoughts .....	170
References .....	171
Appendix A IRB.....	174
Appendix B Sample of Survey Questionnaire.....	176
Appendix C Participant Demographics .....	190
Appendix D Variables and Constructs .....	192
Appendix E Interview Protocol.....	195
Biographical Information .....	198

## List of Figures

Figure 1.1 IBEB (Identity, Beliefs, Experiences, Behavior) Conceptual Model .....	28
---	----

## List of Tables

Table 2.1 Faculty beliefs about Campus Carry (n=261) .....	65
Table 2.2. Comparison of responses to Beliefs survey items by gender.....	66
Table 2.3. Comparison of responses to Beliefs survey items by race. ....	67
Table 2.4. Comparison of responses to Beliefs survey items by academic discipline. ....	68
Table 2.6. Comparison of responses to Behavior survey items by gender. ....	70
Table 2.7. Comparison of responses to Behavior survey items by race. ....	71
Table 2.8. Comparison of responses to Behavior survey items by academic discipline. .	73
Table 3.1. Intention to use same teaching practices after campus carry implementation (ANOVA) .....	99
Table 3.2. Intention to use same teaching practices after campus carry implementation – Regression analysis .....	102
Table 4.1. Study participants .....	125
Table 5.1 Summary of chapters, concepts and main findings .....	158

## Chapter 1

### Introduction

The interpretation of the Second Amendment, and the circumstances under which individuals may own or carry weapons on college campuses, is fiercely debated in the United States. On one hand, gun control advocates see campus carry policies as antithetical to higher education's mission and culture, which are strongly rooted in the First Amendment of the U.S. Constitution, and call for tighter gun restrictions to increase public safety (Birnbaum, 2013). On the other hand, gun rights advocates view campus carry as a natural part of the right guaranteed by the Second Amendment of the U.S. Constitution, and argue that an armed bystander may be able to take action to prevent or deter criminal violence on college campuses (Harnisch, 2008).

Although gun possession has traditionally been prohibited at higher education institutions, college campuses became a new battleground for the gun rights versus gun restrictions debate in the aftermath of the 2007 massacre at Virginia Tech, during which 32 students and faculty were shot and killed. Since that time, several states have passed legislation allowing guns to be carried on college campuses (Morse, Sisneros, Perez Jr., & Sponsler, 2016). With the passage of Texas Senate Bill 11 (2015), Texas became the eighth state to pass legislation to allow license holders to

carry concealed weapons throughout college campuses, including dormitories and classrooms. The so-called “campus carry” policy took effect in Texas on August 1, 2016. The term *campus carry* is used in my research work, as in practice, as short-hand to describe the general concept of allowing concealed handguns on college campuses, the specific policies drafted and approved for achieving this purpose, and the resulting circumstances in which a university allows licensed carriers to carry concealed handguns on a college campus.

Early research indicates that the majority of university faculty are strongly opposed to the measure (Bennett, Kraft, & Grubb, 2012; Brinker, Lenneman, & Swayne, 2016; Dahl, Gene Bonham, & Reddington, 2016; Patten, Thomas, & Wada, 2013; Thompson, Price, Dake, & Teeple, 2013; Wilson & Gervais, 2016). Faculty opposing campus carry often argue that in addition to increasing violence, allowing guns on campus conflicts with the university mission of a collaborative search for truth by stifling free speech and debate. Higher education institutions prioritize pursuing truth; discovering, integrating, and communicating knowledge; and preparing students to effectively participate in our economy and our democracy (Bringle, Games, & Malloy, 1999). In order to achieve these goals, higher education faculty rely on a tradition of academic freedom to ensure that colleges and universities remain accountable to serving the public good

rather than the whims of wealthy donors, pressure from political interest groups, or other powerful entities (Finkin, 1982). Campus carry opponents argue that adding weapons to university environment threatens this academic freedom and the pursuit of truth. Similarly, the impact of campus carry on faculty's interactions with students is also a concern.

Campus carry opponents argue that policies may have a negative impact on *faculty-student interaction behavior*, defined in this research as contact and relationships between a faculty member and his or her students inside and outside the classroom (Brinker, Lenneman, & Swayne, 2016; Wilson & Gervais, 2016). This aspect of faculty responsibility is of particular concern because positive contact with faculty has been shown to be so important to student satisfaction and success in college (Astin, 1999; Campbell & Campbell, 1997; Lau, 2003).

Faculty-student interactions such as robust classroom discussion, especially those centered on controversial or sensitive subject matter are of particular importance in a higher education context in which shared search for truth is its cornerstone. The discussion of controversial topics in educational settings is an important factor toward achieving positive educational outcomes for students, including civic engagement, political literacy, and critical thinking (Bielby, 2003; Campbell, 2008; Diemer & Blustien, 2005; Giroux, 2006; Godfrey & Grayman, 2014; Hess, 2009;

Wernick, 2012). Policies that interfere with the free and robust exchange of ideas in college classrooms may deprive students of the opportunities to gain experience in these areas. Some have expressed concern that campus carry may be one such policy. For example, the American Association of University Professors issued a public statement about campus carry that states that the presence of guns in the classroom could create a “chilling effect” on classroom discussions about controversial or sensitive topics (AAUP, 2015).

Interactions with faculty outside the classroom are also important for student satisfaction and success. According to the theory of student involvement, students who connect frequently with faculty members are more likely to succeed academically and be satisfied with their college experience (Astin, 1999). Astin (1999) states, “frequent interaction with faculty is more strongly related to [student] satisfaction with college than any other type of involvement, or indeed, any other student or institutional characteristic” (p. 525).

According to the Bureau of Labor Statistics (2015), there are over 1.5 million post-secondary educators in the United States, representing a large and important component of the American educational system. This large segment of the university ecosystem has a direct impact on the educational future of our nation, especially through their interactions with

students both in and outside of the classroom. As vitally important actors in public higher education, faculty and their perceptions, beliefs, and behaviors in response to higher education policies are especially important to understand. Given the fact that campus carry is a relatively new phenomenon, academic research in this area is scarce. Therefore, understanding how policies like campus carry may impact how faculty interact with their students is foundational to assessing the value gained or harm caused by such policies.

### **Statement of the Problem**

Although several studies have been conducted to determine the level of support for and against expanding gun rights to include college campuses (Bennett, Kraft, & Grubb, 2012; Brinker et al., 2016; Patten, Thomas, & Viotti, 2013; Patten, Thomas, & Wada, 2013; Wilson & Gervais, 2015), little research exists to explore the impact of campus carry policies on faculty-student interaction behaviors, especially engaging students in discussions about controversial and sensitive issues in class, and interacting face-to-face with students outside the classroom. As faculty members are faced with the reality of campus carry at their institutions, it is important to understand how faculty perceive and experience campus carry, and how their beliefs and experiences may impact faculty-student interactions.



## **Purpose and Objectives of the Study**

The purpose of this dissertation is to examine the beliefs and experiences of faculty in the context of campus carry at a public university in Texas, how these beliefs and experiences about campus carry are related to faculty identity, and the ways in which faculty beliefs, experiences, and identity in this context may impact faculty-student interaction behaviors. The objectives for this research are as follows:

1. To describe faculty *beliefs* and *experiences* regarding campus carry in the context of higher education in Texas.
2. To explore how a faculty member's personal and professional identity may account for differences in his or her beliefs, experiences, and behaviors related to campus carry.
3. To examine the ways in which faculty identity, beliefs, and experiences in the context of campus carry impact faculty-student interaction behavior.

## **Background to the Problem**

As a concept, campus carry conveys deep symbolic meaning for many, evoking strong opposition from one faction and vehement support from other segments of the American population (Birnbaum, 2013). In this section I will provide brief background information about the gun culture in America, the history of gun policies on college campuses, and the current

research and media coverage about how faculty perceive the campus carry policy as conflicting with their right to free speech.

### **American Gun Culture**

The debate about the right to carry weapons is a much broader issue than the higher education context. According to Yamane (2017), the United States has more guns than any other country in the world, and a “strong cultural association of guns with personal identity and national values” (p.2) that is unlike anywhere else. Although there is no official registry of firearms in the United States, there are an estimated 270 million civilian-owned firearms, including handguns, rifles, and shotguns in the United States according to the most recent survey of small arms (Graduate Institute of International Studies, 2007). Many of those arms are concentrated in the Central Southwest census region, which includes Texas, Oklahoma, Arkansas, and Louisiana. In this region of the United States, owning guns is often considered normative, rather than deviant behavior (Cook & Goss, 2014) and gun ownership rates reflect that sentiment. According to the NORC General Social Study, 43% of households in the Central Southwest region own guns compared to 23% of the total U.S. population (Smith & Son, 2015).

Seate, Cohen, Fujioka and Hoffner (2012) argue that in the case of guns, gun ownership functions as a sort of social identity. Shapira (2017)

agrees, stating that “being a gun owner and participating in the world of gun ownership means having a relationship not simply with a mechanical object but with a wide range of ideological positions” (p. 221). Gun ownership and the right to carry weapons also symbolizes self-determination and self-reliance, as well as opposition to government expansion and intrusion; values which are in line with the self-identities of many gun owners in the south (Celinska, 2007). Cook and Goss (2014) describe the association of guns with certain regional values as a “gun culture.”

Although the gun culture in the central south is strong, universities have traditionally been considered a safe haven, where guns were not needed for protection and did not have a purpose on college campuses, where open discourse and variety of opinions and cultures were valued and resolved in non-violent ways (Brady Center to Prevent Gun Violence, 2007). However, in recent years, gun-rights advocates have argued that individuals have the right to carry weapons and defend themselves regardless of their location, including college campuses (Birnbaum, 2013). Several high profile campus shootings in recent years have been held up as evidence for the need for self-defense on college campuses specifically (Birnbaum, 2013). The passage of campus carry exemplifies a philosophical divide among citizens of the United States, but one that is

particularly stark in the central south region. For example, while survey results indicate that as high as 85% of Texas faculty oppose campus carry (Wilson & Gervais, 2016), only 45% of registered voters in Texas opposed the policy in a 2015 poll (Henson & Blank, 2016).

### **Brief History of University Gun Policy**

In this section, I will trace the recent trajectory of gun policies on college campuses in the United States. Up until the 1970s, colleges and universities in America operated *in loco parentis*, or “in place of the parent” (Cramer, 2014) by assuming full legal responsibility of the students. At a time when the age of majority was 21, universities operated as parent-like guardians of students, setting the limits of their students’ freedom. Dress codes and curfews were typical forms of oversight, as were conduct codes designed to prevent students from engaging in casual sex or heavy drinking. Not surprisingly, universities often enforced rules that discouraged their charges from the reckless use or possession of weapons (Cramer, 2014).

These expectations, enforced more commonly by tradition than policy, were inconsistently codified and many campuses did not have specific written policies related to weapons. In 1971, however, the voting age was lowered from 21 to 18 (U.S. Const. Amend. XXVI). As a result, the authority of universities to act *in loco parentis* was diminished as

college students gained more independence as legal adults. During a similar time period, student demonstrations escalated as civil rights and anti-war movements gained steam. Universities wrestled with the best ways to ease campus tensions without violence (Cramer, 2014).

According to Cramer, as a measure to keep campuses safe in light of growing campus unrest, many campuses added new policies specifically restricting firearm possession on campus. Since that time, most college and university campuses have been officially gun-free zones. Results from a 2008 survey of more than 400 campus police chiefs showed that 97% of institutions had a specific policy prohibiting firearms on campus (Thompson, Price, Mrdjenovich, & Khubchandani, 2009).

In recent years, however, public sentiment has shifted in favor of easing gun restrictions in some states. Since the 2007 Virginia Tech massacre, a number of states have sought to expand gun laws to allow license holders to carry guns on college campuses for the purpose of protection. Decisions in several court cases have strengthened and broadened states' roles in upholding gun rights, thereby setting the stage for advancing campus carry legislation. For example, *District of Columbia v. Heller* (2008) held that the Second Amendment protects an individual's right to bear arms unconnected to militia service. Under this decision, the court determined that individuals have a constitutional right to possess a

firearm for the purpose of self-defense within the home. The Supreme Court further clarified the scope of the states' role by holding that the Second Amendment is incorporated under the Due Process Clause of the Fourteenth Amendment, and is protected from infringement by local governments (*McDonald v. City of Chicago*, 2010). According to Meloy (2011), these two Supreme Court cases clarified the rights of citizens to own guns for personal protection and the state's authorization to protect gun rights, strengthening the pro-gun position in many states and paving the road for expanding carry guns laws on college campuses. Other high profile incidents of campus violence fanned the flames of the campus carry supporters in some states (Birnbaum, 2013). In 2015, 15 states introduced bills seeking to expand gun laws to allow firearms on college campuses. Texas became the eighth state to pass and implement campus carry with the passing of Senate Bill 11, which required that license holders be allowed to carry concealed handguns throughout public college campuses as of August 1, 2016 (Texas S.B. 11, 2015).

### **Faculty and Campus Carry**

Although research is only just now emerging to investigate the impact of campus carry, a few studies provide some early indication about faculty opinions and perspectives of the issue. Reports from mainstream media serves as one of the only sources of information regarding

individual and collective action from faculty in response to campus carry. In this section, I will discuss the small but growing body of academic research regarding faculty perceptions and attitudes about campus carry and I will explore reports of collective and individual action taken by faculty in response to campus carry policies in recent years.

### **Academic research about campus carry.**

In spite of the pervasive gun culture in the U.S., it is clear from recent survey results that the large majority of faculty, regardless of geographic region, oppose campus carry policies (Bennett, Kraft, & Grubb, 2012; Brinker, Lenneman, & Swayne, 2016; Wilson & Gervais, 2016). According to a survey of more than 10,000 faculty members in Kansas conducted by Brinker, Lenneman, and Swayne (2016), 70% of respondents favored the prohibition of guns on college campuses. Another poll conducted at UT San Antonio found similar results, with 86% of faculty reporting they were opposed to campus carry (Wilson & Gervais, 2016). In a study conducted in Georgia, researchers found that 78% of faculty and administrators who participated in the survey opposed expanding Georgia's gun laws to include lawfully carrying of weapons on college campuses, while only 17% favored such legislation (Bennett, Kraft, & Grubb, 2012). Research also shows that some differences may exist

between various faculty groups classified based on race, gender, and discipline (Patten, Thomas, & Viotti, 2013; Patten, Thomas, Wada, 2013

**Collective and individual action against campus carry.**

In addition to the research discussed above, opposition to campus carry by university faculty and administrators has been well-documented in the media and in public forums. Prominent national organizations and scholarly societies have issued statements online declaring their opposition to policies that allow guns on college campuses, including the National Association of Student Affairs Professionals (NASPA, n.d.), and the American Educational Research Association (AERA, 2016). The American Association of University Professors (2015) issued a joint statement declaring their opposition to campus carry. It reads in part:

College campuses are marketplaces of ideas, and a rigorous academic exchange of ideas may be chilled by the presence of weapons. Students and faculty members will not be comfortable discussing controversial subjects if they think there might be a gun in the room (AAUP, 2015).

National grass roots movements such as Armed Campuses (n.d.) and the Campaign to Keep Guns Off Campus (n.d.) have formed to specifically organize opposition against the expansion of gun laws on college campuses. The organization Gun Free UT has emerged as central



headquarters for the campus carry opposition movement in Texas, and its website serves as a repository of statements and petitions against campus carry. During the academic year preceding the implementation of campus carry in Texas, more than 1,700 professors, the student government, the graduate student assembly, the faculty council, and 43 academic departments, centers, and schools at UT-Austin signed petitions, resolutions, or statements against campus carry (Gun Free UT, n.d.). The faculty at UT Austin effectively joined forces to support a proposal to allow faculty and staff to ban guns in their private offices. The proposal was approved by the University of Texas Board of Regents in July 2016 (Conway, 2016). Most recently, a student protest group held an event during the first day of classes at the University of Texas at Austin in August 2016, during which students flouted campus obscenity rules by distributing and displaying sex toys as a way to bring attention to their protest against the new campus carry laws (Samuels, 2016).

Individual faculty have also publically opposed the policy. In August 2016, three University of Texas-Austin professors filed a lawsuit against the University and the State arguing that the campus carry policy infringed on their right to free speech, and would cause a chilling effect in their classrooms during lessons related to emotional and controversial topics, such as gay rights or abortion (Walters, 2016). The professors sought an

injunction to prevent guns on campus prior to the first day of Fall 2016 classes, which was ultimately denied. In addition, several news stories described faculty leaving Texas universities or turning down job offers citing campus carry legislation as the reason. In one highly publicized instance, the long-time Dean of the College of Architecture at the University of Texas-Austin resigned citing the passage of the campus carry law as his primary motivation for leaving the university (Watkins, 2016).

In another example, Nobel Laureate, Steven Weinberg publically announced that he would ban guns in his classes at The University of Texas-Austin regardless of the legal ramifications of his actions. In the statement, Weinberg claimed he would be concerned for his safety if students were allowed to carry guns, providing an example of a time when a student reacted angrily to a lecture about the intersection between religion and science. Weinberg stated that his first amendment right to free speech would be unduly burdened by the campus carry policy (Mekelburg, 2016). On January 27, 2016, history professor Joan Neuberger testified during an out-of-session hearing of the Senate State Affairs committee that she was concerned that the policy would negatively impact her relationships with her students. At the hearing, Neuberger stated

The reason they can come talk to me and my colleagues, is because we create an environment in the classroom that is an environment of absolute trust and respect and I don't think I can do this if I don't know if the person sitting next to me is carrying a gun in their backpack (UT, 2016).

Examples of faculty declining job offers and speaking engagements due to concerns about campus carry have also been verified and reported by news media (Kuhlman, 2016; Wong, 2016).

Of course, not all faculty are opposed to campus carry. Although no organized faculty groups of campus carry supporters have matched the visibility of the opposition, there is no doubt that some faculty find the concept of campus carry in line with their philosophical and political viewpoints, as evidenced by the fact that surveys of faculty do not reflect consensus on the issue of allowing guns on campus (Bennett, et al., 2012; Brinker et al., 2016; Patten, Thomas, Viotti, 2013; Patten, Thomas, Wada, 2013; Wilson & Gervais, 2015). Gun rights groups, such as the National Rifle Association, and grassroots activist groups like TX Gun Rights and Open Carry Texas represent the supporters of campus carry legislation. These groups argue that the Second Amendment rights are violated by gun bans on college campuses and that law-abiding citizens carrying legal firearms increase campus safety (Birnbaum, 2013; Cox, 2015).

## **Faculty-Student Interactions**

University faculty play an important role in the socialization and academic success of their students. Positive and productive interactions between faculty and their students has been shown to be a key factor in the college persistence and completion. The following section will explore the importance of faculty interactions with their students both in and outside of the college classroom.

### **Classroom discussions.**

Faculty and students in American universities enjoy a culture of free speech based on critical thinking, debate, and questioning that produces individuals capable of addressing social injustices and inequity in civil society and creative thinkers in their fields of expertise. American higher education is world renowned not only as an institution of excellent scholarship and creativity, but as a space that is powerful and relevant precisely because it is open and democratic (Said, 2004). According to the National Task Force on Civic Learning and Democratic Engagement (NTFCLDE) (2012), education should be characterized by ‘deep engagement with the values of liberty, equality, individual worth, open mindedness, and the willingness to collaborate with people of differing views and backgrounds toward common solutions for the public good” (p.3). Higher education institutions serve as the training ground for citizens

learning democratic values and practices and civic responsibilities (NTFCLDE, 2012). This training is achieved, in no small measure, in a critically reflective and engaged, or “open,” classroom, in which controversial political or social issues are openly discussed, and where dissenting opinions are encouraged and respected (Godfrey & Graymen, 2013). McAvoy and Hess (2013) argue that classrooms are one of the most valuable sites for teaching skills necessary to fostering critical democratic thinking in individuals. Faculty are ultimately responsible for creating a stimulating and safe environment within which students may engage in robust and inclusive discussions with faculty and other students.

Providing a safe space for students to engage in discussions with individuals with differing viewpoints and debate controversial topics using reason and evidence is not only a cherished university tradition, but has been shown to have a positive impact on educational outcomes. According to Hess (2009), the ability to engage in free and open discussion about controversial issues in the learning environment is crucial to the development of critical thinking skills and the achievement of real learning.

Students of all ages who are allowed to engage deliberately and critically with controversial issues in the classroom are also likely to

become engaged and informed citizens. According to Campbell (2008), discussing and reflecting on controversial or sensitive topics in the classroom is important to young people's civic engagement, political understanding, and political awareness. Diemer and Blustein (2005) found that open classroom environments contribute to the development of students' "critical consciousness," described by Freire (2000) as the ability to "read the world," and question the nature of learners' historical and social situations. Critical consciousness enhances students understanding of the world, increases their motivation to act for change (Wernick, 2012), advances their understanding of abstract ethical principles and moral dilemmas (Bielby, 2003), and even increases students' focus and commitment to their own career goals (Diemer & Blustein, 2005). The discussion of controversial and sensitive issues in college classrooms is an important factor in educational and civic development of students, which requires faculty to be free to address such issues as the learning objectives for their courses dictate, and for students to feel safe to respond.

#### **Out of class faculty-student interactions.**

According to Trolan, Jach, Hanson, and Pascarella (2016), examples of faculty-student interactions outside of class include working on research together, discussing a students' personal problem(s) with him

or her, and having other discussions outside of class regarding issues of interest and importance to students. Research shows that faculty interactions with students outside of class are positively related to student motivation (Trolan, et al., 2016), success, and persistence (Astin, 1999). Further, Anaya and Cole (2001) found that the quality of relationships with faculty, including academic and personal relationships, was positively associated with students' academic performance.

Policies like campus carry may negatively impact the frequency and quality of faculty- student interactions, especially if the student is struggling with personal or academic issues, resulting in students missing out on an aspect of their higher education that has been shown to have positive impacts on educational and career outcomes.

### **Conceptual Framework**

Faculty beliefs and experiences related to allowing guns on campus are deeply personal and complex. In this dissertation, I will explore how individual faculty beliefs and experiences regarding campus carry, as well as a faculty member's identity may impact faculty behavior with respect to faculty-student interactions. In order to systematically discuss the relationship between faculty and campus carry policy, several concepts must be identified and defined. In the following section, I will provide operational definitions for the notions *belief*, *experiences*, *identity*, and

*(faculty-student interaction) behaviors* and propose a conceptual framework to guide the use of these concepts throughout this dissertation.

## **Belief**

Belief is a complex and much debated concept. A full accounting of the various views on belief and belief formation is beyond the scope of my study, therefore I will use a simplified Cartesian definition which states that beliefs involve mental representation and positive assessment of meaningful information (Gilbert, 1991).

Mental representation refers to the mental “code” of a visual image, a statement, or an idea. It is the “proposition” that one holds in his or her brain. That mental representation is assessed within the mind and if the assessment is positive (i.e. the proposition is deemed to be true or likely true), the proposition is incorporated into one’s belief system. An individual’s belief system influences and is influenced by one’s personal identity (Chai, 2001).

In this research, I explore how faculty interactions with students may be related to faculty beliefs about campus carry, including beliefs about how the policy relates to campus safety, academic freedom, and university culture.



## **Experience**

For the purpose of this study, I will rely on an anthropological view of experiences, which defines experiences as “how events are received by consciousness” (Bruner, 1986, p. 4). Experience is not to be confused with the event itself, which could be observed by many or could stand alone without being consciously experienced. It is also to be distinguished from individual behavior, which can be described by an external observer and concerns a routine through which the individual simply passes. The individual experience of others is not directly accessible to researchers, it can only be interpreted by what subjects express orally, in writing, or transpire in their behavior (Bruner, 1986). The notion of experience is used in my research as something unique which happens to an individual and involves an intensity of personal feeling (Abrahams, 1986). For instance, many faculty have had encounters with upset students, but the personal experience of each individual in such situations is unique. In this way, experience is related to both beliefs and identity formation. One’s belief system and sense of self have bearing on how one experiences events and situations. In addition, one’s experiences shape one’s belief system and identity (Chai, 2001).

## **Identity**

According to Adams and Marshall (1996), identity is a social-psychological construct shaped both socially, through our interactions with others in a societal context, and individually through our own experiences and beliefs. Through one's identity, one processes information, makes judgments, and selects behaviors. However, identity is not a static construct. Rather identity is constructed and reconstructed through an iterative and reciprocal process in which one's beliefs, experiences, interactions, and contexts have a mutual influence on one's identity. Therefore, as campus contexts change with the inclusion of campus carry, it follows that faculty understanding of themselves in that context may change as well and, in the reciprocal effect described by Adams and Marshall (1996), may in turn affect the context.

Adams and Marshall (1996) also argue identity and identity formation undergird social experiences. Social experiences such as dialogue, knowledge transmission, discussion and other forms of human relatedness are influenced by the sense of self. Reciprocally, the sense of self is in turn influenced by these same acts of human relatedness.

Gee (2000) provides a useful framework for understanding faculty professional identity. Gee (2000) proposes several perspectives such as nature, institution, discourse, and affinity as interrelated and overlapping

facets contributing to the construct of identity. The nature perspective prioritizes the state a person is in by nature, rather than other labels or qualities that have been assigned or ascribed to the individual by others. Nature identities, while not synonymous with biological characteristics, are informed by such characteristics. Identities constructed around such traits as being a woman, or belonging to an ethnic group are examples of the nature identity perspective (Gee, 2000).

The institutional perspective focuses on identities shaped by the laws, rules, traditions, or principles related to institutions to which an individual belongs. Institutional identity may be constructed based on relationship to a legally recognized institution, such as a university or organization. For example, consider the identity one carries by virtue of being in the Chemistry department, for example, and being aware about chemical hazards and lab safety norms, or other situations to which the individual is trained to respond. Institutional identity may also be based on a more symbolic definition of institution. For example, a person with the identity of “professor” may be granted a certain amount of power based solely on the traditions and principles constructed around the institution of “the professoriate” (Gee, 2000), but also years of experience in dealing with more delicate situations during faculty-student interactions.

Discourse perspectives refer to “ascribed” or “achieved” identities constructed without the attachment to institution, but rather, sustained through the way others interact with, discuss, and treat an individual. For example, someone who is identified an effective teacher is not simply considered “effective” because of an institutional tradition about teachers, but carries the identity of “effective” as a reflection of the interactions with her students and colleagues and how she perceives the symbolic message of those interactions and discussions with others. One cannot be “effective” by oneself (Gee, 2000).

The final identity perspective prioritizes group affinity. Affinity identity is constructed through one’s affiliation with groups that share one’s interests and experiences. Affinity identity reflects judgements and perceptions about groups that the individual actively chooses to join and participate in the unique social practices of that group that reinforce group membership. For example, a faculty member may also be a “Democrat” or a “gun owner.” Those group affinities shape how one’s identity is understood by oneself and others in specific, but nuanced ways (Gee, 2000).

Professional identity exists as part of the complex individual identity landscape. According to Archer (2005), professional identities are necessarily integrated into individuals’ other personal and social identities.

Rayner, Fuller, McEwen, and Roberts (2010), explore how faculty construct their professional identities within many overlapping contexts including academic discipline, institutional setting, and individual role. Changes in professional duties, roles, and responsibilities; impact on power relationships and authority channels; and changes in how others discuss and define the role of professor; can all affect and shape the way that a university professor constructs her identity (Gee, 2000). It stands to reason that the professional identities of faculty at an institution will affect how an individual views the campus carry policy and behaves in relation to the policy.

### **Behavior**

Behavior, or the way in which one acts in response to a situation or stimulus, can affect both the individual as well as others with whom the individual interacts. In this way, behavior is important to explore in order to gain a fuller understanding of the impact of a particular event or situation in a social setting. Research indicates that faculty behaviors related to their interactions with students are especially important in a higher education context as they may affect student success and satisfaction in college (Astin, 1999).

Faculty interact with students in a variety of ways both in class and outside of class. In-class engagement includes teaching methods and

techniques used by faculty to engage with their students. Lectures, discussions, and debates all fall into this category. Faculty-student interaction behaviors outside of class are also of interest in this research. According to the College Student Experiences Questionnaire (Kuh & Pace, 1998), examples of faculty student interactions outside of class include talking with a student about an idea he or she has for a term paper or other assignment, discussing a student's career plans with him or her, offering a critiques or comments to students about their academic performance, working with a student on a research project, and discussing a student's personal concerns.

Using data collected via survey questions and one-on-one interviews, the three studies included in this dissertation explore both faculty behavior (e.g., teaching/discussing sensitive topics in the classroom) and behavioral intentions regarding faculty interactions with students in the context of campus carry (e.g., likelihood to adjust their teaching style after campus carry policy implementation). According to Rottman and Rossett (2014), understanding intentions is foundational to understanding human behavior. Therefore, in this research faculty intentions regarding their student interaction behaviors will be treated as a proxy for actual behavior change.

## Conceptual Model

In the previous sub-sections, I explored several concepts and perspectives that help create a framework to discuss the issue of behavioral change among faculty as a result of campus carry policy. Figure 1.1 represents a conceptual model which illustrates my proposed approach to examining the impact of faculty identity, simultaneously influencing and influenced by faculty beliefs, faculty experiences, and the campus carry context, on faculty-student interaction behaviors.

Figure 1.1 IBEB (Identity, Beliefs, Experiences, Behavior) Conceptual Model



As illustrated in this model, faculty identity both influences, and is influenced by beliefs and experiences, just as beliefs and experiences influence each other, as described by Chai (2001). Faculty behavior, especially faculty-student interactions, is related to beliefs, experiences, and identity. Because the impact of campus carry on faculty behavior is the focus of this study, the concept of behavior is located in the center of the model. All the beliefs, experiences, and behaviors that influence and are influenced by identity are embedded in the context of a campus carry institution and are simultaneously shaped by the context and are shaping the context.

### **Research Methodology**

The main research goal of this dissertation is to understand how faculty beliefs, experiences, and identity in the context of campus carry affect their interactions with students within and outside classroom. This section introduces the research site, target population, research methods, and specific data collection procedures used in conducting three empirical studies.

Qualitative and quantitative research methods work together to provide a more complete picture of a research topic or issue (Gall, Gall, & Borg, 2007). Quantitative research methods provide techniques to measure observable phenomenon, compare across populations, and



examine relationships among variables (Gall et al., 2007), while qualitative methods provide rich descriptions and details about the meanings humans ascribe to problems by allowing for the individual participant's voice to be heard (Creswell, 2007). Given the complex and highly personal nature of faculty beliefs and experiences with campus carry, I conducted a multi-method approach to this research, using both quantitative and qualitative approaches to gain a fuller view of the issue. These methods were employed in developing three articles, each of which was peer reviewed and accepted at a major research conference. The three studies included in this dissertation are described below.

### **Research Site**

Texas public, four-year institutions were required by law to allow licensed individuals to carry guns on campus as of August 1, 2016. Therefore, I selected a large, public, research university, located in an urban area in a Texas metroplex as the site for this research. The institution offers a variety of degree programs including undergraduate, masters, and doctoral programs. The recent implementation of the campus carry laws in the state made it an ideal location for gathering information about faculty beliefs and experiences related to campus carry policies.

## **Research Population**

The faculty of one large research university was selected as the accessible population for my research because of the relevant information they provide with respect to campus carry law implementation on their campus and because of the convenience of the population. In addition, faculty have a strong interest in the policy environment, including campus carry, making them ideal participants in a research project focused on these topics. Also, faculty were chosen as the focus of this study due to the relative stability and accessibility. The faculty population remains relatively constant over time, especially in the tenure and tenure-track ranks. Additionally, faculty are relatively easy to contact using publically available email addresses. In the academic year 2015-2016, the accessible population consisted of 1333 faculty members.

## **Survey Data Collection**

The survey method was selected in order to objectively collect and analyze data from a large population regarding an observable phenomenon. Publically available faculty email lists were used to distribute a survey designed by researcher to 1333 faculty participants at no cost to the researcher. The response rate to the survey was 24%. Several responses were omitted for incomplete or invalid responses, leaving 261 valid responses. One of the limitations of the data is caused

by the voluntary nature of survey responses, which means the generalizability of the study to the larger population is limited.

After an extensive search of the literature, I found no existing survey instrument related to gun laws that was specific enough for this particular study, therefore a survey was developed specifically for this project. The survey was designed to collect data regarding faculty perceptions and behaviors related to the campus carry law and its impact on teaching. An IRB approval was granted for the study (Appendix A). The survey was administered in the spring 2016 semester, prior to the implementation of the policy in the fall 2016 term. The online survey was distributed using publically available email addresses for faculty.

The survey began with a series of demographic and identity questions including gender, age, rank, race, discipline, and the format and number of courses taught each year. The following section included questions about participants' experiences interacting with students. For example, how often the participants engaged in discussions regarding controversial issues in class, how often these discussions made students angry or upset, and whether the participant had ever experienced violent student behavior. The questionnaire then included a brief statement describing the background of campus carry in Texas which read as follows: "On June 1, 2015, Texas Governor Greg Abbott signed S.B. 11,

also known as the "campus carry" law. S.B. 11 provides that license holders may carry a concealed handgun throughout public university campuses, starting August 1, 2016.”

This statement was followed by several questions in which faculty were asked to rate their belief in the likelihood that their own teaching practice (i.e. in class faculty student interaction behavior) would change in the context of campus carry. Participants ranked their belief about each statement on a 5-point Likert scale. For example, participants were asked to rate their level of agreement with the following statement from *definitely yes* to *definitely no*: “If licensed students are allowed to carry guns in the classroom once the campus carry is implemented I expect to ‘tone down’ my usual approach to teaching controversial or sensitive topics.”

The next section of the survey was designed to collect data regarding participants’ beliefs about the campus carry policy in general. Participants were again asked to rate their agreement with statements related to whether the participant agreed or disagreed with the campus carry policy, if the participant believes the campus carry policy will negatively impact his or her own teaching practice, and if the policy will negatively affect the free exchange of ideas at the university using a 5-point Likert-type scale. For example, participants were asked to rate their level of agreement with the following statement from *strongly agree* to

*strongly disagree*; “I support the right of license holders to carry concealed weapons on college campuses.” The survey concluded with an open-ended comment section in which participants could write any thoughts or feelings they had about the topic at hand or the survey itself. The full text of the survey is included in Appendix B. Survey data were cleaned, prepared, and analyzed using SPSS software by employing univariate, bivariate, and multivariate statistical techniques appropriate to the research design of two of the empirical studies.

### **Qualitative Data Collection**

A small group of faculty of the same large research university in Texas was invited to participate in my study. Participants were identified using a snowball technique starting with my personal contacts at the university (Bogdan & Biklan, 2007). I recruited six female faculty members from diverse academic disciplines who are employed full-time at the university before, during, and after the implementation of the campus carry policy.

I conducted in-depth, semi-structured interviews with the participants over the course of the Spring 2017 and Summer 2017 semester. I selected interviews as the primary method of data collection in order to facilitate my goal of soliciting participants’ descriptions of their personal beliefs and experiences regarding campus carry and the

symbolic meanings they ascribed to them (Marshall & Rossman, 2014). The interview methodology allowed me, through discourse, to gain insight into the participants' view of campus carry and its impact on their professional lives and identity. According to Bogdan and Biklan (2007), conversations with participants allow insights into participants' perspectives of an issue in ways that could not be directly observed.

Participants were provided the opportunity to talk about their experiences and perceptions in their own words. During the interviews, I strived for a natural flow of conversation along the general thematic focus of the study as recommended by Bogdan and Biklan (2007). With the participants' permission, interviews were recorded and later transcribed.

Data collected during the interviews were systematically reviewed and analyzed using coding methods recommended by Creswell (2013). As the interviews were read, I searched for patterns and topics that consistently arose in the data. Codes reflecting themes related to faculty identity, beliefs, and experiences regarding campus carry were applied as they naturally emerged from the data. Analysis and results are presented in one empirical study, which is the basis of this dissertation. A full description of the qualitative research techniques used in this study can be found in Chapter 4.

## **Empirical Studies**

Data for analysis and discussion in this dissertation consist of three empirical studies, listed below, that represent Chapters 2, 3 and 4 of this dissertation. The studies document faculty beliefs, experiences, and behavior in the context of the campus carry policy implemented in August 2016 at a large research university in Northern Texas. In Chapter 5, the findings presented in these studies is used as the main evidence to discuss the research themes of this dissertation through the proposed conceptual framework.

Krismer, J. (2017, April). *Impact of campus carry on faculty interactions with students in college classrooms: Faculty perspective*. Paper presented at AERA 2017 Annual Meeting, San Antonio, TX.

Krismer, J., & Adamuti-Trache, M. (2018, April). *Exploring faculty commitment to teaching controversial topics at a campus carry institution*. Paper presented at AERA 2018 Annual Meeting, New York, NY.

Krismer, J. (2017, November). *Faculty perspectives of the impact of campus carry on their interactions with students*. Paper presented at ASHE 2017 Annual Meeting, Houston, TX.

The purpose of the first article in the series is to explore faculty beliefs about campus carry and investigate the impact campus carry may have on faculty student interaction behaviors using a comparative design. I examined survey responses from faculty at a Texas research institution in the months just prior to the implementation of a campus carry policy. The ANOVA method was used to compare 261 valid responses to the survey questions on faculty beliefs about campus carry and the impact of campus carry on in-class student interactions by faculty race, gender, and academic discipline. Study findings are providing some information about how personal and institutional identities play a role in faculty response.

The purpose of the second study was to dive deeper into the same survey data, using a correlational design to model faculty responses to uncover how experiences and beliefs around campus carry influence the way faculty approach interactions with students in class, especially discussions around controversial topics. A series of linear regression models show the relative contribution of faculty characteristics (e.g. their personal background, beliefs about the relative safety of campus carry, past experiences with violence, and years in the academy), in predicting faculty responses about their interactions with students. Study findings explore how faculty-interaction behaviors are shaped by their own background, beliefs, experiences, and contextual factors.



The third and final study was designed to probe beyond the statistical data to explore the individual perspectives and lived experiences of female faculty on the same campus with an enacted campus carry policy. I conducted in-depth, semi-structured interviews to explore the language and thoughts of faculty as they construct their beliefs about campus carry around their own experiences and identity. The interview methodology allowed for the illumination of insights into participants' beliefs, experiences, and identities that could not be directly examined through quantitative methods.

### **Limitations/Delimitations of the Research**

The voluntary nature of survey participation leading to the research sample used in the first and second studies means the generalizability of the findings to the entire faculty population at this university will be limited. In addition, survey data was collected from a large research university in Texas. Since the research is focused on gaining a fuller understanding of how campus carry impacts faculty at one institution, the findings in this specific context may not be applicable to other higher education institutions. Furthermore, Texas is a state with a significant gun culture tradition, so the generalizability of the findings is also limited to the specific state context. Finally, since I am an administrator at the university I studied, existing relationships between myself and the participants

possibly shaped their responses and my interpretations of the interviews conducted in the third study (Bogdan & Biklan, 2007).

A delimitation of my research was to collect interview data only from female faculty at a large research university in Texas. Since the participants in Study 3 were six female faculty members at one institution, the transferability of the findings is reduced.

### **Significance of the Research**

As the public sentiment championing expanding gun rights continues to grow in Texas and other states in the United States, the impact that campus carry laws may have on higher education campuses has become an area of interest for higher education advocates, leaders, stakeholders, and researchers. The location and timing of this study offers a unique opportunity to gain some understanding of the perceptions and lived experiences of faculty working at a newly-designated “campus carry institution.” As gun laws continue to expand to college campuses, it is important for researchers, policy makers, and faculty to understand the impact these laws may or may not have on the individuals in these spaces. The studies deepen our understanding of how faculty may be affected by policies that allow weapons on campus.

The use of a complex research methodology (e.g., collection of quantitative and qualitative data, research design) contributes to the

strength of this research project. The studies also explore various theoretical concepts rooted in social and psychological theories that are combined in a unique conceptual framework. Understanding faculty beliefs and behaviors in these contexts may lead to understanding how students may be impacted if faculty alter the ways in which they interact with students. This work may also help inform institutions about how to minimize the negative impact on student interactions as they are required to implement policies like campus carry.

## References

- Abrahams, R.D. (1986). Ordinary and Extraordinary Experience. In V.W. Turner and E.M. Bruner (Eds.), *The Anthropology of Experience* (pp. 45-73). Urbana, IL: University of Illinois Press.
- Adams, G. R., & Marshall, S. K. (1996). A developmental social psychology of identity: Understanding the person-in-context. *Journal of Adolescence*, 19(5), 429–442.
- American Association of University Professors. (2015). *Joint statement opposing “campus carry” laws*. Washington, DC: Author. Retrieved from <http://www.aaup.org/file/CampusCarry.pdf>.
- American Educational Research Association (2016). *American Scholarly Societies joint statement on “campus carry” legislation*. Washington, DC: Author. Retrieved from <http://www.aera.net/Newsroom/AERA-Highlights-E-newsletter/AERA-Highlights-July-2016/AERA-Council-Endorses-Joint-Statement-on-Campus-Carry-Legislation>
- Anaya, G., & Cole, D. G. (2001). Latina/o student achievement: Exploring the influence of student–faculty interactions on college grades. *Journal of College Student Development*, 42(1), 314-317.

- Archer, L. (2008). Younger academics' constructions of authenticity, success, and professional identity. *Studies in Higher Education, 33*(4), 385-403.
- Armed Campuses (n.d.). *Guns on campus' laws for public colleges and universities*. Retrieved from <http://www.armedcampuses.org>
- Astin, A. W. (1999). Student involvement: A developmental theory for higher education. *Journal of College Student Development, 40*(5), 518-529.
- Bennett, K., Kraft, J., & Grubb, D. (2012). University faculty attitudes toward guns on campus. *Journal of Criminal Justice Education, 23*(3), 336–355.
- Bielby, P. (2003). Courting controversies: Using insights from a legal philosophy course to develop practical recommendations for realizing pedagogical objectives in teaching morally contentious issues. *Teaching in Higher Education, 8*(3), 369-381.
- Birnbaum, R. (2013). Ready, fire, aim: The college campus gun fight. *Change: The Magazine of Higher Learning, 45*(5), 6-14.
- Bogdan, R., & Biklen, S. K. (2007). *Qualitative research for education: An introduction to theories and methods*. Boston: Allyn & Bacon.

- Brady Center to Prevent Gun Violence. (2007). *No gun left behind: The gun lobby's campaign to push guns into colleges and schools*. Retrieved at: <https://www.bradycampaign.org/sites/default/files/no-gun-left-behind.pdf>
- Bringle, R. G., Malloy, E. A., & Games, R. (Eds.). (1999). *Colleges and Universities as Citizens*. Boston, MA: Allyn & Bacon.
- Brinker, G., Lenneman, B., & Swayne, R. L. (2016). *Campus Employees' Weapons Survey*. Hays, KS: Fort Hays State University Docking Institute of Public Affairs. Retrieved from [https://www.fhsu.edu/uploadedFiles/executive/docking/Regents%20FacultyStaff%20Gun%20Survey%202015%20\(2\).pdf](https://www.fhsu.edu/uploadedFiles/executive/docking/Regents%20FacultyStaff%20Gun%20Survey%202015%20(2).pdf)
- Bruner, E.M. (1986) Experience and its expressions. In V.W. Turner and E.M. Bruner (Eds.), *The Anthropology of Experience* (pp. 3-30). Urbana, IL: University of Illinois Press.
- Bureau of Labor Statistics (2015). *Occupational employment statistics: Colleges, Universities, and Professional Schools*. Washington, DC: Author. Retrieved from <http://www.bls.gov/oes/current/oes250000.htm>
- Campaign to Keep Guns Off Campus (n.d.). *We work to protect America's colleges and universities*. Retrieved from <http://keepgunsoffcampus.org/about/>.

- Campbell, D.E. (2008). Voice in the classroom: How an open classroom climate fosters political engagement among adolescents. *Political Behavior*, 30(4), 437–454.
- Campbell, T.A. & Campbell, D.E. (1997). Faculty/student mentor program: Effects on academic performance and retention.” *Research in Higher Education*, 38(6), 727–742.
- Celinska, K. (2007). Individualism and collectivism in America: The case of gun ownership and attitudes toward gun control. *Sociological Perspectives*, 50(2), 229-247.
- Chai, S.K. (2001). *Choosing an Identity: A General Model of Preference and Belief Formation*. Ann Arbor, MI: University of Michigan Press.
- Conway, M. (2016, July 13). UT-Austin faculty can ban guns in offices. *Texas Tribune*. Retrieved at:  
<https://www.texastribune.org/2016/07/13/ut-regents-hear-proposed-campus-carry-rules/>.
- Cook, P.J. & Goss, K.A. (2014). *The gun debate: What everyone needs to know*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- Cox, C. (2015). *On campus carry, we’ve only begun to fight*. Fairfax, VA: NRA Institute for Legal Action. Retrieved at:  
<https://www.nraila.org/articles/20150730/political-report-on-campus-carry-we-ve-only-begun-to-fight>

- Cramer, C. E. (2014). Guns on Campus: A History. *Academic Questions*, 27(4), 411–425.
- Creswell, J.W. (2013). *Qualitative inquiry & research design: Choosing among five approaches*. (3<sup>rd</sup> ed.). Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage Publications.
- Dahl, P. P., Gene Bonham, J., & Reddington, F. P. (2016). Community college faculty: Attitudes toward guns on campus. *Community College Journal of Research and Practice*, 40(8), 706–717.
- Diemer, M. A. & Blustein, D. L. (2006). Critical consciousness and career development among urban youth. *Journal of Vocational Behavior*, 68(2), 220–232.
- District of Columbia v. Heller, 554 U.S. 570 (2008). Retrieved from <http://www.supremecourt.gov/opinions/07pdf/07-290.pdf>
- Finkin, M. W. (1982). On institutional academic freedom. *Texas Law Review*, 61, 817.
- Freire, P. (2000) *Pedagogy of the oppressed*. New York, NY: Continuum.
- Gall, M. D., Gall, J. P., & Borg, W. R. (2007). *Educational research: An introduction*. New York: Pearson Education.
- Gee, J. P. (2000). Identity as an Analytic Lens for Research in Education. *Review of Research in Education*, 25, 99–125.



- Gilbert, D. T. (1991). How mental systems believe. *American Psychologist*, 46(2), 107-119.
- Giroux, H. (2006). Academic freedom under fire: The case for critical pedagogy. *College Literature*, 33(4), 1-42.
- Godfrey, E.B. & Grayman, J.K. (2014). Teaching citizens: The role of open classroom climate in fostering critical consciousness among youth. *Journal of Youth and Adolescence*, 43, 1801-1817.
- Graduate Institute of International Studies (2007). *Small Arms Survey 2007: Guns and the City*. Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press.
- Gun Free UT (n.d.). *Statements*. Retrieved from <http://gunfreeut.org/statements/>.
- Harnisch, T. L. (2008). *Concealed weapons on state college campuses: In pursuit of individual liberty and collective security*. Washington, DC: American Association of Colleges and Universities.
- Henson, J. & Blank, J. (2016). Reviewing Texas attitudes toward campus carry as law goes into effect. *The Texas Politics Project*. Austin, TX: The University of Texas at Austin. Retrieved at: <https://texaspolitics.utexas.edu/blog/reviewing-texas-attitudes-toward-campus-carry-law-goes-effect>

- Hess, D. E. (2009). *Controversy in the classroom: The democratic power of discussion*. New York, NY: Routledge.
- Kuh, G. D., & Pace, C. R. (1998). College student expectations questionnaire. *Center for Postsecondary Research and Planning*. Bloomington, IN: Indiana University.
- Kuhlmann, S. (2016). Aggie genetics professor to retire over campus carry law. *The Eagle*. Retrieved from [http://www.theeagle.com/news/a\\_m/aggie-genetics-professor-to-retire-over-campus-carry-law/article\\_23d6f6ce-57ec-11e6-b232-1f7106797bf5.html](http://www.theeagle.com/news/a_m/aggie-genetics-professor-to-retire-over-campus-carry-law/article_23d6f6ce-57ec-11e6-b232-1f7106797bf5.html).
- Lau, L. (2003). Institutional factors affecting student retention. *Education*, 124(1), 126-136.
- Marshall, C., & Rossman, G. B. (2010). *Designing Qualitative Research (5th edition)*. Los Angeles, CA: SAGE Publications, Inc.
- McAvoy, P. & Hess, D. (2013). Classroom deliberation in an era of political polarization. *Curriculum Inquiry*, 43(1), 14-47.
- McDonald v. City of Chicago, 561 U.S. 742 (2010). Retrieved from <http://www.supremecourt.gov/opinions/09pdf/08-1521.pdf>
- Mekelburg, M. (2016). Nobel Laureate becomes reluctant anti-gun leader. *Texas Tribune*. Retrieved from <https://www.texastribune.org/2016/01/26/nobel-something/>

Meloy, A. (2011). *Guns on campus: What are the limits?* Washington, DC:

American Council on Education. Retrieved from

<http://www.acenet.edu/the-presidency/columns-and-features/Pages/Legal-Watch-Guns-on-Campus-What-Are-the-Limits.aspx>

Morse, A., Sisneros, L., Perez Jr., Z., Sponsler, B.A. (2016). Guns on campus: The architecture and momentum of state policy action.

*Joint Report of NASPA & Education Commission of the States.*

Retrieved from <https://www.naspa.org/rpi/reports/guns-on-campus-the-architecture-and-momentum-of-state-policy-action>.

NASPA (n.d.). *NASPA's statement regarding guns on campus.*

Washington, DC: Author. Retrieved from

[https://www.naspa.org/images/uploads/main/NASPA\\_Gun\\_Statement\\_\(2\).pdf](https://www.naspa.org/images/uploads/main/NASPA_Gun_Statement_(2).pdf)

National Task Force on Civic Learning and Democratic Engagement.

(2012). *A crucible moment: College learning and democracy's*

*future.* Washington, DC: Association of American Colleges and

Universities. Retrieved from

[https://www.aacu.org/sites/default/files/files/crucible/Crucible\\_508F.pdf](https://www.aacu.org/sites/default/files/files/crucible/Crucible_508F.pdf)

- Patten, R., Thomas, M. O., & Viotti, P. (2013). Sweating Bullets: Female Attitudes Regarding Concealed Weapons and the Perceptions of Safety on College Campuses. *Race, Gender & Class, 20*(34), 269–290.
- Patten, R., Thomas, M. O., & Wada, J. C. (2013). Packing Heat: Attitudes Regarding Concealed Weapons on College Campuses. *American Journal of Criminal Justice, 38*(4), 551–569.
- Rayner, S., Fuller, M., McEwen, L., & Roberts, H. (2010). Managing leadership in the UK university: A case for researching the missing professoriate? *Studies in Higher Education, 35*(6), 617–631.
- Rottman, J. & Rossett, E. (2014). The big “whoops!” in the study of intentional behavior: An appeal for a new framework in understanding human actions. *Journal of Cognition and Culture, 14*, 27-39.
- Said, E. (2004). *Humanism and Democratic Criticism*. New York, NY: Columbia University Press.
- Samuels, A. (2016) UT-Austin students snatch up free dildos for gun protest. *Texas Tribune*. Retrieved from <https://www.texastribune.org/2016/08/23/students-distribute-4500-sex-toys/>

- Seate, A. A., Cohen, E. L., Fujioka, Y., & Hoffner, C. (2012). Exploring gun ownership as a social identity to understanding the perceived media influence of the Virginia Tech news coverage on attitudes toward gun control policy. *Communication Research Reports*, 29(2), 130–139.
- Shapira, H. (2017). Calvin's problem: Racial identity and gun ownership. *Public Culture*, 29(2 82), 221-226.
- Smith, T.W., & Son, J. (2015). Trends in gun ownership in the United States 1972-2014. *General Social Survey Final Report*. Chicago, IL: NORC.
- Texas S.B. 11 (2015). Leg. Sess. 84(R), Retrieved from <http://www.legis.state.tx.us/BillLookup/Text.aspx?LegSess=84R&Bill=SB11>.
- Thompson, A., Price, J. H., Dake, J., & Teeple, K. (2013). Faculty perceptions and practices regarding carrying concealed handguns on university campuses. *Journal of Community Health*, 38(2), 366–373.
- Thompson, A., Price, J. H., Mrdjenovich, A. J., & Khubchandani, J. (2009). Reducing firearm-related violence on college campuses-police chiefs' perceptions and practices. *Journal of American College Health*, 58(3), 247–254.

- Trolian, T. L. & Jach, E. A. & Hanson, J. M. & Pascarella, E. T. (2016). Influencing academic motivation: The effects of student–faculty interaction. *Journal of College Student Development* 57(7), 810-826.
- University of Texas at Austin (2016, January 26). *Joan Neuberger testifies on SB 11 (campus carry) before the Senate State Affairs Committee*. Austin, TX: Author. Retrieved from <https://liberalarts.utexas.edu/history/news/article.php?id=10206>
- U.S. Const. amend. XXVI
- Walters, E. (2016). Judge denies UT-Austin professors' attempt to block campus carry. *Texas Tribune*. Retrieved from <https://www.texastribune.org/2016/08/22/judge-denies-professors-attempt-block-campus-carry/>
- Watkins, M. (2016). UT architecture dean cites campus carry as a reason for departure. *Texas Tribune*. Retrieved from <https://www.texastribune.org/2016/02/25/ut-architecture-dean-cites-campus-carry-reason-dep/>
- Wernick, L.J. (2012). Leveraging privilege: Organizing young people with wealth to support social justice. *Social Service Review*, 86(2), 323-345.

- Wilson, W. & Gervais, B. (2015). UTSA professors overwhelmingly oppose guns on campus. *San Antonio Express News*. Retrieved from <http://www.expressnews.com/file/147/0/1470-UTSA%20professors%20oppose%20guns%20on%20campus.pdf>
- Wong, C. (2016, March 4). Faculty members cite campus carry as reason to leave university. *The Daily Texan*. Retrieved from <http://www.dailytexanonline.com/2016/03/04/faculty-members-cite-campus-carry-as-reason-to-leave-university>.
- Yamane, D. (2017). The sociology of U.S. gun culture. *Sociology Compass*, 11(7), 1-10.

## Chapter 2

### Comparative Study of Faculty Beliefs and Behaviors in the Context of Campus Carry <sup>1</sup>

Legislation allowing the legal possession of concealed firearms on college campuses, referred to as “campus carry,” has faced strong opposition from university faculty in Texas. Faculty have launched protests, filed lawsuits, and have resigned from positions in protest of the policy (Kuhlman, 2016; Walters, 2016; Watkins, 2016; Wong, 2016). According to Birnbaum (2013), campus carry opponents cite three main categories of concern related to state implementation of laws allowing guns on campuses: decreased safety of the university community, loss of university autonomy and the chilling effect the presence of guns can have on the academic exchange of ideas. The purpose of this study is to focus on the third concern, by specifically exploring the perceptions of faculty regarding whether campus carry laws may have an impact on their approach to controversial or sensitive topics in the classroom as well as their basis of beliefs about guns on campus.

With more than 1.5 million post-secondary educators in the United States, the direct impact that faculty have on the educational future of our

---

<sup>1</sup> A version of this chapter was submitted as a paper and presented at the American Educational Research Association 2017 Annual Meeting



nation cannot be underestimated, especially through their interactions with students (Astin, 1999). One of the important ways that faculty engage with their students, is through leading respectful and thoughtful discussions of sensitive or controversial issues that include students from a variety of opinions, experiences, and backgrounds. According to research, the discussion of controversial topics in educational settings is an important instructional tool toward achieving positive educational, career, and civic outcomes for students (Bielby, 2003; Campbell, 2008; Diemer & Blustien, 2005; Giroux, 2006; Godfrey & Grayman, 2014; Hess, 2009; Wernick, 2012).

While several researchers have explored student and faculty opinions and perceptions about campus carry laws, very little research has been conducted to explore faculty beliefs about campus carry, and their approach to addressing controversial issues in the classroom in the context of campus carry, which is the purpose of this study. This study focuses on faculty in Texas, where campus carry has recently been implemented.

This study aims to explore several research questions:

1. How do faculty characterize their beliefs about the campus carry policy in general? Do faculty responses about their beliefs

regarding campus carry differ by race, gender, or academic discipline?

2. How do faculty expect the campus carry policy to impact their own teaching behavior? Do faculty responses about the policy's impact on teaching behavior differ by race, gender, or academic discipline?

### **Literature Review**

The following section includes a brief overview of the recent history of campus carry in Texas, discussion of the evidence in mainstream media and in academic research regarding faculty perceptions and attitudes regarding campus carry policies, and a review of the literature on the positive educational outcomes associated with the discussion of controversial issues in college classrooms.

### **Background of Campus Carry in Texas**

Given the strong gun culture in Texas, owning guns is often considered to be a normal and accepted behavior in the region (Cook & Goss, 2014). Gun ownership rates in the general Central Southwest region, which includes Texas, Louisiana, Oklahoma, and Arkansas, reflect that sentiment. According to the NORC General Social Study, 43% of households in the Central Southwest region own guns compared to 23% of the total U.S. population (Smith & Son, 2015).

Although many Texans own firearms (Cook & Goss, 2014; Smith & Son, 2015), universities have traditionally been considered gun-free zones (Thompson, Price, Mrdjenovich, & Khubchandani, 2009). However, as the nation continues to experience horrific and highly-publicized school shootings, gun rights activists have doubled-down on their claim that arming bystanders is the best approach to preventing such tragedies, and have called for relaxing gun restrictions on college campuses (Harnisch, 2008). Lawmakers from several politically conservative states, including Texas, introduced legislation to ease gun restrictions on college campuses (Morse, Sisneros, Perez Jr., & Sponsler, 2016).

Texas Senate Bill 11 was passed just before midnight during the last minutes of the 84th legislative session. Although several amendments had threatened to hold up the bill, the final version was approved before the session ended, and on June 13, 2015, the so-called “campus carry bill” was signed into law by Texas Governor Greg Abbot (Smith, 2015). According to the bill, license holders may not be prohibited from carrying a concealed handgun at public institution of higher education in Texas. Although the president of an institution may establish reasonable rules regarding campus carry, including designating some justifiable “gun free zones”, he or she may not establish provisions that generally prohibit license holders from carrying on campus. To ensure that license holders

are generally free to carry weapons on campuses, any provisions established by the president of a university must be reviewed annually by the board of regents and may be amended or vetoed by a two-thirds vote (Texas S.B. 11, 2015). The Texas campus carry policy took effect at all public four-year universities on August 1, 2016.

### **Faculty Attitudes about Campus Carry**

Opposition to campus carry by university faculty and administrators in Texas has been well-documented in the media and in public forums. Grass roots movements such as Armed Campuses (n.d.) and The Campaign to Keep Guns Off Campus (n.d.) have formed to specifically organize opposition against the expansion of gun laws on college campuses. The organization Gun Free UT, has emerged as central headquarters for the campus carry opposition movement in Texas, and its website serves as a repository of statements and petitions against campus carry (Gun Free UT, n.d.).

Faculty in Texas have taken collective and individual action in protest of the campus carry policy. Three University of Texas professors filed a lawsuit against the university and the State in 2016. The professors claimed that the campus carry policy infringed on their right to free speech, and would cause a chilling effect in their classrooms during lessons related to emotional and controversial topics, such as gay rights

or abortion (Walters, 2016). In addition, some faculty have resigned or turned down job offers from Texas universities citing campus carry legislation as the reason. For example, the resignation of the Dean of the College of Architecture at the University of Texas at Austin was highly publicized after he publically stated that the passage of the campus carry law was his primary motivation for leaving the university (Watkins, 2016). Several other anecdotes regarding faculty declining job offers and speaking engagements due to concerns about campus carry have also been verified and reported by news media (Kuhlman, 2016; Wong, 2016)

Surveys of faculty in American institutions indicate that while the majority of faculty oppose campus carry laws, there exists a variety of viewpoints on the issue (Brinker, Lenneman, and Swayne, 2016, Wilson & Gervais, 2016; Bennett, Kraft, & Grubb, 2012). Research shows that some differences in support for or against campus carry may exist between various faculty groups classified based on race, gender, and discipline (Patten, Thomas, & Viotti, 2013; Patten, Thomas, Wada, 2013). In a study by Patten, Thomas, and Viotti (2013), showing some variation in opinion among racial lines, 77% of Whites would not feel safe with guns on campus, as opposed to 85% of non-White respondents in a survey of over 2,000 faculty, staff, and students. Women may be uniquely impacted by gun policies as well. According to Blair and Hyatt (1995) women are

more likely to fear guns and be more hesitant to shoot an attacker if necessary. A study by Patten, Thomas, and Viotti (2013), found that although women tend to have higher levels of fear of violent crime, the vast majority of female respondents felt that allowing concealed weapons on campus would make them less safe and expressed that they would not carry weapons for protection on campus. Some evidence in the literature suggests that faculty in different academic disciplines may have different views on campus carry. For example, Bennet, Kraft, and Grubb (2007) found that individuals in the College of Liberal Arts were more likely to be opposed to expanding gun laws than individuals in the College of Education or College of Science and Technology. Therefore, research suggests that faculty attitudes about campus carry may differ by gender, race and academic discipline.

### **Faculty Interactions with Students in the Classroom**

The ability of students to engage in discussion by talking with individuals with differing viewpoints and to debate controversial topics using reason and evidence is not only a cherished university tradition, but has been shown to have a positive impact on educational outcomes. For college students, this skill is often practiced, in critically reflective and engaged, or “open,” classrooms, in which controversial political or social issues are openly discussed, and where dissenting opinions are

encouraged and respected (Godfrey & Graymen, 2013). In fact, according to McAvoy and Hess (2013), classrooms are one of the most valuable sites for teaching skills necessary for fostering critical democratic thinking in individuals.

According to Hess (2009), the ability to engage in free and open discussion about controversial issues in the learning environment is crucial to the development of critical thinking skills and the achievement of real learning and meaning-making, skills that improve a student's chances of success in college and in the workforce. Diemer and Blustein (2005), found that participating in open classroom environment may increase students' focus and commitment to their own career goals. In addition, students allowed to engage deliberately and critically with controversial issues in the classroom are also likely to become engaged and informed citizens. According to Campbell (2008), discussing and reflecting on controversial or sensitive topics in the classroom is an important factor in young people's civic engagement, political understanding, and political awareness. Campbell also found that engagement with controversial issues could increase an adolescent's intent to be an informed voter.

Because of the important academic, career, and civic outcomes related to open classroom discussions, faculty must be free to address sensitive and controversial issues to achieve the learning objectives in

their classrooms without being affected by external factors such as the possibility of concealed weapons in the classroom. As gun laws continue to expand to college campuses in the United States, it is important for researchers, policy makers, and faculty to understand the impact these laws may or may not have on the individuals in these spaces.

### **Method**

This study explores faculty beliefs about campus carry and the anticipated impact of the policy on the ability and willingness of faculty to engage students in discussions about controversial and sensitive issues.

### **Research Design**

The current quantitative study is based on data collected from a researcher-developed, online survey instrument that was distributed to faculty at a large Texas research university. No existing survey instrument related to gun laws was specific enough for this particular study. The survey was designed to collect data regarding faculty perceptions and behaviors related to the campus carry law and its impact on teaching. The survey was administered in the spring 2016 semester, prior to the implementation of the policy in the fall 2016 term. This exploratory quantitative study employs a comparative design to compare and contrast faculty responses by sex, race/ethnicity and academic discipline.



## **Data Collection**

The faculty of a large Texas research university was selected as the accessible population of this study focused on understanding faculty beliefs and behaviors in the context of campus carry. Since faculty play a crucial role in leading discussions of controversial topics on campus and are knowledgeable about the attitudes of students, faculty are in a special position to observe the impact this law has on their students, the classroom, and the university climate. As major stakeholders on college campuses, faculty have a strong interest in the issues of academic freedom and campus carry, making them ideal participants in a research study focused on these topics.

After obtaining approval for the study from the Institutional Review Board, several faculty were asked to pilot the survey. Feedback from their review was incorporated into the survey.

The survey was distributed via email to 1333 faculty. The response rate to the survey was 24%. Several responses were omitted for incomplete or invalid responses, leaving 261 valid responses. One of the limitations of the data is the voluntary nature of survey responses, which means the generalizability of the study to the larger population will be limited.

In addition to collecting a series of demographic and identification questions including age, rank, race, discipline, the survey included specific questions designed to gauge the impact participants perceived campus carry would have on their teaching practice in the context of campus carry in Texas. Survey participants were first reminded about the Texas context through a statement which read as follows: "On June 1, 2015, Texas Governor Greg Abbott signed S.B. 11, also known as the "campus carry" law. S.B. 11 provides that license holders may carry a concealed handgun throughout public university campuses, starting August 1, 2016." Then, participants were asked to agree or disagree with a series of statements designed to explore faculty perceptions of the impact that campus carry will have on them as faculty in the classroom. Participants were asked to rank their agreement with each statement on a Likert-type scale.

The next section of the survey was designed to collect data regarding participants' personal attitudes regarding the campus carry policy. Participants were again asked to rate their agreement with statements related to whether the participant agreed or disagreed with the campus carry policy, if the participant believes the campus carry policy will negatively impact his or her own teaching practice, and if the policy will negatively affect the free exchange of ideas at the university using a Likert-type scale. The current study includes only a small part of the

survey data, focusing on faculty intention to change their teaching practices and their overall perspectives on the campus carry policy (the exact text and format of the relevant survey items for this paper can be found in Appendix B).

### **Research Sample**

Of the 261 respondents, 57% (n=148) identified as male, while 43% (n=113) identified as female. Participants were originally able to select from eight different race categories, but to avoid small size of some categories, race was grouped into three broader categories: White or Caucasian (80%), Asian (8.4%), and Underrepresented Racial Groups (11.5%). The latter category includes participants who indicated American Indian, Black/African American, Native Hawaiian, or Hispanic/Latino. Similarly, fifteen discipline areas were regrouped into seven discipline categories: science/engineering; education/social science; health/social work; liberal arts/humanities/fine arts; and architecture/public affairs, and business. Participant demographics are displayed in Appendix C.

## **Findings**

### **Faculty Beliefs about Campus Carry**

To explore faculty beliefs about campus carry, responses to two survey items were analyzed: supporting the right of license holders to carry concealed guns on campus (SUPPORT) and belief of negative

impact law can bring on the free exchange of ideas at the university (FREE EXCHANGE). These two questions presented general statements about the campus carry policy. Faculty were asked to rate the extent to which they agreed or disagreed with the statement along with a Likert-type scale. The distribution of responses for the two survey questions is presented in Table 2.1.

*Table 2.1 Faculty beliefs about Campus Carry (n=261)*

Survey items	Strongly Disagree (1)	Disagree (2)	Neutral (3)	Agree (4)	Strongly agree (5)	Mean response
I support the right of license holders to carry concealed weapons on campus (SUPPORT)	66.3%	11.5%	5.7%	7.3%	9.2%	1.82
Laws will have a negative impact on the free and robust exchange of ideas at my university (FREE EXCHANGE)	8.0%	10.0%	11.9%	24.5%	45.6%	3.90

The clear majority of faculty participants (i.e., 79% disagree or strongly disagree) indicated they did not support the campus carry policy. Further, most faculty believed that the campus carry policy would have a negative impact on the free and robust exchange of ideas on college campuses. In response to the statement “Laws will have a negative impact on the free and robust exchange of ideas at my university,” 46.5% of faculty indicated they “Strongly agree,” and another 24.5% indicated they

“agree”, which shows about 70% of faculty anticipate a negative effect of free exchange of ideas at the university.

### *Gender and Race*

Using ANOVA, the differences in faculty beliefs about campus carry by gender, race, and academic discipline are further examined. An alpha level of .05 was used for all tests comparing faculty responses by the three independent variables. The gender and race analyses show no statistically significant differences in beliefs on SUPPORT or FREE EXCHANGE items in the survey as shown in Tables 2.2 and 2.3. However, female faculty are more inclined to have negative beliefs about campus carry policy and its possible effects.

Similarly, Asian and White faculty are less supportive of the campus carry law compared to Under-represented faculty. In addition, Asian faculty have stronger beliefs of the negative impact of the law than the other two racial groups.

***Table 2.2. Comparison of responses to Beliefs survey items by gender.***

		Mean	SD	F value	<i>p</i>
I support the right of license holders to carry concealed weapons on college campuses. (SUPPORT)	Males	1.95	1.456	3.208	.074
	Females	1.65	1.172		
Laws will have a negative impact on the free and robust exchange of ideas at my university (FREE EXCHANGE)	Males	3.82	1.365	1.261	.263
	Females	4.00	1.210		

*Table 2.3. Comparison of responses to Beliefs survey items by race.*

		Mean	SD	F value	p
I support the right of license holders to carry concealed weapons on college campuses. (SUPPORT)	Asian, non-Hispanics	1.73	1.202	.464	.629
	Underrepresented	2.03	1.351		
	White, non-Hispanics	1.79	1.363		
Laws will have a negative impact on the free and robust exchange of ideas at my university (FREE EXCHANGE)	Asian, non-Hispanics	4.32	1.086	1.282	.279
	Underrepresented	3.90	1.125		
	White, non-Hispanics	3.85	1.342		

### *Academic Discipline*

However, when ANOVA analysis was conducted by academic discipline, some statistically significant differences were discovered on both survey items as follows: SUPPORT ( $F(6, 254)=4.469, p<.001$ ) and FREE EXCHANGE ( $F(6, 254)=4.469, p<.001$ ) as shown in Table 2.4.

Post-hoc Least Significant Difference (LSD) tests were then conducted to identify which groups present significant differences. According to an LSD post hoc test, the Business disciplinary group's mean responses to the SUPPORT item ( $M=2.87, SD=1.839$ ) indicated a significantly greater level of support for campus carry than their colleagues in all other disciplinary groups. Likewise, Business participants reported significantly less agreement with the FREE EXCHANGE item ( $M=3.06, SD=1.672$ ), suggesting that Business faculty were less likely to agree that

*Table 2.4. Comparison of responses to Beliefs survey items by academic discipline.*

		Mean	SD	F value	p
I support the right of license holders to carry concealed weapons on college campuses. (SUPPORT)	Science & Engineering	1.78	1.447	4.469	.000
	Education & Social science	1.86	1.150		
	Health & Social work	1.62	1.048		
	Liberal Arts/Humanities & Fine Arts	1.65	1.225		
	Architecture & Public Affairs	1.25	.775		
	Business	2.87	1.839		
	Other, Declined	1.00	.000		
Laws will have a negative impact on the free and robust exchange of ideas at my university (FREE EXCHANGE)	Science & Engineering	4.06	1.302	3.204	.005
	Education & Social science	3.92	1.204		
	Health & Social work	3.80	1.325		
	Liberal Arts/Humanities & Fine Arts	4.05	1.114		
	Architecture & Public Affairs	4.50	.894		
	Business	3.06	1.672		
	Other, Declined	4.00	.000		

campus carry would have a negative impact free and robust exchange of ideas at the university. No significant difference was found between any other disciplinary groups' responses on these two items.

### **Impact of Campus Carry on Teaching Approach of Controversial or Sensitive Issues**

Impact of faculty on changing their teaching approach as a result of campus carry was measured using the responses to 4 survey items listed in Table 2.5. For example, in response to the statement "My approach to

teaching controversial or emotionally charged topics will remain the same”, 31.4% of faculty responded “most likely not” or “definitely not,” while 53.3% responded that they would “most likely” or “definitely” stay the same. Finally, in response to the statement “My ability to effectively teach controversial or emotionally charged topics will be negatively impacted”, about 50% said “most likely yes” or “definitely yes,” while 30% said “most likely not” or “definitely not.” About 18% of respondents were “not sure.” The full results from the four teaching approach related questions are presented in Table 2.5 below.

*Table 2.5. Faculty responses regarding impact on teaching practice (n=261)*

	Definitely No (1)	Most Likely No (2)	Not sure (3)	Most Likely Yes (4)	Definitely Yes (5)	Mean response
My approach to teaching controversial or emotionally charged topics will remain the same (APPROACH)	17.6%	13.8%	15.3%	23.8%	29.5%	3.34
I expect to omit some topic(s) from my course content (OMIT)	34.9%	23.8%	18.4%	13.0%	10.0%	2.39
I expect to tone down my usual approach to teaching controversial or sensitive topics (TONE DOWN)	24.9%	20.7%	14.6%	23.8%	16.1%	2.85
My ability to effectively teach controversial or emotionally charged topics will be negatively impacted (NEG IMPACT)	18.8%	13.4%	17.6%	28.4%	21.8%	3.21



Several one-way analysis of variance (ANOVA) tests were conducted to explore any statistical differences in faculty responses regarding the impact the policy may have on teaching practice and the free exchange of ideas at the university. The participants' responses to the four statements were analyzed as dependent variables by gender, race/ethnicity and academic discipline.

### *Gender*

Although the mean responses indicated that females were more affected by the campus carry on each question related to teaching approaches than did their male counterparts, the ANOVA analyses revealed no statistically significant differences between female and male responses to all of the four survey items as shown in Table 2.6.

***Table 2.6. Comparison of responses to Behavior survey items by gender.***

		Mean	SD	F value	<i>p</i>
My approach to teaching controversial or emotionally charged topics will remain the same (APPROACH).	Males	3.42	1.494	1.060	.304
	Females	3.23	1.433		
I expect to omit some topic(s) from my course content (OMIT)	Males	2.31	1.314	1.335	.249
	Females	2.50	1.342		
I expect to "tone down" my usual approach to teaching controversial or sensitive topics (TONE DOWN)	Males	2.80	1.457	.537	.464
	Females	2.93	1.419		
My ability to effectively teach controversial or emotionally charged topics will be negatively impacted. (NEG IMPACT)	Males	3.13	1.467	1.157	.283
	Females	3.32	1.345		

*Race*

Among the three racial groups in the sample (White/Caucasian, Asian, and Underrepresented Racial Groups), significant differences were found in the mean responses to the survey items APPROACH ( $F(2, 258)=7.884, p<.001$ ), OMIT ( $F(2, 250)=7.298, p=.001$ ), NEG IMPACT ( $F(2, 258)=3.858, p=.022$ ), and TONE DOWN ( $F(2, 258)=10.216, p<.001$ ) as shown in Table 2.7.

*Table 2.7. Comparison of responses to Behavior survey items by race.*

		Mean	SD	F value	<i>p</i>
My approach to teaching controversial or emotionally charged topics will remain the same. (APPROACH)	Asian, non-Hispanics	2.18	1.435	7.884	.000
	Underrepresented	3.37	1.564		
	White, non-Hispanics	3.45	1.411		
I expect to omit some topic(s) from my course content. (OMIT)	Asian, non-Hispanics	3.41	1.403	7.298	.001
	Underrepresented	2.20	1.297		
	White, non-Hispanics	2.32	1.303		
My ability to effectively teach controversial or emotionally charged topics will be negatively impacted. (NEG IMPACT)	Asian, non-Hispanics	4.00	1.024	3.858	.022
	Underrepresented	3.07	1.437		
	White, non-Hispanics	3.15	1.428		
I expect to "tone down" my usual approach to teaching controversial or sensitive topics (TONE DOWN)	Asian, non-Hispanics	4.14	.990	10.216	.000
	Underrepresented	2.77	1.478		
	White, non-Hispanics	2.73	1.413		

Post hoc LSD tests show that responses from Asian participants accounted for the significant differences detected in the four analyses. Asian participants were more likely than other racial groups to indicate that campus carry would have a negative impact on their ability to teach controversial issues. Similarly, Asian respondents indicated they were more likely to change their approach to controversial topics, more likely to omit some topics from the course content, and more likely to tone down their approach to controversial topics than either the White or Underrepresented racial groups.

#### *Academic Discipline*

ANOVA analysis was also conducted to examine differences in responses by seven faculty academic discipline. Using the hypothesized alpha level of .05, the ANOVA analyses revealed statistically significant differences only on survey item APPROACH ( $F(6, 254)=2.160, p=.047$ ) as shown in Table 2.8.

On the APPROACH item, the mean responses of both the Science & Engineering ( $M=2.98, SD=1.679$ ) and the Architecture & Public Affairs ( $M=2.75, SD=1.291$ ) groups were significantly lower than mean scores for Education & Social Science ( $M=3.69, SD=1.28$ ), Health & Social Work ( $M=3.58, SD=1.458$ ), and Business ( $M=3.74, SD=1.437$ ) indicating Architecture & Public Affairs and Science & Engineering and faculty were

*Table 2.8. Comparison of responses to Behavior survey items by academic discipline.*

		Mean	SD	F value	<i>p</i>
My approach to teaching controversial or emotionally charged topics will remain the same. (APPROACH)	Science & Engineering	2.98	1.679	2.160	.047
	Education & Social science	3.69	1.283		
	Health & Social work	3.58	1.458		
	Liberal Arts/Humanities & Fine arts	3.19	1.382		
	Architecture & Public affairs	2.75	1.291		
	Business	3.74	1.437		
	Other, Declined	4.00	1.414		
I expect to omit some topic(s) from my course content. (OMIT)	Science & Engineering	2.55	1.553	1.928	.077
	Education & Social science	2.33	1.195		
	Health & Social work	2.18	1.351		
	Liberal Arts/Humanities & Fine arts	2.60	1.241		
	Architecture & Public affairs	2.88	1.088		
	Business	1.84	1.369		
	Other, Declined	2.00	.000		
My ability to effectively teach controversial or emotionally charged topics will be negatively impacted. (NEG IMPACT)	Science & Engineering	3.33	1.492	1.923	.078
	Education & Social science	3.19	1.369		
	Health & Social work	3.06	1.490		
	Liberal Arts/Humanities & Fine arts	3.39	1.251		
	Architecture & Public affairs	3.75	1.125		
	Business	2.55	1.609		
	Other, Declined	3.50	.707		
I expect to "tone down" my usual approach to teaching controversial or sensitive topics. (TONE DOWN)	Science & Engineering	3.00	1.575	1.296	.259
	Education & Social science	2.89	1.282		
	Health & Social work	2.64	1.467		
	Liberal Arts/Humanities & Fine arts	2.95	1.374		
	Architecture & Public affairs	3.38	1.258		
	Business	2.39	1.542		
	Other, Declined	3.50	.707		

less likely to agree that their approach to teaching controversial issues would remain the same after the campus carry policy was implemented.

The lower commitment to maintain their teaching practices by Science & Engineering faculty is similar to the Asian faculty group. Since more than half of the participants who identified as Asians are faculty in Science & Engineering, it looks like this particular faculty group is less likely to maintain their teaching practices in the context on campus carry.

### **Discussion**

The present study aims to explore the perceptions of campus carry among faculty at one university in Texas, and the anticipated impact the policy may have on teaching practice, especially as related to teaching controversial topics, which has been shown to have positive educational outcomes (Campbell, 2009; Diemer & Blustien, 2005; Hess, 2009). The analysis shows that Asian participants' responses reflected that the group more greatly anticipates that campus carry will have a negative impact on their teaching practice. Although the sample of Asian faculty in this survey was relatively small (n=22), the difference in the groups' responses is cause for concern. According to the Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board Accountability Report (2016), there are over 3,000 Asian faculty teaching in public universities in Texas. Further research should explore

this racial group more widely to determine if the results from the survey in this study reflect a larger trend.

While the analysis shows that the majority of faculty are opposed to the campus carry legislation, the level of opposition or support for the policy varies by academic discipline. Specifically, participants who identified themselves as Business faculty reported more support for the right of license holders to carry concealed weapons on campus than any other disciplinary group. In addition, Business faculty were less likely than their colleagues to agree that campus carry may have a negative impact on the free and robust exchange of ideas on college campuses. This study did not attempt to assess the reasons why faculty hold their opinions. Since academic discipline indicates such differences, further research could explore the nuances in views of campus carry held by faculty in various disciplines in more depth.

Although many faculty (53.3%) indicated that they would not personally change their teaching practice as a result of the policy, it is concerning that more than 30% said their approach would change. In addition, a fair number of faculty indicated that they would omit or tone down controversial topics that they have taught in the past. This may indicate that campus carry is a threat to the free exchange of ideas in

college classrooms and that robust debate about controversial issues in some classrooms may be chilled by the policy.

### **Conclusion**

As the public sentiment championing expanding gun rights continues to grow in Texas and other states in the United States, the impact that campus carry laws may have on higher education campuses has become an area of interest for higher education advocates, leaders, stakeholders, and researchers. Legislation allowing concealed guns on college campuses has been passed in ten states throughout the United States, and will most likely be considered or passed in several more. More information is needed about the impact campus carry laws have on faculty in the classroom. The ability and willingness of faculty to freely discuss controversial and sensitive topics in class is of particular concern because of the potential effect this practice has on important educational outcomes.

Although the current study reveals a strong opposition from the faculty at one university, it is clear from academic research as well as media coverage, that faculty are largely opposed to policies that allow license holders to carry weapons on college campuses. However, this limited study suggests that the views of faculty are varied and nuanced, and some faculty groups may be more negatively impacted in the classroom than others by this policy. The implications of policies like

campus carry are only now beginning to be explored and understood.

Future research into the experiences of faculty on campus carry institutions should be undertaken to further the understanding of how this policy affects this and other important groups in our educational ecosystem.



## References

- American Educational Research Association (2016). American Scholarly Societies joint statement on “campus carry” legislation. Retrieved from: <http://www.aera.net/Newsroom/AERA-Highlights-E-newsletter/AERA-Highlights-July-2016/AERA-Council-Endorses-Joint-Statement-on-Campus-Carry-Legislation>
- Armed Campuses website (n.d.). *Guns on campus’ laws for public colleges and universities*. Retrieved from <http://www.armedcampuses.org>
- Astin, A. W. (1999). Student involvement: A developmental theory for higher education. *Journal of College Student Development, 40*(5), 518-529.
- Bennett, K., Kraft, J. & Grubb, D. (2012). University faculty attitudes toward guns on campus. *Journal of Criminal Justice Education, 23*(3), 336-355.
- Bielby, P. (2003). Courting controversies: Using insights from a legal philosophy course to develop practical recommendations for realizing pedagogical objectives in teaching morally contentious issues. *Teaching in Higher Education, 8*(3), 369-381.
- Birnbaum, R. (2013). Ready, fire, aim: The college campus gun fight. *Change: The Magazine of Higher Learning, 45*(5), 6-14.

- Blair, M. E., & Hyatt, E. M. (1995). The marketing of guns to women: factors influencing gun-related attitudes and gun ownership by Women. *Journal of Public Policy & Marketing*, 14(1), 117–127.
- Brinker, G., Lennemann, B., & Swayne, R. (2016). *Campus employees' weapons survey*. Hays, KS: Fort Hays State University. Retrieved from [https://www.fhsu.edu/uploadedFiles/executive/docking/Regents%20FacultyStaff%20Gun%20Survey%202015%20\(2\).pdf](https://www.fhsu.edu/uploadedFiles/executive/docking/Regents%20FacultyStaff%20Gun%20Survey%202015%20(2).pdf).
- Campaign to Keep Guns Off Campus website (n.d.). *We work to protect America's colleges and universities*. Retrieved from <http://keepgunsoffcampus.org/about/>.
- Campbell, D. E. (2008). Voice in the classroom: How an open classroom climate fosters political engagement among adolescents. *Political Behavior*, 30(4), 437–454.
- Cook, P. J., & Goss, K. A. (2014). *The Gun Debate: What Everyone Needs to Know*. Oxford University Press: New York.
- Diemer, M.A. & Blustein, D.L. (2005) Critical consciousness and career development among urban youth. *Journal of Vocational Behavior*, 68, 220-232.
- Giroux, H. (2006). Academic freedom under fire: The case for critical pedagogy. *College Literature*, 33(4), 1-42.

- Godfrey, E.B. & Grayman, J.K. (2014). Teaching citizens: The role of open classroom climate in fostering critical consciousness among youth. *Journal of Youth and Adolescence*, 43, 1801-1817.
- Gun Free UT (n.d.). *Statements*. Retrieved from <http://gunfreeut.org/statements/>.
- Harnisch, T. L. (2008). Concealed weapons on state college campuses: In pursuit of individual liberty and collective security. *A Higher Education Policy Brief*, 1-7.
- Hess, D. E. (2009). *Controversy in the classroom: The democratic power of discussion*. New York: Routledge.
- Kuhlmann, S. (2016, July 31). Aggie genetics professor to retire over campus carry law. *The Eagle*. Retrieved from [http://www.theeagle.com/news/a\\_m/aggie-genetics-professor-to-retire-over-campus-carry-law/article\\_23d6f6ce-57ec-11e6-b232-1f7106797bf5.html](http://www.theeagle.com/news/a_m/aggie-genetics-professor-to-retire-over-campus-carry-law/article_23d6f6ce-57ec-11e6-b232-1f7106797bf5.html).
- McAvoy, P. & Hess, D. (2013). Classroom deliberation in an era of political polarization. *Curriculum Inquiry*, 43(1), 14-47.
- McDonald v. City of Chicago*, 561 U.S. 742 (2010). Retrieved from <http://www.supremecourt.gov/opinions/09pdf/08-1521.pdf>
- Morse, A., Sisneros, L., Perez Jr., Z., & Sponsler, B.A. (2016). Guns on campus: The architecture and momentum of state policy action.

*Joint Report of NASPA & Education Commission of the States.*

Retrieved from <https://www.naspa.org/rpi/reports/guns-on-campus-the-architecture-and-momentum-of-state-policy-action>.

Said, E. (2004). *Humanism and Democratic Criticism*. New York: Columbia University Press.

Smith, M. (2015, May 31). Campus carry bill heads to Gov. Abbott, *Texas Tribune*. Retrieved from [www.texastribune.org/2015/05/31/campus-carry-bill-heads-gov-abbott/](http://www.texastribune.org/2015/05/31/campus-carry-bill-heads-gov-abbott/)

Smith, T.W., & Son, J. (2015). Trends in gun ownership in the United States 1972-2014. *General Social Survey Final Report*. Chicago, IL: NORC.

Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board (2016). *Accountability Report*. Retrieved from [http://www.txhighereddata.org/Interactive/Accountability/UNIV\\_Complete\\_PDF.cfm?FICE=445566](http://www.txhighereddata.org/Interactive/Accountability/UNIV_Complete_PDF.cfm?FICE=445566).

Texas S.B. 11 (2015). *Leg. Sess. 84(R)*, Retrieved from <http://www.legis.state.tx.us/BillLookup/Text.aspx?LegSess=84R&Bill=SB11>.

Thompson, A., Price, J.H., Mrdjenovich, A. J., & Khubchandani, J. (2009). Reducing firearm-related violence on college campuses: Police

chiefs' perceptions and practices. *Journal of American College Health*, 58(3), 247-254

Walters, E. (2016, August 22). Judge denies UT-Austin professors' attempt to block campus carry. *Texas Tribune*. Retrieved from <https://www.texastribune.org/2016/08/22/judge-denies-professors-attempt-block-campus-carry/>

Watkins, M. (2016, February 25). UT architecture dean cites campus carry as a reason for departure. *Texas Tribune*. Retrieved from: <https://www.texastribune.org/2016/02/25/ut-architecture-dean-cites-campus-carry-reason-dep/>

Wernick, L.J. (2012). Leveraging privilege: Organizing young people with wealth to support social justice. *Social Service Review*, 86(2), 323-345.

Wilson, W. & Gervais, B. (2015). *UTSA professors overwhelmingly oppose guns on campus*. Retrieved from: <http://www.expressnews.com/file/147/0/1470-UTSA%20professors%20oppose%20guns%20on%20campus.pdf>

Wong, C. (2016, March 4). *Faculty members cite campus carry as reason to leave university*. Retrieved from <http://www.dailytexanonline.com/2016/03/04/faculty-members-cite-campus-carry-as-reason-to-leave-university>.

## Chapter 3

### Exploring Faculty Commitment to Teaching Controversial Topics at a “Campus Carry” Institution <sup>2</sup>

For centuries, universities have proclaimed their mission of the pursuit of knowledge and truth (Altbach, 2001; Jorgensen & Helms, 2008; Scott, 2006), through teaching, research, service and civic engagement (Boyer, 1990; Franz, 2009). Five decades ago, Kerr (1963) stated “the preservation of eternal truths, the creation of new knowledge, (and) the improvement of service wherever truth and knowledge of a higher order may serve the needs of man” (p. 38).

In the United States, scholars engage in the discovery and dissemination of knowledge through an open dialogue with each other, their students and community at large. Since the beginning of the 20th century, the American Association of University Professors has declared academic freedom as a pillar of public higher education institutions (AAUP, n.d.), giving professors a special protection of speech and writing on all issues, within and outside the university campus (Altbach, 2001). Although free speech is an American right protected by the First Amendment (U.S. Const, Amend. I), scholars in particular are often

---

<sup>2</sup> A version of this chapter was submitted as a paper and presented at the American Educational Research Association 2018 Annual Meeting

considered valuable social critics whose expertise should contribute to decisions made in communities and in society at large.

Classroom teaching is a particular area in which university faculty have the right to exert free speech, subject to the professional norms of competence, teaching standards and responsibilities determined by the higher education institution (Downs, 2009; Jorgensen & Helms, 2008). The role of faculty in disseminating knowledge and stimulating the discovery of knowledge among students has been recognized since the inception of the university. There is a vast body of research that demonstrates how the discussion of controversial topics in educational settings contributes to achieving positive educational outcomes for students such as civic engagement, political literacy, and critical thinking (Bielby, 2003; Campbell, 2008; Diemer & Blustien, 2005; Giroux, 2006; Godfrey & Grayman, 2014; Hess, 2009; Payne & Gainey, 2003; Wernick, 2012). Many argue that classroom debates of controversial issues should start even in K-12 settings (Hess, 2004) to increase civic knowledge and shape democratic values at younger age (Philpott, Clabough, McConkey, & Turner, 2011). Civility, respect and safeness in the classroom stimulate and encourage debate of controversial issues. However, recent legislation allowing the legal possession of concealed firearms on college campuses has challenged this assumption and raised concerns on how teaching

practices, especially faculty willingness to engage in controversial or difficult conversations, may change in academic settings (Reilly, 2016).

Although college campuses have traditionally been free-gun zones, ten states<sup>3</sup> have passed legislation allowing concealed weapons on college campuses in recent years (National Conference of State Legislatures, n.d.), and the number will most likely continue to grow (Morse, Sisneros, Perez Jr., & Sponsler, 2016). With the passage of Senate Bill 11 (Texas S.B. 11, 2015), Texas became the eighth state to pass legislation that allows license holders to carry concealed weapons throughout college campuses. The so-called “campus carry” laws have been found to be deeply unpopular with the majority of university faculty (Bennett, Kraft, & Grubb, 2012; Brinker, Lenneman, & Swayne, 2016; Dahl, Gene Bonham, & Reddington, 2016; Patten, Thomas, & Wada, 2013; Thompson, Price, Dake, & Teeple, 2013; Wilson & Gervais, 2016) and has been viewed by opponents as a direct threat to faculty and student academic freedom, by creating an atmosphere of fear (AAUP, 2015) and potentially limiting free inquiry and exchange of ideas on university campuses (Flaherty, 2016).

---

<sup>3</sup> States that allow carrying of concealed weapons on public postsecondary campuses: Arkansas, Colorado, Georgia, Idaho, Kansas, Mississippi, Oregon, Texas, Utah and Wisconsin. Tennessee allows faculty members (not students) with licenses to carry weapons on campus.



The current study contributes to the research that examines faculty opinions and perceptions about campus carry laws by focusing on the potential impact of campus carry on teaching practice. The overarching question is whether faculty are committed to maintaining their teaching practices after the campus carry law is implemented, and what factors may affect their commitment to free and robust exchange of ideas in college classrooms. The assumption of this study is that faculty beliefs about campus carry and their personal experiences with threatening situations caused by guns or violence are key contributing factors to commitment to maintaining teaching practices.

## **Literature Review**

### **Campus Carry Law**

In the United States, there is a fierce debate whether gun ownership and possession should be allowed or restricted. In the wake of several high profile campus shootings, including the killing of 32 students and faculty at Virginia Tech in 2007, the gun rights versus gun restrictions debate has extended to public college campuses (National Conference of State Legislatures, n.d.). Currently, only 16 states ban carrying a concealed weapon on a college campus, other 23 states leave this decision to each higher education institution, and 11 states have provisions allowing concealed weapons to be carried on campus by those

possessing gun permits (in Tennessee the law applies only to faculty members). Supporters of campus carry laws have argued that banning guns from campuses would violate states' concealed carry laws and would restrict citizens' Second Amendment rights.

However, legislation allowing the legal possession of concealed firearms on college campuses has faced strong opposition from university constituents. According to Birnbaum (2013), campus carry opponents cite three main categories of concern related to the implementation of laws allowing guns on campuses: decreased safety of the university community, loss of university autonomy, and the chilling effect the presence of guns can have on the academic exchange of ideas. The third concern is particularly important because the presence of guns on campus could possibly suppress free class discussion, which is a violation of the First Amendment.

The debate over the implementation of campus carry law has become intense in Texas (Watkins, 2016) when professors from University of Texas at Austin sued their university for imposing "dangerously-experimental gun policies". The suit claims a violation of three constitutional amendments: First Amendment rights by limiting free class discussion of emotional issues; Second Amendment rights by not providing a substantial reason of why the policy is necessary to "the

security of a free state” and whether this policy is “well-regulated”; Fourteenth Amendment violation which promises equal protection under the law. Regardless of whether the lawsuit has or not legal merit, it reflects serious fear and concerns that many college professors have with respect to campus carry laws.

### **Teaching Controversial Topics**

Teaching controversial issues in classroom is always challenging because such conversations can stir wide range of emotions among students. However, in the spirit of the free and robust exchange of ideas, one of the most sacred tenets of higher education (Birnbaum, 2013), it is important for both college teachers and students to learn how to conduct discussions in a civilized and respectful way. Campus carry opponents express concern that expanding gun laws on campus negatively impacts the ability and willingness of faculty to discuss controversial or sensitive topics in class, when there is a possibility that students carry guns. This concern is clearly expressed in a joint statement issued by the American Association of University Professors (AAUP, 2015) warning about the chilling effect of weapons in the class, and their effect on students and faculty members’ discomfort in discussing controversial subjects. Evidence of the chilling effect has already been materialized. In one high profile incident, a faculty group at University of Houston advised faculty to

consider omitting discussion of controversial issues in class to avoid angering students who might possibly be armed (Flaherty, 2016).

The tradition of free and open discussion in the classroom is not only a university tradition, but is a component of a successful educational experience for students. According to Hess (2009), free and open discussions of controversial issues in a safe learning environment are crucial to the development of critical thinking skills. As stated by Godfrey and Graymen (2015), students practice these skills in a critically reflective and engaged classroom, in which debate is not avoided and dissenting opinions are encouraged and respected. According to the National Association of Colleges and Employers (2017) critical thinking is among the top seven skills associated with career readiness in college graduates.

Research also suggests that students allowed to deliberately and critically discuss controversial issues in the classroom are more likely to become engaged and informed citizens. Campbell (2008) found that engagement with controversial issues could increase an adolescent's civic engagement, political awareness, and intent to be an informed voter. Faculty must be free to address sensitive and controversial issues as the learning objectives for their courses dictate, as the discussion of these issues in college classrooms is an important factor in the educational and civic development of students. College students' motivation is also highly

increased through the interaction with faculty outside of class like working together on research (Troian, Jach, Hanson, & Pascarella, 2016). Since teaching controversial issues and maintaining an open and free exchange of ideas in the classroom are embedded in the university mission to contribute to a democratic society, they become sacred obligations for university faculty.

### **Academic Freedom**

The role of university faculty as a facilitator of controversial and challenging discussions is a cornerstone of higher education that has been protected for centuries under the tradition of academic freedom. According to Hofstadter and Metzger (1995), at the beginning of the 19<sup>th</sup> century, the American concept of academic freedom was first enshrined in the 1915 Declaration of Principles issued by the American Association of University Professors. In it, academic freedom was defined as comprising of three pillars: “freedom of inquiry and research; freedom of teaching within the university or college; and freedom of extramural utterance and action.” (Seligman & Lovejoy, 1915). Although the declaration is symbolic (i.e., lacking legal force), it represented a step forward in the advancement of academic freedom for university teachers. In 1940, the declaration was updated and re-released as the “Academic Freedom and Tenure: Statement of Principles.” Since its publication, the 1940 statement has

been widely accepted throughout higher education and incorporated into the faculty contracts at hundreds of universities. The ubiquitous acceptance of the Statement of Principles is evidence of the centrality of academic freedom to the profession. According to Altbach (2001), "History shows that academic freedom is not only a fundamental prerequisite for an effective university, but is a core value for academia. Just as human rights have become an international priority, so academic freedom must be placed at the forefront of concern for the higher education community" (Altbach, 2001, p.217)

Faculty place a high value on students' ability to critically examine mainstream ideas and historical events, and many see it as their role to develop these competencies (Knopf-Newman, 2005). For example, one study of over 1600 faculty at Columbia University found that 86% of faculty agreed with the statement: "A fundamental role of a professor is to challenge orthodoxies and the presuppositions and biases of his/her students even if this results in unsettling feeling among the students" (Cole, Cole, & Weiss, 2015). However, throughout the history of higher education, academic freedom has been consistently threatened by war, anti-intellectual movements in society, or perceived threats to safety. For example, in the months following the September 11, 2001 terrorist attacks, academics experienced a chill on any speech that was critical of the

United States or which focused on Islam (Knopf-Newman, 2005).

Researchers argue that other societal influences like changes in tenure policy, political correctness movements (Dreyfuss & Ryan, 2016) and even teaching evaluations (Haskell, 1997) may weaken academic freedom.

Individual faculty commitment to free speech and open classroom discussions may also be threatened by negative personal experiences. Faculty may be fearful of addressing certain topics due to past experiences with violence or censorship, or because of fear of professional or personal backlash. Studies have shown that teachers may avoid discussing controversial or difficult issues in their classroom due to a perceived lack of preparation to handle the discussion in an effective way, and a fear that students may become upset or angry (Hess 2004; Sue, Torino, Capodilupo, Rivera, & Lin, 2009). Therefore, it is not unreasonable to predict that faculty may be further discouraged from addressing difficult topics in class when guns are allowed in classrooms. Strong beliefs in the value of free speech and the importance of open discussion of controversial topics in educational settings must be balanced with an individual's perceived threat of retaliation or negative consequences. The pressure of the campus carry law implementation may create real threats and concerns for both students and faculty. Given the important outcomes realized when faculty effectively address controversial

or difficulty topics in their classroom, it is crucial that university policies do not contribute to chilling free inquiry.

### **Theoretical Framework**

This study is based on the assumption that beliefs and experiences of faculty regarding campus carry, and the threat of allowing guns in university classrooms, can have an impact on faculty commitment to maintaining their teaching practices regarding discussions of controversial issues. In the following section, beliefs and experiences are discussed as related concepts important to understanding and predicting faculty behavior.

#### **Beliefs**

According to Gilbert (1991), beliefs involve mental representation and positive assessment of meaningful information. The mental representation of a proposition, such as whether the threat of campus carry will impact teaching controversial issues, is assessed within the mind. If the assessment is positive (i.e., the proposition is deemed to be true or likely true), the proposition is incorporated into one's belief system (Chai, 2001). Faculty beliefs are critical factors that shape teaching practice (Drew, 2016; Khader, 2012; Phipps & Borg, 2009). Khader (2012) argues that teachers' beliefs are the guiding principles on which their teaching practice is built, and serve as the lens through which



teachers make instructional decisions. In this way, understanding faculty beliefs about campus carry is central to understanding the impact of the policy on teaching practice.

### **Experience**

Experience plays an important role in faculty beliefs and behavior. According to Phipps and Borg (2009) many of the beliefs in teachers' beliefs systems are grounded in experience. These personal experiences inform core beliefs that in turn impact individual behavior, including teaching practice. Lemus-Hidalgo (2017) argues that faculty beliefs that are firmly grounded in experience have the most effect on teaching practices. Therefore, personal and professional experiences of faculty are central for the formation of their beliefs and exert a high level of influence on their behaviors, including their interactions with students in the classroom.

### **Methods**

This is an exploratory quantitative study using a correlational research design to examine the factors that may affect faculty commitment to free and robust exchange of ideas in college classrooms in the context of campus carry laws. Faculty commitment is indicated by their expressed intentions to maintain their teaching practices after campus carry law implementation. We addressed two research questions:

1. What is the overall response of faculty when asked about maintaining teaching practices after campus carry, and how does the response differ by faculty beliefs about guns on campus and their experiences of classroom safety? Does response differ by faculty background characteristics (e.g., sex, race, age, tenure/rank, discipline) and other contextual factors (e.g., teaching sensitive topics, teaching level)?

2. What is the relative effect of beliefs, experiences, background characteristics and contextual factors on the faculty intentions to maintain their teaching practices after campus carry law implementation?

### **Data Collection and Research Sample**

The data has been collected prior to the actual implementation of the law in August 2016 on the campus of a large Texas research university. After receiving the Institutional Review Board approval, data was collected using an online survey developed by the researchers which was administered to over 1300 faculty (including tenure-track and non-tenure-track). Participants responded to questions regarding their demographic and faculty status, their experiences with controversial and sensitive class discussions, their experiences with upset or angry students, their beliefs about the campus carry law, and the anticipated impact of the pending campus carry law on their teaching practice.

Participants accessed the survey through a link provided via email that directed them to the online tool. To increase the survey response rate, initial emails requesting participation were sent through Deans and department chairs, and follow-up emails were sent directly to all faculty using their addresses from a public university directory. The response rate to the survey was about 25%, and led to 332 valid cases. For the purpose of this study, we use a sample of N=260 faculty with valid responses on all variables of interest.

### **Variables**

Faculty were asked 4 questions about their intentions to keep same teaching practices in the context of campus carry laws, using 5-point Likert scale survey items, coded from 1='definitely not' to 5='definitely yes'. For instance, one survey item stated "My approach to teaching controversial or emotionally charged topics will remain the same", while another item was phrased "I expect to omit some topic(s) from my course content" (recoded for analysis). The four survey items were highly correlated (alpha's Cronbach = .904), and a composite score reflecting faculty intentions to maintaining their teaching practice was derived. This is the focal variable of the study and the dependent variable for the statistical analyses. More details on variables are provided in Appendix D.

Using a 5-point Likert scale coded from 1='strongly disagree' to 5='strongly agree', faculty expressed their level of agreement with statements like "I support the right of license holders to carry concealed weapons on college campuses" which reflects their beliefs about the legitimacy of campus carry law. Survey items such as "Laws that allow license holders to carry concealed handguns throughout campus will make the university less safe" were recoded. The four survey items measuring faculty beliefs in campus carry are highly correlated (alpha's Cronbach = .933), and a composite score was computed.

In addition, a dichotomous variable was constructed to reflect whether faculty had experienced feeling unsafe or threatened in the classroom. Several questions were asked about unsafe situations (e.g., personal safety, safety of students, fear that upset students might have a gun), or whether faculty were threaten with violence by a student or felt threaten by a student behavior. The response was coded '1' if faculty experienced at least one of these situations. For those who never experienced any event or did not know, the response was coded '0'.

Background variables include gender (2-category variable), race (3-category variable, with underrepresented minority including African Americans, Hispanics, Others), age (4-category variable), academic discipline (5-category variables), and tenure/rank faculty status (5-

category variable). Although details on race, age and discipline were collected, some groups were aggregated to avoid small subsample size. For similar reasons, the information on tenure and rank was combined to reflect the faculty status.

Contextual variables provide information on the functions exerted by faculty (e.g., holding administrative positions, teaching graduate or undergraduate level classes, or teaching subjects in which specific controversial topics are often addressed). Such contexts may have different levels of safeness or threat that may affect faculty intentions to maintain teaching practices after campus carry law implementation. All contextual variables are dichotomous.

## **Findings**

### **Comparing Faculty Intentions to Maintain Teaching Practices**

The overall response of faculty when asked about maintaining teaching practices after campus carry indicates a mean score of 3.25 [SD=1.26], that suggests a slightly positive intention to not change teaching practice, but a large polarization of responses. Data also shows a moderate positive relationship between faculty intention to maintain their teaching approach after law implementation and their pro-gun beliefs in general ( $r=.513$ ,  $p<.001$ ). Those who support campus carry are more likely to anticipate that they will not be affected by the law in their approach to

teaching sensitive topics, while those who oppose the policy are more inclined to be negatively impacted and change their teaching approach. Overall, faculty are opposed to campus carry law, as indicated by a mean score of 1.92 [SD=1.17].

When comparing faculty intentions to maintain teaching practices after campus carry law implementation, there is variation in responses among groups as shown by results of ANOVA analyses (Table 3.1).

*Table 3.1. Intention to use same teaching practices after campus carry implementation (ANOVA)*

		N	Mean	SD	F value	p
Has experienced feeling unsafe/threatened in classroom		113	3.89	1.08	63.397	.000
	Never	147	2.76	1.16		
Gender	At least once				1.811	.180
	Male	146	3.34	1.28		
Race/ethnicity	Female	114	3.13	1.22	9.242	.000
	Asian, non-Hispanics	21	2.15	.95		
	Underrepresented minority	30	3.36	1.28		
Age	White, non-Hispanics	209	3.34	1.23	2.369	.071
	25-44	73	3.22	1.08		
	45-54	54	2.88	1.39		
	55-64	78	3.42	1.30		
Rank/tenure	65+	55	3.41	1.22	.811	.519
	Professor, tenured	53	3.15	1.39		
	Associate professor, tenured/track	60	3.23	1.23		
	Assistant professor, tenure track	23	2.90	1.10		
	Lecturer/instructor	60	3.37	1.19		
Discipline	Non-tenure ranked faculty & Other	64	3.37	1.28	1.824	.109
	Science & Engineering	53	3.13	1.38		
	Education & Social science	35	3.29	1.12		
	Health & Social work	49	3.44	1.26		
	Liberal Arts/Humanities & Fine arts	74	3.07	1.32		
	Architecture & Public affairs	16	2.85	1.08		
Has administrative position	Business	33	3.70	1.43	.986	.322
	No	181	3.30	1.27		
	Yes	79	3.13	1.23		

Teaching undergraduate courses	No	49	3.24	1.18	.004	.950
	Yes	211	3.25	1.28		
Teaching graduate courses	No	100	3.44	1.19	3.561	.060
	Yes	160	3.13	1.28		
Teaching sensitive topics – Politics	No	106	3.59	1.18	13.531	.000
	Yes	154	3.02	1.26		
Teaching sensitive topics –Sexuality	No	144	3.44	1.28	7.512	.007
	Yes	116	3.02	1.19		
Teaching sensitive topics –Race	No	101	3.56	1.22	10.737	.001
	Yes	159	3.05	1.24		
Teaching sensitive topics –Social Class	No	117	3.49	1.27	7.786	.006
	Yes	143	3.06	1.21		
Teaching sensitive topics –Religion	No	139	3.42	1.25	5.388	.021
	Yes	121	3.06	1.24		
Teaching sensitive topics –Violence	No	147	3.37	1.28	3.153	.077
	Yes	113	3.09	1.21		
Teaching sensitive topics –Gender	No	111	3.54	1.21	10.757	.001
	Yes	149	3.03	1.25		
Teaching sensitive topics –Science	No	114	3.37	1.28	1.879	.172
	Yes	146	3.16	1.23		

For instance, statistically significant differences in responses ( $p < .05$ ) are observed among faculty who experienced feeling unsafe/threatened in their classrooms - those who experienced at least one incident being inclined to not maintain same teaching practice ( $M=2.76$ ), while those who never experienced an incident being most likely to keep their teaching approach ( $M=3.89$ ). There are also difference in responses among racial groups, with Asian faculty being extremely less likely maintain same teaching practice ( $M=2.15$ ). Statistically significant differences in responses ( $p < .05$ ) are also noticed among faculty who have encountered politics, sexuality, race, social class, religion, gender as sensitive topics of discussion that triggered emotions.

There are also some weaker effects ( $p < .1$ ) of age, teaching graduate courses and discussing topics of violence on faculty intention to maintain the same teaching approach in the context of campus carry laws. The 45-54 age group appears to be the least likely to maintain same teaching approach after the law implementation. Overall, ANOVA analyses suggest that contextual factors matter in taking the decision to change (or not) teaching practices and some faculty would tone down discussions of certain issues knowing students may bring guns in the classrooms. This could happen for those teaching graduate classes where more debates are encouraged and a range of topics that trigger usually emotions among students.

### **Modeling Faculty Intentions to Maintain Teaching Practices**

To learn more about the relative contribution of beliefs, experiences, background characteristics and contextual factors on the faculty intentions to use the same teaching practices after campus carry law implementation, we also conducted a series of linear regression analyses. First model includes only beliefs and experience as predictors that explain 35.7% of the variance in the outcome (adjusted R-squared). Stronger beliefs in the rightness of campus carry lead to stronger intentions to maintain same teaching practices, while previous experiences with unsafe or threatening situations have a negative impact



on intentions. The effect of beliefs is stronger than the effect of experiences on faculty intentions to maintain same teaching practices after law implementation.

The second model in which background factors are also included explains up to 40.8% of the variance in the outcome while the full model including also contextual factors reaches 42.5%. The results for the full model are presented in Table 3.2.

*Table 3.2. Intention to use same teaching practices after campus carry implementation – Regression analysis*

Variable	Unstandardized coefficients		Standardized Beta	p-value (t-tests)
	B	Std. error		
Constant	3.501	.398		.000
Pro-gun beliefs	.411	.060	.384	.000
Has experienced feeling unsafe/threatened (Never=ref)	-.758	.134	-.300	.000
Female (Male=ref)	-.028	.148	-.011	.849
Race/ethnicity (White=ref)				
Asian, non-Hispanics	-1.292	.245	-.281	.000
Underrepresented minority	-.061	.192	-.015	.752
Age (65+ = ref)				
25-44	.168	.205	.060	.415
45-54	-.158	.203	-.051	.436
55-64	.002	.180	.001	.989
Rank/tenure (Professor, tenured=ref)				
Associate professor, tenured/track	.133	.200	.045	.506
Assistant professor, tenure track	-.187	.288	-.042	.516
Lecturer/instructor	-.306	.226	-.103	.178
Non-tenure ranked faculty & Other	-.206	.224	-.071	.358
Discipline (Liberal Arts/Humanities/Fine arts =ref)				
Science & Engineering	-.069	.230	-.022	.765
Education & Social science	.256	.220	.070	.245
Health & Social work	.362	.234	.113	.124
Architecture & Public affairs	.059	.313	.011	.852
Business	.077	.235	.020	.743
Has administrative position (No=ref)	.010	.147	.004	.948
Teaching undergraduate courses (No=ref)	.106	.176	.033	.550
Teaching graduate courses (No=ref)	-.314	.160	-.122	.050

Teaching sensitive topics (No=ref)					
	Politics	-.334	.163	-.131	.041
	Sexuality	-.246	.200	-.097	.220
	Race	-.061	.215	-.024	.777
	Social class	-.097	.196	-.038	.623
	Religion	.049	.187	.019	.795
	Violence	.108	.193	.043	.577
	Gender	-.127	.191	-.050	.507
	Science	.070	.136	.028	.610

---

When all factors are included, the main contribution is due to faculty beliefs in gun safety (positive relationship with the outcome) and faculty experiences of unsafe/threatening situations in the classroom (negative relationship with the outcome). A statistically significant decrease in faculty commitment to maintain teaching practices in the context of campus carry law is noticed for Asian faculty, those who teach graduate courses, and those who reported that discussing politics in their classroom triggered emotions in students.

### **Discussion and Conclusion**

The findings of this study confirm that faculty beliefs and experiences regarding campus carry are varied and complex (Bennett, Kraft, & Grubb, 2012; Brinker, Lenneman, & Swayne, 2016; Dahl, Gene Bonham, & Reddington, 2016; Drew, 2016; Patten, Thomas, & Wada, 2013; Thompson, Price, Dake, & Teeple, 2013; Wilson & Gervais, 2016). However faculty beliefs, including those about guns and campus carry and experiences with violence or threat, may affect teaching practice, such as

faculty willingness to engage with controversial issues in the classroom (Khader, 2012; Phipps & Borg, 2009). Unsurprisingly, faculty who support campus carry and do not believe that the policy negatively impacts safety or free inquiry are more likely to report that the policy will have no impact on their ability to teach controversial topics or on the exchange of ideas at the university.

Similarly, faculty who do not support campus carry and those who have experienced threatening classroom situations, are more likely to change their teaching approach, indicating an increase in fear of violence under the campus carry policy, and a belief that the threat posed by armed students outweighs the perceived risk of discussing controversial issues. For faculty who have had a past experience with classroom violence or threat, the presence of guns in a classroom in which a controversial issues are being discussed may seem no less serious than life and death. Given the important role experience plays on individual beliefs and behavior (Lemus,-Hidalgo, 2017; Philip and Borg, 2009) campus carry may disproportionately impact those faculty who have experienced violence or threatening situations in the past. These vulnerable populations of faculty are particularly at risk of avoiding controversial topics in their classrooms.

The findings of this study indicate that certain background and contextual characteristics may also play a role in faculty beliefs,

experiences, and behaviors related to campus carry as suggested by previous research complex (Bennett, Kraft, & Grubb, 2012; Brinker, Lenneman, & Swayne, 2016; Dahl, Gene Bonham, & Reddington, 2016; Patten, Thomas, & Wada, 2013; Thompson, Price, Dake, & Teeple, 2013; Wilson & Gervais, 2016). Faculty who identified as Asian, faculty who discuss politics in their classrooms, and faculty who teach graduate courses are all found to be less likely to maintain their teaching practices following the implementation of a campus carry policy. Understanding the reasons for such background characteristics differences was outside the scope of this study and can only be speculated. We can be sure, however, that additional research into the cultural and contextual factors that impact faculty commitment to teaching practice in the face of campus carry is needed to fully understand the ramifications of the policy impact on faculty from a variety of backgrounds. While some populations of faculty may be vulnerable to experiencing a chilling effect caused by the potential presence of guns in a classroom, faculty beliefs and experiences regarding guns and gun policy are highly personal and complex (Drew, 2016; Khader, 2012; Phipps & Borg, 2009). Much more research is needed to explore the impact campus carry may have on academic freedom, free inquiry, and the discussion of controversial issues in the classroom.

## **Significance of the Study**

The impact campus carry laws may have on higher education campuses is a growing concern. With the proliferation of high profile school shootings in recent months, the issue of allowing guns on campus for self-defense is front and center in the media and American political discourse. Legislation allowing concealed guns on college campuses has already been passed in ten states throughout the United States, and will most likely be considered or passed in several more. More information is needed about the impact campus carry laws have on students and faculty in the classroom in order to responsibly implement these laws on college and university campuses. The experiences of vulnerable populations of faculty, including those with past negative classroom experiences, should be acknowledged and understood, especially in terms of how those experiences put some faculty at risk of avoiding controversial topics in their classrooms.

The ability and willingness of faculty to freely discuss controversial and sensitive topics in class is of particular concern because of the potential effect changes of traditional university practice have on educational outcomes and the culture of the university. This study aims to further the understanding of faculty, campus leadership, and educational researchers on how policies such as the campus carry law in Texas may

or may not affect the free and robust exchange of ideas in college classrooms.

## References

- Altbach, P.G. (2001). Academic freedom: International realities and challenges. *Higher Education* 41, 205–219.
- American Association of University Professors (n.d.). *Resources on academic freedom*. <https://www.aaup.org/our-programs/academic-freedom/resources-academic-freedom>
- American Association of University Professors (2015). *Joint statement opposing “campus carry” laws*. Retrieved from: <https://www.aaup.org/file/CampusCarry.pdf>.
- Astin, A. W. (1999). Student involvement: A developmental theory for higher education. *Journal of College Student Development*, 40(5), 518-529.
- Bennett, K., Kraft, J., & Grubb, D. (2012). University faculty attitudes toward guns on campus. *Journal of Criminal Justice Education*, 23(3), 336-355.
- Bielby, P. (2003). Courting controversies: Using insights from a legal philosophy course to develop practical recommendations for realizing pedagogical objectives in teaching morally contentious issues. *Teaching in Higher Education*, 8(3), 369-381.
- Birnbaum, R. (2013). Ready, fire, aim: The college campus gun fight. *Change: The Magazine of Higher Learning*, 45(5), 6-14.

- Blair, M. E., & Hyatt, E. M. (1995). The marketing of guns to women: Factors influencing gun-related attitudes and gun ownership by women. *Journal of Public Policy & Marketing*, 14(1), 117–127.
- Boyer, E. L. (1990). *Scholarship reconsidered: Priorities of the professoriate*. Princeton, New Jersey: The Carnegie Foundation for the Advancement of Teaching.
- Brinker, G., Lennemann, B., & Swayne, R. (2016). *Campus employees' weapons survey*. Hays, KS: Fort Hays State University.
- Campbell, D. E. (2008). Voice in the classroom: How an open classroom climate fosters political engagement among adolescents. *Political Behavior*, 30(4), 437–454.
- Chai, S.K. (2001). *Choosing an identity: A general model of preference and belief formation*. Ann Arbor, MI: University of Michigan Press.
- Cole, J.R., Cole, S., & Weiss, C.C. (2015). Academic freedom: A pilot study of faculty views. In A. Bilgrami & J.R. Cole (Eds.), *Who's afraid of academic freedom?* (343-394). New York: Columbia University Press.
- Cook, P. J., & Goss, K. A. (2014). *The gun debate: What everyone needs to know*. Oxford University Press: New York.



- Dahl, P. P., Gene Bonham, J., & Reddington, F. P. (2016). Community college faculty: Attitudes toward guns on campus. *Community College Journal of Research and Practice*, 40(8), 706–717.
- Diemer, M.A. & Blustein, D.L. (2005) Critical consciousness and career development among urban youth. *Journal of Vocational Behavior*, 68, 220-232.
- Downs, D.A. (2009). *Academic freedom: What it is, what it isn't, and how to tell the difference*. Raleigh, NC: The John William Pope Center for Higher Education Policy.
- Drew, S. K. (2017). Making sense of campus carry at Pittsburg State University. *Midwest Quarterly*, 59(1), 81-98.
- Dreyfuss, S., & Ryan, M. (2016). Academic freedom: The continuing challenge. *Portal: Libraries and the Academy*, 16(1), 1–9.
- Flaherty, C. (2016, February 24). Don't go there. *Inside Higher Ed*, Retrieved from <https://www.insidehighered.com/news/2016/02/24/u-houston-faculty-senate-suggests-changes-teaching-under-campus-carry>
- Franz, N. (2009). A holistic model of engaged scholarship: Telling the story across higher education's missions. *Journal of Higher Education Outreach and Engagement*, 13(4), 31-50.

- Gilbert, D. T. (1991). How mental systems believe. *American psychologist*, 46(2), 107-119.
- Giroux, H. (2006). Academic freedom under fire: The case for critical pedagogy. *College Literature*, 33(4), 1-42.
- Godfrey, E.B. & Grayman, J.K. (2014). Teaching citizens: The role of open classroom climate in fostering critical consciousness among youth. *Journal of Youth and Adolescence*, 43, 1801-1817.
- Haskell, R. E. (1997). Academic freedom, tenure, and student evaluation of faculty. *Education Policy Analysis Archives*, 5(6), 636-39
- Hess, D. E. (2009). *Controversy in the classroom: The democratic power of discussion*. New York: Routledge.
- Hess, D. (2004). Controversies about controversial issues in democratic education. *P.S.: Political Science & Politics*, 37(2), 257-261.
- Hofstadter, R. & Metzger, W.P. (1995). *The development of academic freedom in the United States*. New York: Columbia University Press.
- Jorgensen, J.D. & Helms, L.B. (2008). Academic freedom, the First Amendment and competing stakeholders: The dynamics of a changing balance. *The Review of Higher Education*, 32(1), 1-24.
- Kerr, C. (1963). *The uses of the university*. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press.

- Khader, F.R (2012). Teachers' pedagogical beliefs and actual classroom practices in social studies instruction. *American International Journal of Contemporary Research*, 2(1), 73-92.
- Knopf-Newman, M. J. (2005). Fair and balanced?: On academic freedom in post 9/11 America. *Palestine - Israel Journal of Politics, Economics, and Culture; East Jerusalem*, 12(2–3), 101–108.
- Lemus-Hidalgo, M. E. (2017). The role of teachers' experiences in the construction of their knowledge and beliefs: A case study of English language teaching in Mexico. *International Journal of Languages' Education and Teaching*, 5(1), 447–461.
- Morse, A., Sisneros, L., Perez Jr., Z., & Sponsler, B.A. (2016). Guns on campus: The architecture and momentum of state policy action. *Joint Report of NASPA & Education Commission of the States*. Retrieved from <https://www.naspa.org/rpi/reports/guns-on-campus-the-architecture-and-momentum-of-state-policy-action>.
- National Association of Colleges and Employers (2017). Retrieved from: <http://www.naceweb.org/career-readiness/competencies/career-readiness-defined/>
- National Conference of State Legislatures (n.d.). Guns on campus: Overview. Retrieved from

<http://www.ncsl.org/research/education/guns-on-campus-overview.aspx>

Patten, R., Thomas, M. O., & Wada, J. C. (2013). Packing heat: Attitudes regarding concealed weapons on college campuses. *American Journal of Criminal Justice : AJCJ*, 38(4), 551–569.

Payne, B.K. & Gainey, R.R. (2003). Understanding and developing controversial issues in college courses. *College Teaching*, 51(2), 52-58.

Philpott, S., Clabough, J., McConkey, L., & Turner, T.N. (2011). Controversial issues: To teach or not to teach? That is the question! *The Georgia Social Studies Journal*, 1(1), 32-44.

Phipps, S., & Borg, S. (2009). Exploring tensions between teachers' grammar teaching beliefs and practices. *System*, 37(3), 380-390.

Reilly, K. (2016, February 26). How guns on campus could change what Texas teaches. *Time*. Retrieved from <http://time.com/4237638/campus-carry-texas-universities/>

Seligman, E., & Lovejoy, A. (1915). AAUP 1915 declaration of principles. Akron: American Association of University Professors.

Scott, J. C. (2006). The mission of the university: Medieval to postmodern transformations. *The Journal of Higher Education*, 77(1), 1–39.

- Sue, D.W., Torino, G. C., Capodilupo, C. M., Rivera, D. P., & Lin, A. I. (2009). How White faculty perceive and react to difficult dialogues on race: Implications for education and training. *The Counseling Psychologist, 37*(8), 1090-1115.
- Texas S.B. 11 (2015). Leg. Sess. 84(R), Retrieved from <http://www.legis.state.tx.us/BillLookup/Text.aspx?LegSess=84R&Bill=SB11>.
- Thompson, A., Price, J. H., Dake, J., & Teeple, K. (2013). Faculty perceptions and practices regarding carrying concealed handguns on university campuses. *Journal of Community Health, 38*(2), 366–373.
- Trolian, T. L., Jach, E. A., Hanson, J. M. & Pascarella, E. T. (2016). Influencing academic motivation: The effects of student–faculty interaction. *Journal of College Student Development 57*(7), 810-826.
- U.S. Constitution, Amendment 1
- Watkins, M. (2016, July 26). Three UT professors sue to block campus carry. *Texas Tribune*. Retrieved from <https://www.texastribune.org/2016/07/06/3-ut-austin-professors-sue-state-over-campus-carry/>

Wernick, L.J. (2012). Leveraging privilege: Organizing young people with wealth to support social justice. *Social Service Review*, 86(2), 323-345.

Wilson, W., & Gervais, B. (2015). *UTSA professors overwhelmingly oppose guns on campus*. Retrieved from:

<http://www.expressnews.com/file/147/0/1470->

[UTSA%20professors%20oppose%20guns%20on%20campus.pdf](#)

## Chapter 4

### Female Faculty Beliefs, Experiences, and Behaviors in the Context of Campus Carry: A Qualitative Study <sup>4</sup>

*A well-regulated militia being necessary to the security of a free State, the right of the People to keep and bear arms shall not be infringed.*

– *Second Amendment, Constitution of the United States of America*

The Second Amendment of the United States Constitution has a long history as a topic that inspires fierce debate, political divisiveness, and ardent nostalgia. The circumstances under which individual gun ownership and possession should be allowed or restricted continues to be debated on political candidate podiums, congressional floors, and in the high courts, and the interpretation of the amendment is as contentious today as ever. In recent years, high profile school shootings have made headlines, raising public questions about the place of guns in schools, and college campuses have become a battleground for the gun rights versus gun restrictions debate. Although gun possession has traditionally been prohibited at higher education institutions, several states have passed legislation allowing guns to be carried on college campuses in recent years (Morse, Sisneros, Perez Jr., & Sponsler, 2016). With the passage of

---

<sup>4</sup>A version of this chapter was presented as a paper at ASHE 2017 Annual Meeting.

Texas Senate Bill 11 (2015), Texas became the eighth state to pass legislation to allow license holders to carry concealed weapons throughout college campuses, including dormitories and classrooms. The so-called “campus carry” policy took effect in Texas on August 1, 2016

Policies related to gun rights and gun control are politically polarizing. The opposing sides, which Birnbaum (2013) refers to as the “more guns” and the “ban guns” positions, both hold deep convictions about the appropriate way to combat escalating gun violence on college campuses. “Ban guns” activists view all guns as dangerous, deem campus carry policies as threatening to university mission and culture, and call for tighter gun restrictions to increase public safety (Birnbaum, 2013). On the other hand, those who take the “more guns” position hold the Second Amendment in high regard, and believes that a arming law abiding citizens is the most effective way to deter violence and keep the campus safe (Birnbaum, 2013; Harnisch, 2008). In a 2016 television interview, Texas Governor Greg Abbott, a clear supporter of the “more guns” position, publically articulated his view after a knife attack on the Ohio State University campus:

It's instances like [the 2016 attack at Ohio State University] where if kids on campus could have guns, they could have been able to respond initially. On a college campus like here in Texas, people



will think twice before waging an attack like this, knowing that they would be gunned down immediately (Abbot, 2016).

Although the majority of lawmakers in Texas favor campus carry as evidenced by the passage of Senate Bill 11, research shows that university faculty are largely opposed to the policy and are concerned that it will have a negative impact on teaching and faculty-student interactions (Brinker, Lenneman, & Swayne, 2016; Krismer, 2017; Wilson & Gervais, 2016). Female faculty may be disproportionately affected by negative effects of campus carry policies, given the research findings that females are more likely to be fearful of guns and violence than their male counterparts (Blair and Hyatt, 1995; Patten, Thomas, & Viotti, 2013). Therefore, policies like campus carry may be detrimental to student success if female faculty are more reluctant to engage with students in and outside of the classroom as a result. Understanding how policies like campus carry impact faculty's attitudes and behaviors, especially in terms of student interactions, is foundational to assessing the value gained or harm caused by such policies.

Although several studies have been conducted to determine the level of support for and against expanding gun rights to include college campuses (Bennett, Kraft, & Grubb, 2012; Brinker et al., 2016; Krismer, 2017; Patten, Thomas, & Viotti, 2013; Patten, Thomas, & Wada, 2013;

Wilson & Gervais, 2015), these studies tend to be quantitative in nature and measure faculty attitudes about campus carry prior to the implementation of the policy. Little research has been done to examine the beliefs, experiences, identities and behaviors of faculty at an institution that has recently implemented a campus carry policy, and who currently work on a campus where concealed weapons are allowed by law. Insight into the minds of faculty at campus carry institutions may allow researchers and policy analysts to better understand the real-life experiences and beliefs of faculty as they live with the unpopular policy at their institutions.

Although previous research does not reach conclusive results about the role of gender in shaping beliefs and behaviors related to guns on campus, studies suggest that female faculty are more affected than their male counterparts by such laws (Carlson, 2015; Gerney & Parsons, 2014; Patten, Thomas, Viotti, 2013). Therefore, the purpose of this study is to explore female faculty beliefs, experiences, and behaviors in the context of campus carry at a large public research institution in Texas to learn about gender-specific aspects that may not have been captured through quantitative research. Specifically, I aim to address the following research questions: How is “campus carry” as a concept, policy, and process perceived and experienced by female faculty at a large public

institution in Texas? How has the behavior of faculty members changed as a result of a campus carry policy, including their interactions with students?

### **Literature review**

Campus carry is a relatively new phenomenon, and academic research in this area, especially regarding faculty perspectives, is scarce. At this time, mainstream media serves as one of the only sources of information regarding individual faculty opinions about campus carry. In this section, I will explore the evidence in mainstream media as well as the small but growing body of academic research regarding faculty perceptions and attitudes about campus carry policies.

### **Faculty Views on Gun Policies**

Research, media, and anecdotal evidence all support the notion that university faculty are highly opposed to campus carry policies. Several professional organizations and grass roots groups have publically stated their concerns and displeasure about the policy (AAUP, 2015; NASPA, n.d; AERA, 2016). Grass roots organizations like Armed Campuses (n.d.), Campaign to Keep Guns Off Campus, n.d., and Gun Free UT, n.d. have formed to specifically organize opposition against the expansion of gun laws on college campuses. Surveys of faculty facing the implementation of a campus carry policy show that the vast majority of

faculty oppose such policies (Bennett, Kraft, & Grubb, 2012; Brinker, Lenneman, & Swayne, 2016; Wilson & Gervais, 2016).

Individual faculty have also publically opposed the policy. Faculty have declined job offers (Kuhlman, 2016; Wong, 2016), resigned from prestigious posts (Watkins, 2016), and even filed suit against the state (Walters, 2016) in protest of campus carry policies. However, survey results show that there is some variation of opinion among the faculty on the issue of allowing guns on campus (Bennett, et al. 2012; Brinker et al., 2016; Patten, Thomas, & Viotti, 2013; Patten, Thomas, & Wada, 2013; Wilson & Gervais, 2015).

### **Women and Gun Policies**

Research suggests that women may be uniquely impacted by policies related to guns. According to Blair and Hyatt (1995) women are more likely to fear guns and be more hesitant to shoot an attacker if necessary. Further, women are more often than men the target of gun violence, especially domestic violence (Gerney & Parsons, 2014). For example, from 2001 through 2012, 55% of women killed by intimate partners during this period were killed with guns. During that same time period, more than 50% of intimate partner-related homicides of women in each state involved a gun in 36 states, including Texas. Women in the

United States are 11 times more likely to be murdered with a gun than are women in other high income countries (Gerney and Parsons, 2014)

However, women's views on guns and campus carry policies are not so straightforward. The number of women obtaining a concealed carry permit has increased by more than 200% across the United States between 2007 and 2015 (Lott, Whitley, & Riley, 2015) indicating that many women support and participate in the right to carry a concealed weapon in public spaces. Carlson (2015) found that carrying may serve as a way for females in certain contexts to negotiate gender norms around safety, security, and even caring for others. For some women, guns served as symbols of self-protection and empowerment. However, in spite of these trends, early research suggests that female faculty are highly against policies that allow guns on university campuses. In a study conducted by Patten, Thomas, & Viotti, (2013), the overwhelming majority of female respondents did not want license holders to be allowed to carry a concealed gun on campus and did not think that campus carry would promote a greater sense of campus safety.

### **Faculty Professional Identity**

Academic identities are defined as the ways in which university faculty make sense of themselves as individuals and as professionals in academia (Harris, 2005). Henkel (2000) states that identities are "shaped

and reinforced in and by strong and stable communities and the social processes generated within them.” For academics, the direct work environment, the culture of the discipline, and the higher education institution are the key contexts in which their academic identities are shaped (Clark, 1986). Van Lankveld, Schoonenboom, Volman, Croiset, & Beishuizen (2017), also include *interactions with students* on the list of contexts in which faculty develop their identity. Identities may be enhanced or constrained within these contexts depending on how the values within the context support or inhibit individual identities (van Lankveld, et al, 2017). For example, university faculty may feel their identity as a teacher is confirmed in environments where they believe their academic expertise is valued, and constrained in environments where their expertise is undermined (van Lankveld, et al, 2017).

In two studies by Henkel (2000), two areas of faculty life emerged as the most important parts of faculty academic identities: the relationship of the faculty to their discipline of study, and the academic freedom that faculty viewed as fundamental to their profession. Knowledge of and participation in the discipline as well as individual freedom in the area of teaching and research were viewed by participants as “necessary conditions for academic work and therefore the conditions in which their academic identity was grounded (Henkel, 2000, p.170).” According to

Henkel (2000) policy changes that challenge these most valued aspects of faculty professional life can pose a major threat to academic identity, teacher self-esteem, and sense of purpose.

### **Method**

Guided by the symbolic interactionist perspective, I utilized a qualitative, interview methodology to explore the language and thoughts of faculty as they construct their understanding and perspectives about campus carry around their own experiences. Grounded theory (Charmaz, 2006; Glaser & Strauss, 1967) was used to construct a conceptual model of how faculty identity, beliefs, experiences, and behavior are all interconnected, and simultaneously shape and are shaped by the context, in this case, a higher education institution with a newly enacted campus carry policy.

The following section describes the selection of participants, the data collection process, the analysis methods used, and a discussion of the limitations of the study.

### **Research Sample**

A group of female faculty of a large research university in Texas was invited to participate in this study. Participants were identified using a snowball technique starting with researcher's personal contacts at the university (Bogdan & Biklan, 2007). In order to achieve some consistency

regarding faculty experiences with the campus carry policy at UT Arlington, I recruited participants who were employed at the university before, during, and after the implementation of the campus carry policy. I interviewed six female faculty members from diverse academic backgrounds who are employed full-time at the university. Only female faculty were selected for this study to focus on the unique perspectives of females as underrepresented members of the university faculty and as important agents in the mentoring and socialization of students in higher education. The study participants are described in Table 4.1.

*Table 4.1. Study participants*

Pseudonym	Age	Rank	Discipline
Liz	40-45	Associate Professor	Science
Jane	60-65	Assistant Professor	Social Work
Kate	50-55	Professor	Fine Arts
Joy	50-55	Professor	Engineering
Annie	40-45	Assistant Professor	Social Science
Kristen	35-39	Associate Professor	Liberal Arts

Prior to collecting data for this study, the research proposal was approved by the University Institutional Review Board. I have used pseudonyms for the participants and the university to insure anonymity throughout the study, and in any published results.



## **Interviews**

I conducted in-depth, semi-structured interviews with the six female faculty members over the course of the spring and summer semesters in 2017. I selected interviews as the primary method of data collection in order to facilitate my goal of soliciting participants' descriptions of their personal experiences and perspectives regarding campus carry and the symbolic meanings they ascribe to them (Marshall & Rossman, 2014). The interview methodology allowed me, through discourse, to gain insight into the participants' view of campus carry and its impact on their professional lives. According to Bogdan and Biklan (2007), conversations with participants allow insights into participants' perspectives of an issue in ways that could not be directly observed. Rich and thick descriptions of participants' beliefs, experiences, and behaviors regarding campus carry were obtained and data saturation, as defined by Urquhart (2013), was reached when no new codes emerged within the context of the themes identified in this study.

To encourage open and honest discussions with participants, interviews were conducted in private at either the faculty member's office or a neutral location in the university library as per the participant's preference. An interview protocol was used to guide the interviews (see Appendix E), but participants were provided the opportunity to talk about

their experiences and perceptions in their own words. During the interviews, I strived for a natural flow of conversation along the general thematic focus of the study as recommended by Bogdan and Biklan (2007). With the participants' permission, interviews were recorded and later transcribed.

Data collected during the interviews was systematically reviewed and analyzed using coding methods recommended by Creswell (2013). As the interviews were read, I searched for patterns and topics that consistently arose in the data. Codes reflecting themes related to faculty beliefs and experiences regarding campus carry were applied as they naturally emerged from the data. The constant comparative method—comparing incidents applicable to each theme, integrating the themes, developing the conceptual theory, and writing the theory—was used to make meaning of the data (Glaser & Strauss, 1967).

Since I am an administrator at the university I studied, existing relationships between myself and the participants inevitably shaped their responses and my interpretations of the interview (Bogdan & Biklan, 2007) which must be acknowledged and understood throughout the study.

## **Findings**

In the following section, I will discuss several themes that arose during my discussions with faculty regarding their beliefs, experiences,

identities and behaviors in the context of campus carry. In the next section, I explore these themes and provide examples of the perspectives of the faculty interviewed in this study as described in their own words.

### **Faculty Understanding and Action**

The campus carry policy is fairly complex and the specifics of the policy vary from institution to institution. In the early days of the policy, before it was implemented, Kate and Liz both recalled a sense of general confusion among their colleagues. They specifically recalled noticing some confusion about the difference between campus carry and open carry. Open carry allows license holders to carry weapons openly in some public areas, without concealment. The open carry policy does not apply to college campuses, but was passed in Texas during the same legislative session as campus carry. Kate expressed frustration at her colleagues' lack of understanding.

I felt like nobody really understood. But the thing is, everybody I talked to on campus, a lot of my colleagues felt like they heard on the news 'campus carry' and then they heard 'blah, blah, blah'....I think they were thinking about campus carry as open carry...I think they combined the two together (Kate, Fine Arts)

The participants in this study also expressed being personally confused about the details of the policy. Several participants asked me

questions during the course of the interview in order to clarify aspects of the campus carry policy and policies about gun ownership in general. For example, at one point Jane said, “You can probably order a gun on Amazon! Can you order a gun on Amazon?” Jane also had questions about whether campus security is allowed to carry guns. After the interview ended, Kate expressed confusion about whether guns were allowed in the dorms. She was under the incorrect impression that guns were not allowed in the residence halls under the campus carry policy.

Prior the law taking affect, the university administration held informational “town hall” meetings. Many participants commented on their experience at these meetings. Kristen found them to be informative and reassuring.

[The administrators hosting the town hall sessions] were really well-informed. They helped ... I think to me, they didn't seem to want to put up with this either. They're just trying to facilitate and respond to whatever questions people had in the more advantageous way that they could. I think they were trying to be positive as much as possible. They were throwing out stats about ‘Well, we've looked at various other campuses across the country, who have enacted the Campus Carry law and this is what's happened. There's been very few incidences of anything so we should probably not go overboard

react outrageously about this yet. It could be that this law will come in and nothing will ever happen.' (Kristen, Liberal Arts)

Liz, on the other hand, stated that she believed the faculty voice was not being heard. She explained,

I felt like they were being run by people who supported it and didn't find a problem with it. I felt like faculty's questions about safety were being treated like, 'You're an idiot. Nothing's going to happen.'  
(Liz, Science)

On the other hand, several of the participants commented that they felt the faculty at their university were not really engaged with the issue and had not collectively done enough to protest the campus carry policy. Joy expressed her disappointment with the lack of collective action of the faculty.

One thing that's a little disappointing about the faculty here is when they are against something they tend to not really speak out. And they'll tend to just absorb it and say okay I'm gonna just move on with my life knowing that that's the way that that's going to be and just find a way to get around it. And I wish the faculty would be a little bit more outspoken about something they are against. But they just want to do their research and just not worry about the other things. (Joy, Engineering)

Joy and other participants voiced concern that they, or their colleagues, were not fulfilling their duty as faculty to be more deeply involved in campus issues, an activity that may be related to the professional identity of a faculty member (Clark, 1986; van Lankveld, et al, 2017).

### **Good Guy with a Gun**

All of the participants mentioned the “good guy with a gun” concept, or the idea that law-abiding gun carriers would be able to defend innocent bystanders in the event of a mass shooting incident. The “good guy with a gun” concept is often put forth as one of the most important justifications for the necessity for campus carry policies by lawmakers and gun rights activists. However, several participants believed an armed bystander would be able to do little to protect themselves or others during an active shooter situation. For example, Kristen described how she believed a typical person with a concealed weapon would react when confronted with a shooter on campus,

Fear can set in, your adrenaline gets going - like, how would a good guy with a gun react in reality? I think probably the majority of people would...just try to take cover, or duck, or run. Get out of the building, get out of the way. (Kristen, Liberal Arts)

Other participants thought an armed citizen might be able to help defend against a shooter. Joy stated that she knew a colleague in her department who had a license to carry a concealed weapon, and that the colleague might be able to defend her against an active shooter, stating, "Maybe if [my colleague] had her gun - and she's a good shooter - we're all going to go into [her] office and she will be the one [to defend us]." On the other hand, Joy questioned the effectiveness of campus carry to protect people from an active shooter because she believed so few people would actually carry weapons, and those who did have weapons would not be properly trained. She explained,

If the faculty are not going to be bringing their guns on campus because they don't really believe in doing that, then the defense isn't there. It's still the same situation more or less as it was before....I mean, no one [who carries a gun] is actually getting trained differently [to deal with an active shooter]. (Joy, Engineering)

It is interesting that Joy implies that in the scenario she describes, her female co-worker plays the typically masculine role of the good guy with a gun. This hints at the thinning divide between men and women in terms of gun ownership and suggests that women may see other women as potential protectors in situations involving firearms.

## **Threat of Violence**

Further, most participants expressed concern that campus carry would not only be ineffective as a defense against campus violence, but would actually make campus less safe than before. Jane commented on the overall impact of increasing guns in an area by saying, “Guns can kill people, when there are more guns, more people will be killed. I certainly don't think guns make people safer.” Other participants expressed similar ideas, citing specific types of situations that could be made more dangerous with the presence of guns. For example, Liz describes her concern about some students having access to guns.

I'm worried more about the student who's, you know, having a rough time at it or is drinking too much or is doing things and happens to have a gun around that will lead to something bad for themselves or somebody else. Maybe not a mass [shooting]. But if it's your kid who's sharing the dorm with him. Holy shit! (Liz, Science)

Kate and Joy, on the other hand, did not believe the policy would affect campus safety negatively. Kate explained how her concern about campus carry declined as she learned more about the policy. “I didn't understand [campus carry]. As soon as I found out, I was ok.” She went on to elaborate her position.



Well, [licensed carriers] have to go through training and they have to really want to carry a concealed weapon because it's expensive. There's lots of time and effort involved and, um, I just think that somebody who is that serious about it and spending that much time is going to, um, be thoughtful about carrying and following the rules. And I just think they're not going to be that crazy, irrational, student who goes out and gets a gun and fires in the classroom. I think it's just a totally different population. (Kate, Fine Arts)

Joy, on the other hand did not feel that concealed weapon carriers were less likely to commit violence, but that the threat of violence had not changed with the implementation of the campus carry policy. "I kind of see it as, it's just the same threat as it was before. Somebody who's illegally bringing the gun on campus versus legally, if they shoot the faculty member because they're mad, it still happened."

Jane mentioned that she was concerned about what a policy like campus carry symbolized about the direction of the political sentiment in the United States. At various points in the interview she half-jokingly referred to "heading toward an apocalypse," and "when anarchy hits." Taking a more serious tone, she explained her perspective, "There is a whole narrative I see around not de-escalating but escalating upward. And I don't know where that will bring us." Even if the participants did not

mention specific experiences in which they felt threaten by the presence of guns, they appear to anticipate how such experiences will look like.

### **Arming Oneself**

The campus carry policy allows anyone with a license to carry a gun on campus, prompting the participants to ponder the efficaciousness of carrying a gun themselves. Many of the participants mentioned that they would not feel comfortable carrying a gun on campus, offering some support for Joy's belief that faculty are not likely to carry weapons. Joy, Jane, and Annie all expressed their belief that they would probably do more harm than good if they chose to carry a gun. Joy said,

[Carrying a gun] would makes me feel less safe. I'm not - I'm not skilled enough with the gun to carry it, to feel like I can do it. You know I'd probably get killed in the process because I hesitate or something." (Joy, Engineering)

Kristen's opinion about carrying a weapon was more mixed.

Initially, she expressed that the implementation of campus carry made her feel like she should carry a weapon. When asked how campus carry has affected her opinion about working at the university, she stated, "It makes me want to carry even more." However, she expressed that her feelings were conflicted, saying, "I don't think I should have to bring in a gun to campus or anywhere really because I don't - I doubt if I even had a gun, if

I would shoot somebody.” Annie expressed a more philosophical reason for not carrying a gun, stating, “I think there's already such a pervasive culture of fear, and [arming oneself] is giving power to that. I just don't want to play into it.”

Although Kristen considered carrying a concealed weapon, most of the women did not position themselves as the bearer of arms in a violent scenario. These beliefs were often related to past experiences with weapons, beliefs about their own behavior, and experiences with others. Annie mentions that her choice not to carry a gun coincides with her belief that to do so would give power to fear, suggesting that Annie incorporates a pacifist worldview into her identity.

### **Past Experiences**

Each participant shared some personal experience with gun violence that informed their beliefs about campus carry to some extent. For example, Kate recalled initially having a strong negative reaction to the policy due to a past experience.

My first thought was – back in 1999, when I defended my dissertation, six months before that, some guy walked into his dissertation defense and opened fire on his committee in California and killed them. And when I first heard about campus carry that was the first thing I thought of. Especially during your dissertation

and really intense times, some people can't control their emotions.

(Kate, Fine Arts)

Joy also mentioned cultural and personal experiences that contributed to her concerns about campus carry,

I do know something about Asian [honor culture], and having to go back to your family a failure is worse than killing yourself. A friend of mine...committed suicide because of something like that. So, it wouldn't totally surprise me that our primarily Indian graduate population here in engineering - that if [a student was] put into that situation with the pressure of having to go back home after the family's mortgaged the house to send [him] to school, and [he's] not getting the degree, that [he] may just give up. (Joy, Engineering)

She goes on to explain that even though international students would not be legally permitted to obtain a license to carry a concealed weapon, increased access on campus could increase the likelihood of a student harming him or herself.

They wouldn't be licensed to have one...[but] it may just be that if someone who was licensed to have a gun on campus - and the [upset student] managed to find it and gain access to it - that does increase that ability [to harm oneself]. (Joy, Engineering)

Many participants also attributed their attitudes about guns to experiences in their upbringing. Kristen explains that she does not fear guns because she was raised around them.

Growing up in [a rural area], I grew up with guns in my family. My brother was in the military so he's got a whole arsenal. I never really remember thinking that [guns] were scary. When I got a little older, I ended up shooting all kinds of guns. I've shot handguns, rifles, and shotguns. (Kristen, Liberal Arts)

She expressed a fondness for shooting guns for sport as a way to connect with her father. "The thing with my dad and I nowadays, is that we go shoot sporting clays. It's a really fun game. It's something that we kind of bond doing that together."

Cultural heritage and childhood upbringing were themes that arose during questions about past experiences with guns suggesting powerful connections between identity, experiences, and beliefs about guns. Joy mentions familial pressure as common in Asian culture, while Kristen discusses how families can bond over shooting for sport. These interesting connections point to a wide range of human experience that underlies the beliefs individuals hold about guns.

Several participants also expressed how listening to others discuss campus carry had an impact on their beliefs about the policy. Colleagues

were often cited as a source of information about the policy for the participants, and faculty meetings sometimes became a forum for faculty to voice their opinions about the policy. Kristen describes attending a faculty senate meeting at which campus carry was being discussed, and how that experience influenced her feelings about the policy.

I remember not thinking too deeply into [campus carry] until ... I went to a Faculty Senate meeting and people were outraged. The Faculty Senate meeting gave me heart palpitations. It was like, whoa!....I think it was just that, it was a big group of people across the university and they were all talking about this topic and very worried, very concerned. Then [campus carry] became something that I thought about and thought, 'Well, this isn't good.'" (Kristen, Liberal Arts)

Participants also mentioned how their interactions with family members regarding campus carry which sometimes factored in to their thinking about the policy. Kate described how her husband became her source of information about gun policy and campus carry.

[My husband] was telling me 'well you know they have to be 21, and they have to go through these classes.' [My husband] actually got data from all these different states that have [campus carry]....They found that there was no change in the safety [as a

result of campus carry]. I found out that many other states did this and then I was like, 'It's no big deal.' (Kate, Fine Arts)

Annie and Kristen described how family members they spoke to encouraged them to carry a weapon on campus. Kristen considered her father's suggestion before ultimately deciding against it.

I talked to my father who's part of the NRA and he's got his guns. I said to him once, I said, 'Dad, do you really think I should have to carry a gun? Or like, be worried about weapons on campus in my work environment when I'm with kids and students?' He's like, 'Make sure you have one in your desk at all times.' Maybe I will. I don't know. In the end, I probably wouldn't even use it. It would be a waste of money, even if somebody gift wrapped it for me, I would be like, no. (Kristen, Liberal Arts)

Annie's discussions with her step-father about the pros and cons of gun control helped clarify and solidify her position on the matter.

My stepdad is crazy, like, 'It's my right.' I'm like, 'No, you have rights to healthcare." You know? Who are you gonna shoot?' Then there's this discourse about, like, 'Well, it's for self-protection.' I'm like, 'You live in suburbia!' I don't understand, like, are you really gonna shoot a neighbor? I don't think there's any need for any guns anywhere. (Annie, Social Science)

Colleagues and family members can be an important source of information and can influence beliefs in complex ways regardless of whether the friend or family member's position on guns coincides with one's own. According to Van Lankveld, Schoonenboom, Volman, Croiset, and Beishuizen (2017), experiences like interacting and conversing with others is part of the construction of professional identity.

### **Texas**

All participants in the study recognized the context of the policy as being typically Texan and understood the policy to be a reflection of the gun culture in the state. Annie explained, "It is very Texas and very normal to have guns and be raised with guns, right? So there's this whole gun culture, I guess, that was new for me [when I moved here]." Jane expressed a similar belief and added that she often disagrees with the political direction of the state, "I saw [campus carry] as just Texas doing what Texas wants to do. Texas is going to do what it wants to do, which is never really what I think is a great thing to do." Many of the participants echoed Jane's frustration with the politics in Texas. Kristen illustrated an example of what she felt was hypocrisy by the state government on the issue of guns.

I took ten students to get in to the Texas State Capitol. You have to go through tons of security screening. You have to put your purse



through a metal detector. You have to walk through a metal detector. To me, it was very hypocritical. I'm standing there thinking, 'To get into this place - it's like Fort Knox.' They're the ones legislating this [university] space. [Yet] here in this [government] space, [they're] saying 'banning guns is okay for us but it's not for them.' I just find that to be highly hypocritical.

(Kristen, Liberal Arts)

The women in the study associated campus carry with the regional gun culture. Most often, the participants positioned themselves as outside of that culture, by mentioning they had moved here from other locations. Campus carry was also often associated with the regional politics, and was most often characterized as being in opposition to the participants' political views. Political affiliation can play an important role in beliefs and identity of a faculty member.

### **Women and Guns**

Jane, Kristen, and Liz all expressed their belief that gun control issues impact women differently than men. Liz explained, "Of course [gun laws are] a women's issue - domestic violence you know - when there's a gun in the house it can lead to these murder-suicides." She also expressed that preventing gun violence was a particularly emotional issue for women with children. "[As a mother], you can't separate these [gun-

related] things that happen to these kids from [things that could happen to] our kids. So, I think this [emotion] is all related to that. Like, you know, our kids will be in college soon.”

Other participants discussed why women might choose to carry a gun. Jane stated,

I know there are lots of females who are gun totin' and they love their guns. They just as very fervent about gun rights [as men]. I think just in terms of safety - I think as a female, we're much more vulnerable. Men don't understand that just by being a female and walking in the street it's a completely different experience than being a male. Right? And that that's something you can't know until you experience it. I think some [women] carry firearms because of that vulnerability. (Jane, Social Work)

Women in the study express a complex view of the female in relation to campus carry. While Liz points out that women often feel more vulnerable to violence than men, Jane implicates that fact as a reason to carry weapons, not as a reason to ban them. The maternal nature of women was also discussed as a factor in women's beliefs about campus carry, pointing to the faculty member's identity as a mother.

## **Interacting with Students**

The faculty interviewed for this study reflected on their behaviors and whether they had changed as a result of campus carry. Two of the participants discussed being more aware of the space in which they are meeting with or teaching students. Jane and Liz both described arranging their offices so as not to feel trapped in when meeting with students. Jane said, “So, it’s like the old therapist you know? What you do is, you move your desk so you are closest to the door so you can get out quickly.” Liz expressed concern about the arrangement of certain classrooms on campus.

[In] our big [classrooms] down here, there are cul de sacs, or whatever you call it, a dead end where the faculty member’s at the point in the bottom. There’s no way out. Yeah, so I think about that stuff...your students have you trapped in. (Liz, Science)

Interestingly though, all of the faculty maintained that their interactions with students have not changed as a result of the campus carry policy, even when dealing with sensitive situations. Liz described herself as “nurturing” and said she has no reason to change her behavior when she meets with students.

I’m a very nurturing person anyway, so someone comes in a they’re failing out of the program, I try to make sure I talk to them about

their options and what we can do....I haven't been like 'no, you're out of the program'[in the past] and then now I'm like 'oh no they could be carrying a gun. I better be nice.' (Liz, Science)

However, Liz articulated that the policy has made her more diligent about caring for students who might be at risk harming themselves. "When I think somebody might be in trouble, then I maybe try to follow up a bit more with them."

In terms of teaching, each participant described discussing difficult or sensitive issues with students both in and outside of the classroom setting, however none reported changing her methods or approach to working with students as a result of campus carry.

Liz explains why she is committed to her teaching practice which includes discussions about controversial topics. "[Not discussing controversial topics] would be a disservice to the students I think...I mean, I can hit it pretty hard. I'm passionate about [these topics]."

In addition, each participant felt she had the skills needed to manage her classroom effectively, even when the topic of class was a sensitive one. Jane states,

I have been fortunate to work in [social work] so I have some knowledge...I bring the concepts of mindfulness and self-care into the classroom in the beginning... I really try to make [class] a safe

environment for [the students] because we talk about a lot of sensitive issues. (Jane, Social Work)

Kate concurs, indicating that she has a duty to her students. “ I’m not going to change my firmness – because I am quite firm with them. I say what they don’t want to hear a lot of times. But I have to prepare them to be professionals. So that’s not going to change. Ever.

Although some of the participants expressed some fear about certain situations in which a person might be armed, they were committed to maintaining their teaching practice in the context of campus carry. The participants refer to their practice using words like duty, passion, and service. These responses reflect a strong professional identity in which teaching and preparing students for the future is highly valued.

### **Discussion**

The systematic collection and analysis of the interview data revealed several concepts such as beliefs, experiences, behaviors, and identity that all combined to form a complex picture of an individual’s understanding of the campus carry policy and its impact on the campus community. Thus, using a grounded theory methodology, I propose a framework to describe how these concepts are all interconnected and how faculty identity, simultaneously influencing and influenced by faculty

beliefs, faculty experiences, and the campus carry context, impact faculty-student interaction behaviors.

The role of cultural, familial, and professional identity on an individual's beliefs about campus carry was evident throughout the interviews. This result corresponds to the findings of Kahan and Braman (2003) who found that background and cultural characteristics are strong predictors of a person's support of gun control laws.

Individuals were similarly affected by conversations they had engaged in with people in their social circles about campus carry. As described by symbolic interactionism (Berger & Luckmann, 1966; Prawat & Floden, 1994), individuals constructed their beliefs about the policy through interactions with others. Sometimes the participants incorporated the opinions and beliefs of others in their social and professional circles into their own. For example, Kristen found herself alarmed about the policy after witnessing her colleagues' panic at a faculty meeting. Other times, like Annie interacting with her "gun crazy" stepfather, they positioned themselves as different from those they interacted with, providing further justification for their opposing beliefs.

Although surveys conducted suggest that faculty are largely opposed to campus carry (Bennett, Kraft, & Grubb, 2012; Brinker et al., 2016; Krismer, 2017; Patten, Thomas, & Viotti, 2013; Patten, Thomas, &

Wada, 2013; Wilson & Gervais, 2015), this study goes further to illustrate the nuances and variety in faculty opinions. While participants all had concerns about the policy, they all expressed complex positions about the policy that produced varying levels of concern. For example, Kristen expressed a fair comfort level around guns and people who carry guns legally, but opposed the policy on principle. Annie and Jane expressed more direct concerns about the safety of allowing guns on campus while Joy and Kate expressed the least amount concern about the policy and its impact on the campus community citing a belief that there would be only a small number of licensed carriers on campus and low probability that campus carry policy would directly result in any violent event.

In addition, the participants discussed their identity and experience as women in the context of campus carry. The variety of experiences and beliefs expressed by the participants illustrate that women consider many factors and experiences when forming their opinions about campus carry (Blair and Hyatt, 1995; Carlson, 2015; Patten, Thomas, & Viotti, 2013). Although the participants expressed that females in general indeed have a unique perspective and interest in the issue of guns on campus, individual beliefs of female faculty on this issue are complex and nuanced.

However, regardless of the participants' individual identities, beliefs, and experiences regarding campus carry, the findings in this study paint a

picture of faculty who are confident in their abilities to handle sensitive situations and who are steadfast in their commitment to their teaching practice. As faculty-student interactions are a crucial component in the success and satisfaction of students on campus (Astin, 1999), this finding provides some evidence that certain faculty are able to overcome their concerns about campus carry policy when it comes to effectively educating students. However, faculty are a vastly diverse group which includes individuals with a wide range of backgrounds, experience, and efficacy and much more research is needed to understand the impact campus carry may have on different individuals in the academy.

### **Conclusion and Implications**

As the public sentiment championing expanding gun rights continues to grow in Texas and other states in the United States, the impact that campus carry laws may have on higher education campuses has become an area of interest for higher education advocates, leaders, stakeholders, and researchers. The location and timing of this study offers a unique opportunity to gain some understanding of the perceptions and lived experiences of faculty working at a newly-designated “campus carry institution.” As this study suggests, faculty perceptions of campus carry are varied and nuanced. Faculty in this study describe encountering a patchwork of information sources and feeling that their voice was not



being heard. Institutions facing the implementation of a complex and politically charged policy like campus carry should strive to provide not only highly accessible, complete, and accurate information to the faculty, but should open the discussion around the policy so that faculty voices can be heard and considered, even within the narrow application of the policy that the law requires.

In spite of the concern for campus and personal safety, the participants in this study felt confident in their abilities, and continue to persist in what they see as their duty to teach students effectively. The fact that the participants were all seasoned professors with experience teaching courses that include sensitive or controversial topics may suggest that experienced and well-trained teachers are more efficacious, and are less susceptible to the negative impact campus carry may have on discussions in some classrooms or campus settings. This finding suggests that universities, faculty development offices, and experienced faculty should invest in providing mentoring and training for less experienced and confident teachers in the academy to better inoculate them against the negative impact policies like campus carry might have on their interactions with students. Certainly, more research is needed to fully understand how campus carry is perceived and lived by faculty at institutions affected by this policy.

## References

- Abbot, G. (2016, November 28). Interviewed by B. Kilmeade, A. Earhardt, & S. Doocy. *Fox and Friends* [Television broadcast]. New York City: Fox News Channel.
- American Association of University Professors (2015). *Joint statement opposing "campus carry" laws*. Retrieved from: <https://www.aaup.org/file/CampusCarry.pdf>.
- Armed Campuses website (n.d.). Guns on campus' laws for public colleges and universities. Retrieved from <http://www.armedcampuses.org>
- American Educational Research Association (2016). American Scholarly Societies joint statement on "campus carry" legislation. Retrieved from: <http://www.aera.net/Newsroom/AERA-Highlights-E-newsletter/AERA-Highlights-July-2016/AERA-Council-Endorses-Joint-Statement-on-Campus-Carry-Legislation>
- Astin, A. W. (1999). Student involvement: A developmental theory for higher education. *Journal of College Student Development*, 40(5), 518-529.
- Bennett, K., Kraft, J., & Grubb, D. (2012). University faculty attitudes toward guns on campus. *Journal of Criminal Justice Education*, 23(3), 336-355.

- Berger, P., & Luckmann, T. (1966). *The social construction of reality: A treatise on the sociology of knowledge*. New York: Anchor Books.
- Birnbaum, R. (2013). Ready, fire, aim: The college campus gun fight. *Change: The Magazine of Higher Learning*, 45(5), 6-14.
- Blair, M. E., & Hyatt, E. M. (1995). The Marketing of Guns to Women: Factors Influencing Gun-Related Attitudes and Gun Ownership by Women. *Journal of Public Policy & Marketing*, 14(1), 117–127.
- Bogdan, R., & Biklen, S. K. (2007). *Qualitative research for education: An introduction to theories and methods*. Boston: Allyn & Bacon.
- Brinker, G., Lennemann, B., & Swayne, R. (2016). *Campus employees' weapons survey*. Hays, KS: Fort Hays State University. Retrieved from [https://www.fhsu.edu/uploadedFiles/executive/docking/Regents%20FacultyStaff%20Gun%20Survey%202015%20\(2\).pdf](https://www.fhsu.edu/uploadedFiles/executive/docking/Regents%20FacultyStaff%20Gun%20Survey%202015%20(2).pdf).
- Campaign to Keep Guns Off Campus website (n.d.). *We work to protect America's colleges and universities*. Retrieved from <http://keepgunsoffcampus.org/about/>.
- Carlson, J.D. (2015). Carrying Guns. *Contexts*, (14)1, 20-25.
- Clark, B. R. (1986). *The higher education system: Academic organization in cross-national perspective*. Los Angeles: University of California Press.

- Charmaz, K. (2006). *Constructing grounded theory: A practical guide through qualitative research*. London: Sage Publications.
- Creswell, J.W. (2013). *Qualitative inquiry & research design: Choosing among five approaches*. (3<sup>rd</sup> ed.). Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage Publications.
- Gerney, A. & Parsons, C. (2014). Women under the gun: How gun violence affects women and four policy solutions to better protect them. *Center for American Progress*. Retrieved from <https://cdn.americanprogress.org/wp-content/uploads/2014/06/GunsDomesticViolencereport.pdf>
- Glaser, B.G. & Strauss, A.L. (1967). *The discovery of grounded theory*. Chicago: Aldine.
- Gun Free UT (n.d.). *Statements*. Retrieved from <http://gunfreeut.org/statements/>.
- Harris, S. (2005). Rethinking academic identities in neo-liberal times. *Teaching in Higher Education*, 10(4), 421–433.
- Harnisch, T. L. (2008). Concealed weapons on state college campuses: In pursuit of individual liberty and collective security. *A Higher Education Policy Brief*, 1-7.
- Henkel, M. (2005). Academic identity and autonomy in a changing policy environment. *Higher Education*, 49(1–2), 155–176.

- Kahan, D. M., & Braman, D. (2003). More statistics, less persuasion: A cultural theory of gun-risk perceptions. *University of Pennsylvania Law Review*, 151(4), 1291–1327.
- Krismer, J. (2017, April). *Impact of campus carry on faculty interactions with students in college classrooms: Faculty perspective*. Paper presented at AERA 2017 Annual Meeting, San Antonio, TX.
- Kuhlmann, S. (2016, July 31). Aggie genetics professor to retire over campus carry law. *The Eagle*. Retrieved from [http://www.theeagle.com/news/a\\_m/aggie-genetics-professor-to-retire-over-campus-carry-law/article\\_23d6f6ce-57ec-11e6-b232-1f7106797bf5.html](http://www.theeagle.com/news/a_m/aggie-genetics-professor-to-retire-over-campus-carry-law/article_23d6f6ce-57ec-11e6-b232-1f7106797bf5.html).
- Lott, J. R., Whitley, J. E., & Riley, R. (2015). Concealed carry permit holders across the United States. Rochester, NY: Social Science Research Network.
- Marshall, C., & Rossman, G. B. (2014). *Designing qualitative research*. Los Angeles, CA: Sage publications.
- Mead, G. H. (1934). *Mind, self, and society: From the standpoint of a social behaviorist*. Chicago, IL: University of Chicago Press.
- Morse, A., Sisneros, L., Perez Jr., Z., & Sponsler, B.A. (2016). Guns on campus: The architecture and momentum of state policy action. *Joint Report of NASPA & Education Commission of the States*.

Retrieved from <https://www.naspa.org/rpi/reports/guns-on-campus-the-architecture-and-momentum-of-state-policy-action>.

NASPA- Student Affairs Administrators in Higher Education (n.d.).

*NASPA's statement regarding guns on campus*. Retrieved at:

[https://www.naspa.org/images/uploads/main/NASPA\\_Gun\\_Statement\\_\(2\).pdf](https://www.naspa.org/images/uploads/main/NASPA_Gun_Statement_(2).pdf)

Patten, R., Thomas, M. O., & Viotti, P. (2013). Sweating bullets: Female attitudes regarding concealed weapons and the perceptions of safety on college campuses. *Race, Gender & Class, 20*(3/4), 269–290.

Patten, R., Thomas, M. O., & Wada, J. C. (2013). Packing Heat: Attitudes Regarding Concealed Weapons on College Campuses. *American Journal of Criminal Justice : AJCJ, 38*(4), 551–569.

Prawat, R. S., & Floden, R. E. (1994). Philosophical perspectives on constructivist views of learning. *Educational Psychologist, 29*(1), 37-48.

Texas S.B. 11 (2015). *Leg. Sess. 84(R)*, Retrieved from <http://www.legis.state.tx.us/BillLookup/Text.aspx?LegSess=84R&Bill=SB11>.

Urquhart, C. (2013). *Grounded Theory for Qualitative Research: A Practical Guide*. Sage: Thousand Oaks, CA.

- Van Lankveld, T., Schoonenboom, J., Volman, M., Croiset, G., & Beishuizen, J. (2017). Developing a teacher identity in the university context: a systematic review of the literature. *Higher Education Research & Development*, 36(2), 325–342.
- Walters, E. (2016, August 22). Judge denies UT-Austin professors' attempt to block campus carry. *Texas Tribune*. Retrieved from <https://www.texastribune.org/2016/08/22/judge-denies-professors-attempt-block-campus-carry/>
- Watkins, M. (2016, February 25). UT architecture dean cites campus carry as a reason for departure. *Texas Tribune*. Retrieved from: <https://www.texastribune.org/2016/02/25/ut-architecture-dean-cites-campus-carry-reason-dep/>
- Wilson, W., & Gervais, B. (2015). *UTSA professors overwhelmingly oppose guns on campus*. Retrieved from: <http://www.expressnews.com/file/147/0/1470-UTSA%20professors%20oppose%20guns%20on%20campus.pdf>
- Wong, C. (2016, March 4). *Faculty members cite campus carry as reason to leave university*. Retrieved from <http://www.dailytexanonline.com/2016/03/04/faculty-members-cite-campus-carry-as-reason-to-leave-university>.

## Chapter 5

### Conclusion

Soon after I first began investigating campus carry as a potential topic for my dissertation, I realized that the issues around gun rights and gun control evoked strong feelings for people, and that beliefs about campus carry were often deeply personal. In early conversations with my friends and mentors about campus carry, I encountered a wide variety of reactions and viewpoints, ranging from outrage and fear to fervent support for the policy. There is no issue in contemporary higher education studies quite like campus carry; a policy that is wrapped up in political partisanship, personal feelings of fear and safety, long-standing university traditions, the pioneer history of the United States, and the first two amendments of the U.S. Constitution (Birnbaum, 2013). Add to that mix a recent history of shootings on college campuses and you have a knot that is difficult, if not impossible, to untangle.

In an effort to grab at a small thread in this knot, I started by investigating the beliefs, experiences, and behaviors of some of the people most affected by the policy: university professors. With this research, I focused on one particularly important realm of academic life, the relationships between faculty and students which are key in ensuring student success and the role of higher education in society. Demonstrably



transformative (Astin,1999), the relationship between faculty and students is vitally important, and potentially fragile. Willingness of faculty and students to engage with each other undergirds the entire university experience from classrooms, to grades, to mentorship.

### Synthesis of Results

The IBEB conceptual framework (see Figure 1, p. 28) frames this investigation into the complex yet symbiotic nature of beliefs, experiences, behavior, and identity, and how those concepts can shape and be shaped by a particular context (Chai, 2000). Table 5.1 provides a summary of the studies included in this dissertation, including the related concepts explored and the major findings of each study.

*Table 5.1 Summary of chapters, concepts and main findings*

Ch.	Study	Title	Concepts	Major findings
2	1	Comparative Study of Faculty Beliefs and Behaviors in the Context of Campus Carry	Beliefs Behaviors	Faculty are not supportive of campus carry in general. Some differences in level of support for CC and intended teaching behaviors are noticeable by race, gender, discipline.
3	2	Exploring Faculty Commitment to Teaching Controversial Topics at a Campus Carry Institution	Beliefs Experiences Behaviors	Past experience with violent students is a good predictor of intent to change teaching behavior because of CC. Faculty who support CC and feel that it will not make campus less safe are more likely to maintain their teaching practice in the context of CC. Some background factors (e.g., race) and contextual factors (e.g., teaching graduate courses) affect behaviors.
4	3	Female Faculty Beliefs, Experiences, and Behaviors in the Context of Campus Carry: A Qualitative Study	Beliefs Experiences Behaviors Identity	Female faculty in the study had a variety of beliefs and experiences related to campus carry. Although the women in the study did not generally support campus carry, they were committed to their teaching practice.

In this final section, I will discuss the main findings of my three research studies on campus carry as they respond to the three research objectives laid out in Chapter 1 and in relation to current research literature.

### **Research Objective 1**

*Describe faculty beliefs and experiences regarding campus carry in the context of higher education in Texas.*

One of the most obvious findings from this work is that faculty beliefs cannot be easily summarized. However, it is clear that the majority of faculty do not like the campus carry law and they are not comfortable with the idea of armed students in their classroom. As in previous qualitative research studies, faculty expressed concern regarding the impact campus carry would have on classroom practice and campus safety (Birnbaum, 2013; Bennett, Kraft, & Grubb, 2012; Brinker, Lenneman, & Swayne, 2016; Wilson & Gervais, 2016). However, my study took this general finding of faculty opposition a step farther, demonstrating that faculty opinions are not monolithic, and may fall along a range of opposition responses to the policy. In addition, faculty responses are often shaded by their beliefs and experiences. For example, the viewpoints of faculty surveyed for Studies 1 and 2 mirrored those in previous research (Bennett, Kraft, & Grubb, 2012; Brinker, Lenneman, & Swayne, 2016;

Wilson & Gervais, 2016) and tended to be polarized, with very few people taking a moderate position on the issue. However, the faculty interviewed for Study 3 expressed varying amounts of concern, ranging from ardent and active opposition to the policy, to passive acceptance. It is striking that even among the relatively homogenous group of faculty interviewed (full-time, female faculty at one institution), the range of beliefs about the policy was quite wide. Further research to detect a more detailed range of opinions about gun policies among faculty or other populations may help understand the true lay of the land when it comes to guns and gun laws in the United States.

Faculty beliefs about the impact of campus carry on the free exchange of ideas was similarly variable. While faculty responses to the survey prior to the implementation of campus carry indicated that the policy would negatively impact academic freedom, confirming Birnbaum's (2013) findings, the women interviewed for Study 3 believed in their own ability to overcome any fear that may be inherent to a policy like campus carry, in order to continue exercising their academic freedom. A follow-up survey of a large sample of faculty to assess how the policy is affecting faculty teaching practices post-implementation is an area of interest for future research.

The impact of past experiences on faculty perspectives about campus carry was evident in both the survey results and in the interviews. As demonstrated by the analysis of results in Study 2, faculty with past experiences of threat or violence in the classroom tended to be more fearful of campus carry and the effect it would have on their professional practice. Based on a thorough review of the literature, it does not appear that previous experience with violence has been explicitly considered in other research about faculty behaviors and campus carry which supports the significance of the current research. In addition, the faculty in the interviews described experiences, not only in their professional setting, but throughout their lives that factored into their beliefs about campus carry, coinciding with the framework of belief laid out by Chai (2001). Faculty appear to integrate experiences from childhood, from their professional lives, and from their personal lives. I found that even experiences that are described to faculty by others may be incorporated into a faculty member's view of guns on campus, as their beliefs were constructed through symbolic interactionism (Berger & Luckmann, 1966; Prawat & Floden, 1994). Although I did not analyze the relative impact of a very wide range of experiences with guns as a predictor of one's perspective on campus carry, the centrality of those experiences to the interview participants'

views on campus carry suggests that it would be valuable to add such questions to future surveys on this topic.

## **Research Objective 2**

*Explore how a faculty member's personal and professional identity may account for differences in his or her beliefs, experiences, and behaviors related to campus carry.*

Faculty beliefs about campus carry are clearly shaded by one's individual and professional identity, which incorporates beliefs and past experiences (Clark, 1986; Harris, 2005; Henkel, 2000; Van Lankveld, et.al, 2017). Aspects of one's life experiences that are incorporated into one's identity such as background (e.g., growing up with guns), experiences (e.g., past encounters with violence or threat), race (e.g., being Asian), professional life (e.g., being a Business professor) are impossible to separate from one's beliefs, experiences, and behaviors related to campus carry (Mead, 1934). I found it interesting that the survey participants who identified as Asian were more likely to claim that they would change their teaching practices. Similarly, during the interviews, Joy mentioned that Asian individuals might be more vulnerable to looser gun laws. The connection is not clear, but it points to a possible area for future investigation that points to cultural and anthropological research.

Professional identity also played a starring role in this research, as campus carry is a fact of reality at faculty place of work. As the policy has possible implications for academic freedom and workplace safety, it necessarily intersects with how faculty see themselves as members of the higher education community (Clark, 1986). For example, the individuals interviewed in Study 3 often discussed mixed feelings about their role as faculty in higher education policy making. This points to a consideration of themselves as potential change agents within higher education policy. Similarly, all interview participants imagined themselves in dangerous situations when discussing campus carry, and reflected on the appropriate or likely role they would play in such situations. It is clear from the interviews that individual identity is brought to bear as faculty come to understand campus carry and incorporate their understanding of the policy into their knowledge of the university context as well as into their own belief system (Clark, 1986).

### **Research Objective 3**

*Examine the ways in which faculty identity, beliefs, and experiences in the context of campus carry impact faculty-student interaction behavior.*

Although each study stands on its own, the three studies together tell a story about the impact of campus carry on faculty interactions with

students that they could not have told separately. Results from Study 1 confirm findings from Birnbaum (2013), that the majority of faculty predict that free speech on campus, including the ability to discuss controversial issues, would be negatively impacted by campus carry. However, the majority of faculty also answered that they would most likely not personally change their own teaching practices. These findings point to an interesting contradiction between the faculty concern about how others will be impacted by the policy, and how they intend to behave themselves that may be related to their identity as faculty (Birnbaum, 2013; van Lankveld et al., 2017). Further complicating the analysis of this issue, the faculty surveyed were more evenly split when asked if they might tone down their discussions of such topics. Could the implementation of campus carry result in a potential watering down of teachers' approach to important and contentious material - the very issues that are in most need of exploration, discussion, and critique? The women interviewed in the Study 3 indicate that all hope is not lost. The participants maintained that they would not be pressured by campus carry policies to change their most effective teaching practices. In fact, a few of the participants claimed they may be *more* engaged with students in order to better notice and provide support when students might be struggling or upset. One could argue that this caring and hopeful approach is feminine, but as I did not conduct an in

depth review of feminist literature for this dissertation, I highly recommend this as a potential focus of future research.

### **Contributions to Research and Theory**

The research findings presented in this dissertation address a gap in the literature about the relative impact of campus carry policies on teaching practice and faculty interactions with students. The findings regarding how past experiences with violence may impact faculty ability to maintain their current teaching practices in the context of campus carry are particularly novel. Overall, this research adds some shading and nuance to the debate about the merits and faults of campus carry policies in the context of higher education.

A particular contribution of this dissertation consists in the design of a survey instrument to collect information about a variety of faculty background characteristics, their beliefs about campus carry, and their past experiences discussing controversial issues and encountering violence or threat in their classrooms.

In addition, I proposed a new conceptual model, the IBEB Model (Figure 1.1, p. 28) which integrates beliefs, experiences, identity, and behavior within a specific context (i.e., campus carry implementation), and which provided a framework and a vocabulary to discuss the findings and implications of this research.



Finally, as this dissertation is the first article-based dissertation in the College of Education at the University of Texas at Arlington, it can be used as an example for others in the doctoral program who are interested in an alternative to the traditional dissertation format.

### **Implications for Higher Education Policy and Practice**

The Constitution of the United States provides protection of both free speech and the right to bear arms (U.S. Const. Amend I, U.S. Const. Amend II). This tension between the first and second amendment is at the crux of this research. The university is compelled to strike a balance in order to preserve the rights of citizens as they are currently defined within the higher education context. This research contributes to this goal by illuminating the perspectives of faculty about the issues of weapons on campus and how that may affect their academic practice. By better understanding the connection, and resulting tension, between the rights guaranteed by the first and second amendments at a campus carry institution, policy makers may be more sensitive to the impact that policies that favor the Second Amendment can have on free speech, academic freedom, and the identity of individuals in the academic world.

### **Faculty Perspective**

The findings of this research imply that some faculty are at risk of altering their teaching practice in the context of campus carry, others may

be able to adapt in a way that mitigates the negative effects and reduces the threat to academic freedom. Increasing faculty confidence in managing classroom discussions around controversial or sensitive topics, as well as training on diffusing difficult situations may help, as faculty are confronted with the reality of weapons in their classrooms.

The existence of policies like campus carry point to an even greater need for faculty to teach students how to appropriately conduct themselves in a debate setting. Students must be taught to react with reason rather than violence, especially those with access to deadly weapons. Skillfully exposing students to diverse viewpoints and opinions in college may allow students to practice tolerance, or even compassion for different ideas and ways of viewing the world. As students practice these skills, the threat of violent retaliation against those with different views may decrease (Bielby, 2003; Campbell, 2008; Diemer & Blustien, 2005; Giroux, 2006; Godfrey & Grayman, 2014; Hess, 2009; Wernick, 2012).

However, this is not to imply that faculty should simply accept campus carry as an inevitable part of faculty life, especially if campus carry is found to be detrimental to the free exchange of ideas. Faculty should strive for individual and collective agency when confronted with highly unpopular policies like campus carry. Exercising one's own

freedom of speech, or participating in collective action such as engaging in shared governance, organizing demonstrations, and lobbying government officials for change may be appropriate for faculty who deeply oppose the policy.

### **Institutional Perspective**

As campus carry is implemented on campuses across the United States, concerns about the impact on academic freedom, as well as campus safety must be considered and addressed. For example, institutional policies that allow for properly securing the weapons of those who choose to carry, especially in common places like dorms, classrooms, and communal areas to minimize the chance of accidents and to reduce the chance that those who are not legally allowed to carry concealed weapons do not gain access to a gun. Although I did not study the effects of campus carry on university campus safety, these measures seem to be basic steps that institutions can take to minimize the possible dangers of allowing guns on campus and may ease the fears of the campus community to some extent.

In addition, institutions facing the implementation of a policy like campus carry should prioritize faculty communication and participation in the process. Participants in Study 3 interviews all mentioned the “town hall” style meetings that occurred on campus prior to the beginning of the

policy. Ensuring that the information about campus carry, or any important policy change, is clear and widely available for the campus community is important as the community comes to understand the new law and its impact on campus life. Participants in this study described varying amounts of engagement in the process, therefore, institutions should look for ways that individuals can be closely engaged, as well as find effective means of communicating with those who less likely to get involved. It is especially important for campuses to incorporate faculty voices in the operationalizing of policies that may directly impact classroom practice and academic freedom.

### **National Context**

As more and more states look to loosen restrictions on gun laws in the United States, policy makers must have a full understanding of the consequences of policies like campus carry. While lawmakers seem focused on issues surrounding campus safety (Birnbaum, 2013), this research indicates that some faculty may be vulnerable to the chilling effect of campus carry in their classrooms, putting the core mission of higher education - the free exploration of new ideas - at risk. The vast majority of participants in this study found campus carry to be antithetical to philosophical ideals undergirding public higher education in the U.S. Even if campus carry is the impetus for curriculum changes for a relatively

small number of faculty, the cumulative impact across many institutions across the United States could have long term and detrimental impact on the free exchange of ideas on college campuses.

### **Final Thoughts**

It is not acceptable for any policy to deter the free expression and debate of ideas on college campuses. The irony is not lost on me that the tradition of free inquiry that may be threatened by the presence of guns on campus, is the very tradition that made it possible for me to conduct this research on such a controversial and contentious issue. Maintaining the diversity of opinions, beliefs, and experiences and the ability to express those perspectives without fear or threat is of the utmost importance to the success of higher education. Taking full measure of polarizing issues is not always easy or comfortable, but it is the duty of scholars to understand and represent all opinions in their classrooms for the sake of their students, and in their research in the name of finding compassionate, safe, and effective solutions to real problems in higher education and in society as a whole. It has been my honor to engage in the freedom of inquiry, which has so far been protected by the concept of academic freedom, and I hope that my research contributes in some small way toward preserving that most sacred of university tenets.

## References

- Astin, A. W. (1999). Student involvement: A developmental theory for higher education. *Journal of College Student Development, 40*(5), 518-529.
- Bennett, K., Kraft, J., & Grubb, D. (2012). University faculty attitudes toward guns on campus. *Journal of Criminal Justice Education, 23*(3), 336-355.
- Berger, P., & Luckmann, T. (1966). *The social construction of reality: A treatise on the sociology of knowledge*. New York: Anchor Books.
- Bielby, P. (2003). Courting controversies: Using insights from a legal philosophy course to develop practical recommendations for realizing pedagogical objectives in teaching morally contentious issues. *Teaching in Higher Education, 8*(3), 369-381.
- Birnbaum, R. (2013). Ready, fire, aim: The college campus gun fight. *Change: The Magazine of Higher Learning, 45*(5), 6-14.
- Brinker, G., Lennemann, B., & Swayne, R. (2016). *Campus employees' weapons survey*. Hays, KS: Fort Hays State University. Retrieved from [https://www.fhsu.edu/uploadedFiles/executive/docking/Regents%20FacultyStaff%20Gun%20Survey%202015%20\(2\).pdf](https://www.fhsu.edu/uploadedFiles/executive/docking/Regents%20FacultyStaff%20Gun%20Survey%202015%20(2).pdf).

- Campbell, D.E. (2008). Voice in the classroom: How an open classroom climate fosters political engagement among adolescents. *Political Behavior*, 30(4), 437–454.
- Chai, S.K. (2001). *Choosing an Identity: A General Model of Preference and Belief Formation*. Ann Arbor, MI: University of Michigan Press.
- Clark, B. R. (1986). *The higher education system: Academic organization in cross-national perspective*. Los Angeles: University of California Press.
- Diemer, M. A. & Blustein, D. L. (2006). Critical consciousness and career development among urban youth. *Journal of Vocational Behavior*, 68(2), 220–232.
- Giroux, H. (2006). Academic freedom under fire: The case for critical pedagogy. *College Literature*, 33(4), 1-42.
- Harris, S. (2005). Rethinking academic identities in neo-liberal times. *Teaching in Higher Education*, 10(4), 421–433.
- Henkel, M. (2005). Academic identity and autonomy in a changing policy environment. *Higher Education*, 49(1–2), 155–176.
- Hess, D. E. (2009). *Controversy in the classroom: The democratic power of discussion*. New York, NY: Routledge.

- Mead, G. H. (1934). *Mind, self, and society: From the standpoint of a social behaviorist*. Chicago, IL: University of Chicago Press.
- Prawat, R. S., & Floden, R. E. (1994). Philosophical perspectives on constructivist views of learning. *Educational Psychologist, 29*(1), 37-48.
- U.S. Constitution, Amendment I
- U.S. Constitution, Amendment II
- Van Lankveld, T., Schoonenboom, J., Volman, M., Croiset, G., & Beishuizen, J. (2017). Developing a teacher identity in the university context: a systematic review of the literature. *Higher Education Research & Development, 36*(2), 325–342.
- Wernick, L.J. (2012). Leveraging privilege: Organizing young people with wealth to support social justice. *Social Service Review, 86*(2), 323-345.
- Wilson, W., & Gervais, B. (2015). *UTSA professors overwhelmingly oppose guns on campus*. Retrieved from:  
<http://www.expressnews.com/file/147/0/1470-UTSA%20professors%20oppose%20guns%20on%20campus.pdf>



Appendix A

IRB



UNIVERSITY OF  
**TEXAS**  
ARLINGTON

OFFICE OF RESEARCH ADMINISTRATION  
REGULATORY SERVICES

March 3, 2017

Joslyn Krismer  
Dr. Maria Trache  
Educational Leadership & Policy Studies  
The University of Texas at Arlington  
Box 19575

**IRB No.:** 2016-0498  
**Title:** *Faculty Perspectives on Campus Carry Law: Impact on the Free and Robust Exchange of Ideas in College Classrooms*

**Original Approval Date:** April 19, 2016  
**Modification Approval Date:** March 2, 2017  
**Expiration Date:** April 19, 2017

**EXPEDITED MODIFICATION APPROVAL**

The UT Arlington Institutional Review Board (UTA IRB) Chair (or designee) reviewed and approved the modification(s) to this protocol on **March 2, 2017** in accordance with Title 45 CFR 46.110(b)(2). Therefore, you are authorized to conduct your research. The modification(s), indicated below, was/were deemed minor and appropriate for expedited review:

- Add procedures for a new face-to-face recorded interview to further explore the research questions; up to 10 interviews will be conducted on campus, and no identifiable information will be collected
- Added a new consent form, the interview script, and invitation letter to IRB protocol materials
- The Form 1 was updated to reflect the above changes

**MODIFICATION TO AN APPROVED PROTOCOL:**

Pursuant to Title 45 CFR 46.103(b)(4)(iii), investigators are required to, “promptly report to the IRB any proposed changes in the research activity, and to ensure that such changes in approved research, during the period for which IRB approval has already been given, are **not initiated without prior IRB review and approval** except when necessary to eliminate apparent immediate hazards to the subject.” Modifications include but are not limited to: Changes in protocol personnel, number of approved participants, and/or updates to the protocol procedures or instruments. All proposed changes must be submitted via the electronic submission system prior to implementation. Failure to obtain prior approval for modifications is considered an issue of non-compliance and will be subject to review and deliberation by the IRB which could result in the suspension/termination of the protocol.

**INFORMED CONSENT DOCUMENT:**

REGULATORY SERVICES  
SERVICES

The University of Texas at Arlington, Center for Innovation  
202 E. Border Street, Ste. 201, Arlington, Texas 76010, Box#19188  
(T) 817-272-3723 (F) 817-272-5808 (E) regulatoryservices@uta.edu (W) www.uta.edu/rs

## Appendix B

### Sample of Survey Questionnaire

## **Campus Carry in College Classrooms: Impact on Faculty**

**Q1 Thank you for your interest in completing this survey. You will find more information about this study below. To begin the survey, please read the following information and click "ACCEPT."**

---

**Q2 TITLE OF PROJECT** *Faculty Perspectives on Campus Carry Law: Impact on the Free and Robust Exchange of Ideas in College Classrooms* You are invited to participate in a research study. Participation involves completing a 15 minute online survey. The purpose of this study is to explore the impact of “campus carry” laws on faculty perceptions of their ability to discuss and engage their students in discourse about controversial topics as part of course content. Additionally, this study will explore whether or not faculty report changes in their own behavior, the behavior of their students, and the behavior of their colleagues and administrators in relation to the “campus carry” law. Some questions may ask participants to disclose sensitive information about their practice as faculty. Your answers will be confidential and no information will be collected in this study that will make you directly identifiable. The risk of indirect identification based on your responses to the demographic questions is low. In addition, your records will be kept completely confidential as required by law. Results will be stored on a secure server and on encrypted machines only, and will not be stored as hard copy records or on unencrypted or personal devices. Data presented in publications resulting from this study will be aggregated to the extent that survey responses could not be associated with any one participant. In addition, the university at which the study was conducted will be masked. Additional research studies could evolve from the information you have provided, but your information will not be linked to you in any way. The information obtained in this study will be used for research purposes only. All data collected from this study will be stored on a secure UTA server for at least three (3) years after the end of this research. Although your rights and privacy will be maintained, the Secretary of the Department of Health and Human Services, the UTA Institutional Review Board (IRB), and personnel particular to this research have access to the study records. The IRB at UTA has reviewed and approved this study and the information within this consent form. Your participation is

voluntary. You have the right to refuse to participate, or to quit the survey at any time at no consequence.

---

**Q8 PRINCIPAL INVESTIGATOR:** Joslyn Krismer, Educational Leadership and Policy Studies, UT Arlington, [krismer@uta.edu](mailto:krismer@uta.edu)

**FACULTY ADVISOR** Maria Trache, Educational Leadership and Policy Studies, UT Arlington, [mtrache@uta.edu](mailto:mtrache@uta.edu)

**CONTACT FOR QUESTIONS** Questions about this research study may be directed to Joslyn Krismer, 817-272-0298 or [krismer@uta.edu](mailto:krismer@uta.edu), or Maria Trache, [mtrache@uta.edu](mailto:mtrache@uta.edu). Any questions you may have about your rights as a research subject or a research-related injury may be directed to the Office of Research Administration; Regulatory Services at 817-272-2105 or [regulatoryservices@uta.edu](mailto:regulatoryservices@uta.edu).

**Q9 CONSENT** By clicking “ACCEPT” below, you confirm that you are 18 years of age or older and have read or had this document read to you. You have been informed about this study’s purpose, procedures, possible benefits and risks, and you may print a copy of this form using the “Print” function in your browser. You have been given the opportunity to ask questions before you make a decision regarding your participation, and you have been told that you can ask other questions at any time. You voluntarily agree to participate in this study. By clicking “ACCEPT” below, you are not waiving any of your legal rights. Refusal to participate will involve no penalty or loss of benefits to which you are otherwise entitled. You may discontinue participation at any time without penalty or loss of benefits to which you are otherwise entitled.

- ACCEPT:** I voluntarily agree to participate in this study
  - DECLINE:** I do not wish to participate in this study
-

**Q10 In this section, you will be asked to answer some questions about your role at the university and supply some demographic information about yourself.**

**Q11 1. What is your present academic rank?**

- Professor
- Associate professor
- Assistant professor
- Lecturer
- Instructor
- Post doc
- Graduate Teaching Assistant
- Other (please specify) \_\_\_\_\_

**Q12 2. What is your tenure status at this institution?**

- Tenured
- On tenure track, but not tenured
- Not on tenure track

**Q14 3. With which gender do you identify?**

- Male
- Female
- Other, please specify. \_\_\_\_\_

**Q15 4. Do you consider yourself to be Hispanic/Latino?**

- Yes
- No

**Q16 5. With which race/ethnicity do you identify?**

- American Indian or Alaskan native
- Asian
- Black or African American
- Native Hawaiian or Other Pacific Islander
- White or Caucasian
- Multiracial
- Unknown
- Other (Please specify) \_\_\_\_\_

**Q37 6. Please indicate your age range.**

- Under 25
- 25-34
- 35-44
- 45-54
- 55-64
- Over 65

**Q17 7. Which of the following best describes your citizenship/residency status?**

- U.S. Citizen
- Legal Permanent Resident
- Visa holder (e.g., H-1, J-1, etc.)

Other (please specify)

---

**Q18 8. Which best describes your main academic discipline?**

- Architecture
- Business
- Education
- Engineering
- Fine Arts
- Liberal Arts/Humanities
- Law
- Medicine
- Nursing
- Pharmacy
- Public Affairs
- Science
- Social Science
- Social Work
- Other (Please specify) \_\_\_\_\_



**Q20 9. In which activities do you engage in your current position at your institution? (Select all that apply)**

- Administration
  - Teaching
  - Research
  - Services to clients and patients
  - Other (Please specify) \_\_\_\_\_
- 

**Q21 10. How many courses/lab sections do you typically teach per term?**

Courses per academic term	▼ 0 ... 4+
Labs per academic term	▼ 0 ... 4+

**Q22 11. In the past 12 months, what types of courses/labs have you taught? (Select all that apply)**

- Undergraduate credit courses
- Graduate courses
- Non-credit courses
- Other (Please specify)
- Not applicable

**Q23 12. Indicate the format of the courses you teach (Select all that apply)**

- Online
- In class (face-to-face)
- Hybrid (both online and face-to-face class meetings)
- Field work
- Off campus (face-to-face)
- Other (Please specify) \_\_\_\_\_
- Not applicable

**Q40 Faculty sometimes address topics that are potentially controversial, sensitive, or uncomfortable for students as part of the content of a course. Examples of such topics may include issues related to politics, religion, science, sexuality, etc., but could be related to almost any topic.** Do you ever discuss topics in your class that you think are potentially controversial, sensitive, or uncomfortable for students?

- Never
- Occasionally
- Frequently
- I don't teach classes (By selecting this answer, you will skip the questions regarding teaching practice)
- I don't know

*Skip To: Q33 If Faculty sometimes address topics that are potentially controversial, sensitive, or uncomfortable... = I don't teach classes (By selecting this answer, you will skip the questions regarding teaching practice)*

**Q25 Please indicate (Yes or No) which of the following topics you have discussed in class. If you choose Yes on a topic, indicate how often the topic evokes strong emotional responses from some of your students. You also have the option to add up to four additional topics that you discussed in class that may be considered controversial, sensitive, or uncomfortable for some students.**

	Topic discussed in your class?	If YES - Does the topic evoke strong emotions for your students?			
		Never	Occasionally	Frequently	Don't know
	Check all that apply				
Gender					
Politics					
Race					
Religion					
Science					
Sexuality					
Social Class					
Violence					
Other topics. Please describe using a few key words:					

-----

**Q26 Indicate the frequency with which you have experienced the following situation during your interactions with students in the last 12 months.**

	0	1	2-3	4-5	6+	Not applicable	I don't know
<b>In order to avoid making a student upset or angry I... "toned down" my usual approach to teaching or discussing a topic.</b>							
chose to omit a topic from my course content.							
stopped an otherwise productive discussion in class.							

**Q27 2.**

	0	1	2-3	4-5	6+	Not applicable	I don't know
<b>In my classroom or lab... the behavior of a student made me afraid for my safety.</b>							
the behavior of a student made me afraid for the safety of other students.							
it occurred to me that an emotional or upset student might be armed with a gun.							
I knew for a fact that one or more of my students was armed with a gun.							

Q30	0	1	2-3	4-5	6+	Not applicable	I don't know
<b>I was <u>explicitly</u> threatened with violence by one of my students because of... a viewpoint I expressed in my class.</b>							
a grade he/she earned in my class.							
some other reason.							
<b>Although I was not explicitly threatened with violence, one of my students behaved in a way that I found threatening because of... a viewpoint I expressed in class.</b>							
a grade he/she earned in my class.							
some other reason.							

Q31 Background: On June 1, 2015, Texas Governor Greg Abbott signed S.B. 11, also known as the "campus carry" law. S.B. 11 provides that license holders may carry a concealed handgun throughout public university campuses, starting August 1, 2016.

**Please indicate (Yes or No) if you have experienced the following situations. If you choose Yes, indicate the extent to which you think the situation described was related to the implementation of the "campus carry" law on your campus.**

	Experienced in the past 12 months?		If YES - was the advice/requirement directly related to the upcoming implementation of the "campus carry" law on your campus?				
	YES	NO	Definitely Yes	Most likely yes	Not sure	Most likely not	Definitely not
<b>I was encouraged/advised to avoid controversial or emotionally charged topics in class by...</b> a colleague							
departmental leadership							
a university administrator							
someone else. Please specify.							
<b>I was <u>required</u> to avoid controversial or emotionally charged topics in class by...</b> departmental leadership							
a university administrator							
someone else. Please specify.							

	Definitely yes	Most likely yes	Not sure	Most likely not	Definitely not	Not applicable
<b>Q32 This section of the survey is focused on your personal attitudes and opinions about how “campus carry” may or may not impact your behavior as a faculty member in the future. Indicate the extent to which you agree or disagree with the following statements.</b>						
<b>If licensed students are allowed to carry guns in the classroom once the "campus carry" is implemented...</b> my approach to teaching controversial or emotionally charged topics will remain the same.						
my ability to effectively teach controversial or emotionally charged topics will be negatively impacted.						
I expect to "tone down" my usual approach to teaching controversial or sensitive topics.						
I expect to omit some topic(s) from my course content .						

	Strongly agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
I support the right of license holders to carry concealed weapons on college campuses.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Laws that allow license holders to carry concealed handguns throughout campus will make the university safer.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Laws that allow license holders to carry concealed handguns throughout campus will make the university less safe.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Laws that allow individuals to lawfully carry concealed handguns throughout campus will have a negative impact on the free and robust exchange of ideas at my university.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

Q34 Please leave any comments you have about the survey or the issues raised in this survey.

---



---



Appendix C  
Participant Demographics

Variable		Number	Percent
Sex	Male	148	56.7
	Female	113	43.3
Racial Group	White/Caucasian	209	80.7
	Asian	22	8.4
	Underrepresented <i>American Indian, Black/African American, Native Hawaiian, Hispanic/Latino</i>	30	11.5
Discipline	Science/engineering	51	19.5
	Education/social science	36	13.8
	Health/social work	50	19.2
	Liberal arts/humanities/fine arts	75	28.7
	Architecture/public affairs	16	6.1
	Business	31	11.9

Appendix D  
Variables and Constructs

Variables	Coding	Survey items
Intention to use same teaching practices (4 items, 3 reverse coding; alpha=.933)	Ordinal scale (1-5)	<p><i>If licensed students are allowed to carry guns in the classroom once the "campus carry" is implemented:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>-My approach to teaching controversial or emotionally charged topics will remain the same</li> <li>-I DO NOT expect to omit some topic(s) from my course content</li> <li>-My ability to effectively teach controversial or emotionally charged topics will NOT be negatively impacted</li> <li>-I DO NOT expect to "tone down" my usual approach to teaching controversial or sensitive topics</li> </ul>
Pro-gun beliefs (4 items, 2 reversed coding; alpha=.85)	Ordinal scale (1-5)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>-I support the right of license holders to carry concealed weapons on college campuses.</li> <li>-Laws that allow license holders to carry concealed handguns throughout campus will make the university safe</li> <li>-Laws that allow license holders to carry concealed handguns throughout campus will NOT make the university less safe</li> <li>-Laws that allow individuals to lawfully carry concealed handguns throughout campus will NOT have a negative impact on the free and robust exchange of ideas at my university</li> </ul>
Has experienced feeling unsafe/threatened in classroom	2-category variable (Never / At least once)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>-In my classroom or lab, the behavior of a student made me afraid for my safety</li> <li>-The behavior of a student made me afraid for the safety of other students.</li> <li>-It occurred to me that an emotional or upset student might be armed with a gun.</li> <li>-I knew for a fact that one or more of my students was armed with a gun.</li> <li>-Although I was not explicitly threatened with violence, one of my students behaved in a way that I found threatening because of: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>-a viewpoint I expressed in class.</li> <li>-a grade he/she earned in my class.</li> <li>-some other reason.</li> </ul> </li> <li>-I was explicitly threatened with violence by one of my students because of: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>-a viewpoint I expressed in class.</li> <li>-a grade he/she earned in my class.</li> <li>-some other reason.</li> </ul> </li> </ul>
Gender	2-category variable	With which gender do you identify? Male/Female

---

Race/ethnicity	3-category variable	With which race/ethnicity do you identify? Asian, non-Hispanics Underrepresented minority (aggregated groups) White, non-Hispanics
Age	4-category variable	Please indicate your age range: 25-44 45-54 55-64 65+
Rank/tenure	5-category variable	Professor, tenured Associate professor, tenured/track Assistant professor, tenure track Lecturer/instructor Non-tenure ranked faculty & Other
Discipline	6-category variable	Science & Engineering Education & Social science Health & Social work Liberal Arts/Humanities & Fine arts Architecture & Public affairs Business
Has administrative position	2-category variable (Yes/No)	In which activities do you engage in your current position at your institution? -Administration
Teaching undergraduate courses	2-category variable (Yes/No)	In the past 12 months, what types of courses/labs have you taught? -Undergraduate credit courses
Teaching graduate courses	2-category variable (Yes/No)	In the past 12 months, what types of courses/labs have you taught? -Graduate credit courses
Teaching sensitive topics – Politics –Sexuality –Race –Social Class –Religion –Violence –Gender –Science	2-category variables (Yes/No)	Faculty sometimes address topics that are potentially controversial, sensitive, or uncomfortable. Please indicate (Yes or No) which of the following topics you have discussed in class.

---

Appendix E  
Interview Protocol

How is “campus carry” as a concept, policy, and process perceived and experienced by faculty at a large public institution in Texas? How do the lived experiences of faculty members at a campus carry institution impact their professional identity as professionals in higher education?

### **Interview Protocol: Faculty Perceptions about Campus Carry**

#### **Personal background**

1. What motivated you to want to become a faculty member?
2. How would you describe your teaching style and the kind of atmosphere you like to establish in a classroom? Give an example.

#### **Experience regarding campus carry policy**

3. How did you first hear about campus carry?
  - a. What was your initial reaction?
  - b. What action related to campus carry at that time, if any? For example: Did you attend any “town hall” meetings on campus carry?
4. What was your impression of how the policy was received at UTA?
  - a. Were people talking about it in the department? What are your impressions of their views about the policy?
    - b. What were students saying about the policy, if anything?

5. Are your feelings the same now as they were when you first heard about the policy? Please explain.

**Policy impact on behavior**

What, if any, impact has campus carry had on your behavior? Have you changed your day-to-day routine, if at all? Can you give examples?

For example, has campus carry changed the way you develop your courses, teach, grade, interact with students/colleagues, office hours? Please explain.

**Policy impact on professional identity**

Has UTA being a campus carry institution changed the way you think or feel about working here or your position at the university? Please explain your answer. Has/have your role/responsibilities changed as a result of campus carry, if at all. Please explain.

**Other**

Do you have any general comments about being a faculty member, campus carry, or anything else that we may not have discussed that you would like to add?



## Biographical Information

Joslyn Krismer is a native Texan, born and raised in Perryton, TX. She graduated with a bachelor's degree in journalism and a master's degree in higher education leadership and policy from Oklahoma State University, and she currently serves as the Director of Academic Operations in the Provost's office at The University of Texas at Arlington. She lives in Mansfield, TX with her husband Jeff, and their two children, Vanessa and Evan.