



# TACIR INSIGHT

TENNESSEE ADVISORY COMMISSION ON INTERGOVERNMENTAL RELATIONS

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## ENHANCING SAFETY AND SECURITY AT COLLEGES AND UNIVERSITIES IN TENNESSEE

### Background

Being informed and aware of potential safety risks on campus is an essential part of college preparation. When lawmakers in the 112th General Assembly observed that some colleges and universities direct students to call campus police or security departments for emergencies instead of 911, there was concern that at some schools in Tennessee those calls aren't recorded, which legislators worried could hinder investigations or lead to underreporting of incidents. In response to these concerns, TACIR has published its report on the routing and storage of emergency communications on the campuses of colleges and universities in Tennessee, as directed by Senate Bill 2827 by Senator Hensley and House Bill 2729 by Representative Ogles.

### Findings and Recommendations

Although the Commission found no evidence of higher crime rates or other public safety issues at colleges and universities that don't record calls to campus police or security, recordings of those calls could be valuable. And while federal and state laws require colleges and universities to report statistics and other information about crime and safety on campus, research shows these statistics only capture a small portion of criminal activity. For these reasons, TACIR recommends that

- the state encourage colleges and universities to record and retain recordings of calls reporting crimes and conduct violations to campus police and security departments by providing additional funding to help postsecondary institutions obtain or improve emergency call recording systems;
- the General Assembly require colleges and universities in Tennessee to publish to their websites annual statistics for complaints of sexual misconduct and assault reported to their campus Title IX authorities; and
- the Tennessee Bureau of Investigation develop a process to include statistics for crimes reported within one half mile of each college or university campus—a generally accepted walking distance—in its annual *Crime on Campus* reports, and that colleges and universities publish to their websites the statistics for their institutions from this report, which they are already required to make available upon request.

See TACIR's full report at the following link for additional information:

<https://www.tn.gov/tacir/tacirpublications/publications-by-date.html>.