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Economics of Crime  
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Project #1

In *The Reality of Crime on Campus*, Todd S. Purdum (1988) explores the increasing awareness of crime on college campuses, challenging the traditional view of universities as a safe space. The article highlights incidents of violent crimes, including sexual assaults, murders, as well as racial brawls, which have forced institutions across the United States to reevaluate their security policies and student conduct policies. Purdum notes that while crime statistics on campuses remain incomplete due to inconsistent reporting and reluctance to disclose criminal data, evidence suggests an increase in both physical and sexual violence. Many universities fear that openly sharing crime rates could damage their reputations, leading some to underreport incidents. As Dr. Bernice Sandler notes, “ ‘Schools don't like to air their dirty linen in public,’” showcasing universities tendencies to downplay or mis report violent crimes for fear of developing a negative public image (Purdum, 1988). While FBI reports claim that violent crime on campuses remained relatively stable from 1980 to 1986, surveys suggest that many incidents, especially sexual assault, go unreported.

Purdum categorizes campus crime into two main types: crimes committed by outsiders and crimes committed by students against one another. Crimes committed by outsiders including thefts, assaults, and sexual offenses occur predominately on urban campuses. The latter is more complex and often linked to alcohol abuse as well as fraternity culture. Studies indicate that alcohol plays a major role in sexual assaults, with some universities reporting that nearly all reported cases involve intoxication. William Schafer, director of student conduct at the University of Colorado, estimates that “100 percent of our sexual-assault cases are alcohol-

related” (Purdum, 1988). In response, some institutions have increased security, implemented awareness programs, and revised policies regarding student behavior and alcohol consumption.

Ultimately, Purdum argues that college campuses, once seen as academic safe havens, must confront the harsh reality that they are not immune to the dangers of society.

Building upon this analysis, the article *How Prevalent Is Campus Sexual Assault in the United States?* by Fedina, Holmes, and Backes (2016) delves deeper into the scope of campus sexual victimization. The study finds that while estimates vary wildly due to differences in definitions and methodologies, all reviewed studies conclude that a significant amount of college students face sexual victimization. The most common forms of sexual victimization reported include unwanted sexual contact and sexual coercion, then followed by incapacitated rape and attempted or completed forcible rape (Fedina et al., 2016). Factors influencing prevalence rates include gender, demographic background, and grade level. Higher risk students include underclassmen, racial and ethnic minorities, and students with disabilities. Furthermore, the study highlights that most of the research on campus sexual assault focuses primarily on heterosexual white women attending a four-year college, which leaves gaps in understanding victimization among other population groups. The authors emphasize the need for standardized definitions and measurement techniques in future research. Additionally, they advocate for campus-specific prevention strategies, especially targeting the dynamics of coercion and alcohol-facilitated assault.

### **Analysis of National Campus Crime Trends**

From 2018 to 2021, the national trend for campus crime per 100,000 full time students reveal several significant key shifts and trends. Burglary rate continued their long-term decline, dropping from approximately 66 incidents per 100,000 students in 2018 to 47 incidents per

100,000 students by 2021. In contrast, forcible sex offenses showed a fairly consistent trend from 2018 to 2021, decreasing from approximately 85 incidents per 100,000 in 2018 students to 75 incidents per 100,000 students in 2021. The overall campus crime rate remained relatively stable going from 197 incidents per 100,000 students in 2018 to 169 incidents per 100,000 students in 2021.

When comparing these crimes to the top 5 South Carolina universities, notable similarities differences emerge. From 2018 to 2021, the national average burglary rate was 57.75 incidents per 100,000 students. Greenville Technical College (2.30 incidents per 100,000 students) and Clemson (2.69 incidents per 100,000 students) report burglary rates far below that of the national average. This may indicate that these campus benefit from strong security measures, smaller student population base making more manageable or less urban exposure as discussed in *In The Reality of Crime on Campus* (Purdum, 1988). In contrast, South Carolina (33.98 per 100,000) and Coastal Carolina (32.86 per 100,000) report burglary rates that are significantly lower than the national average but remain notably higher than those of smaller or suburban campuses like Greenville Technical and Clemson. These rates suggest that regional or campus-specific factors, such as urban environments or a higher density of valuable student property, may contribute to elevated burglary incidents (Purdum, 1988).

The assault tree visualization highlights the significant disparities in aggravated assault rates among South Carolina universities. Coastal Carolina reports the highest rate at 17.18 per 100,000 students, nearly three times higher than Charleston (5.62) and significantly above South Carolina (3.97). In contrast, Greenville Technical (1.24) and Clemson (0.63) exhibit much lower rates, suggesting more effective safety measures or less exposure to violent incidents. Coastal Carolina's elevated rate likely reflects challenges such as regional crime or campus size while

Charleston's more moderate rate points to similar, though less severe, issues. The low rates at Clemson and Greenville Technical may result from smaller campus sizes, stronger preventative measures, or safer surrounding communities.

The national trend line for forcible sex offenses per 100,000 students remained relatively stable from 2018 to 2021, averaging 80 incidents per 100,000 students. In contrast, Coastal Carolina's trend line shows a sharp downward trajectory during the same period. In 2018, the university reported approximately 200 incidents per 100,000 students, far exceeding the national average. However, instead of remaining stable like the national trend, Coastal Carolina's rate dropped significantly each year, falling below 60 incidents per 100,000 students by 2022. This steep decline suggests that Coastal Carolina implemented effective interventions, such as improved prevention programs, policy reforms, or heightened security measures, leading to a measurable reduction in reported cases. Charleston (102 per 100,000 - 2018-2022), however, experienced an upward trend, surpassing all other major South Carolina universities after 2020, indicating a growing issue that may require stronger prevention efforts. South Carolina (45 per 100,000 - 2018-2022) maintained a relatively steady trend, closely mirroring the general trend of the national averages, suggesting that its safety measures have had neither a strong positive nor negative impact on reported incidents. Clemson (of 30 per 100,000 students 2018-2022) and Greenville Technical College (15 per 100,000 2018-2022) reported consistently lower rates of sexual misconduct, with little fluctuation over time. Their stable trend lines suggest that fewer incidents occur which may be a result of their suburban status (Purdum, 1988).

Increasing the severity of punishments for campus crimes could serve as a powerful deterrent, reducing incident rates by increasing the perceived consequences of criminal behavior. These methods may not be effective assuming that a good portion of violent crimes on campus

are alcohol related. However, stricter disciplinary actions, such as mandatory expulsions for violent offenses and harsher legal consequences for sexual misconduct could discourage potential offenders.

## Works Cited

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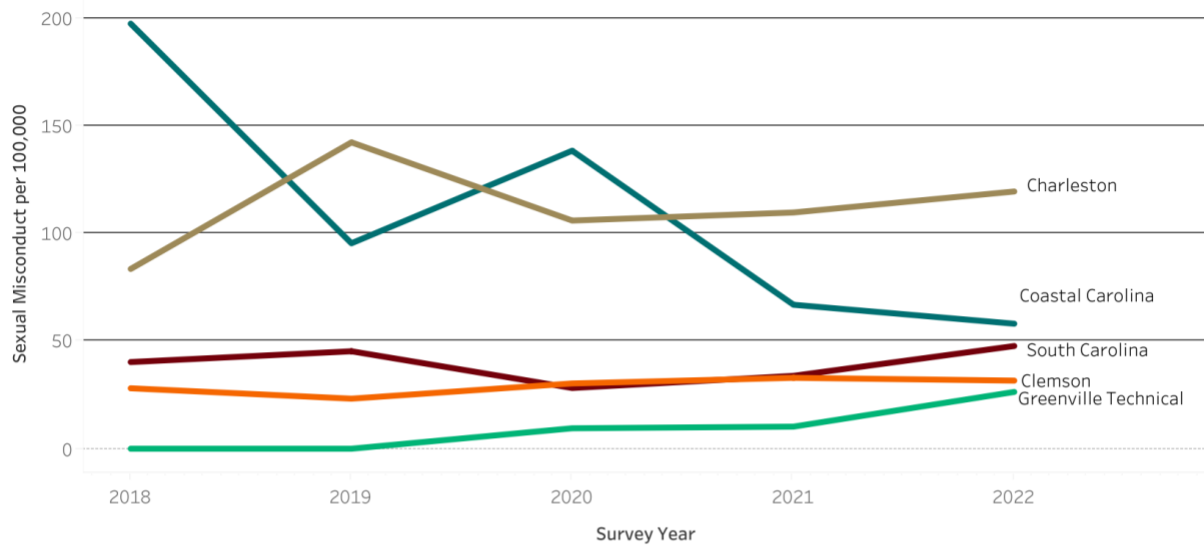
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## Campus Crime Across Major South Carolina Universities

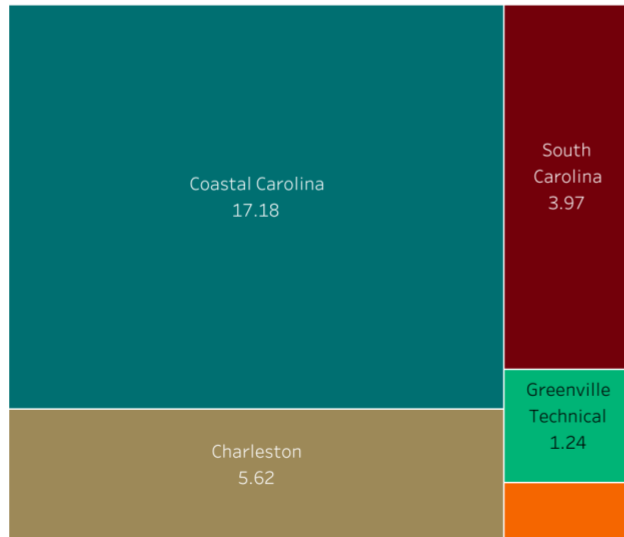
This dashboard analyzes crime trends at the five largest universities in South Carolina, focusing on three key offenses: sexual misconduct, aggravated assault, and burglary. By normalizing the data per 100,000 students, we ensure fair comparisons across institutions with varying enrollment sizes.

### Sexual Misconduct Trends



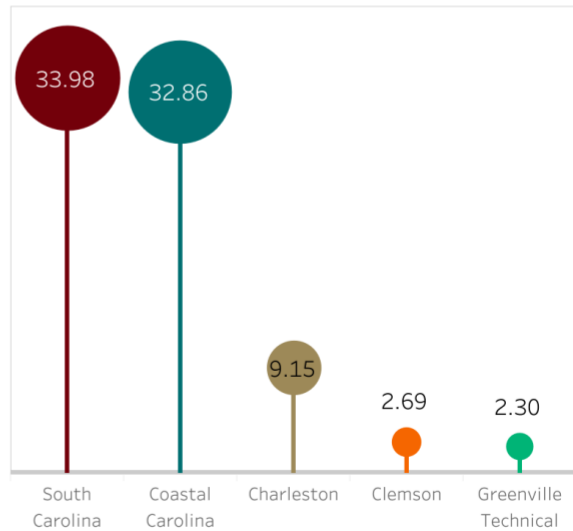
The reported incidents of rape, fondling, incest, and statutory rape over the past five years, highlighting any increases or decreases across campuses.

### Average Aggravated Assault Rate per 100,000 Students



Shows the average rate of aggravated assaults per 100,000 students at each university, making it easy to identify which campuses experience the highest levels of violent crime. Orange (Clemson 0.67), Green is (Greenville Technica..

### Average Burglary Rate per 100,000 Students



Visualizes burglary rates on campus, emphasizing the vulnerability of student housing and predictable schedules that may contribute to property crimes.

This project utilizes crime data from the Campus Safety and Security Program (U.S. Department of Education). All crime statistics are normalized per 100,000 students to account for differences in university enrollment sizes.