

MVPL : Research on Husky Night Safety Interview

–Valerie Remaker–

Project Description

University District isn't known to be the safest of neighborhoods. The Safeway northwest of campus is 'fondly' called Sketchway by students; this brings up the question of how safe it is to walk around campus at night. Students are concerned with feeling safe and secure when they are walking around their school and/or their own neighborhood around dusk and night. We want to tackle the area of how to help students feel safe and comfortable walking near UW's campus during dusk or night. We are focusing on both male and female students who are out near UW at night at least 4 times a month. We are looking at all races, backgrounds, and years of college. We will also be accounting for if the student is traveling alone or in a group.

User Insights

- 1) Physical appearance has an impact on how safe people feel when they are traveling around University District at night.
- 2) When walking around alone it feels safer when there are no strangers around you.
- 3) It feels more comfortable and secure to walk around in groups especially in areas that have been identified as less "safe" by interviewee
- 4) Seeing a UW alert about suspicious night time activity will generally dissuade students from going outside at night.
- 5) People tend to avoid places above 50th and towards i5 (especially when walking alone) because that is where there is more crime and the homeless people tend to hang out.

Interview Questions

1. How often do you find yourself walking around/on campus outside when it's dark?
 - a. Why are you out walking?
 - b. Where do you walk?
 - i. Do you avoid certain places? If so, Why?
 - c. Do you walk by yourself or in groups?
 - i. What affects your decision?
 - d. Tell me about a time you had to walk at night?
 - e. How do you feel walking when it's dark
2. What factors affect your night walking schedule? ** dumb question no one liked it**
 - a. Do safety concerns prevent you from doing things that you want to do?
3. How do you feel as a (gender) walking at night?

- a. Why do you feel this way?
4. Have you been in/heard of dangerous situations near campus?
 - a. Tell me about that dangerous situation
 - b. How does that change the way you walk about at night?
 - c. Why do you think walking at night in the U-District is unsafe?
5. What methods are you currently using to stay safe when walking around in the dark?
 - a. Have you ever used night safety services here at UW?
 - b. Do UW alerts change your night walking?
6. What would help you feel better walking at night?
 - a. Is there anything you would like to add or ask?

Responses

–Interviewee was 20 years old and male–

Q: How often do you find yourself walking around/on campus outside when it's dark?

A: On campus, I walk around at night every other day. That ends up being around 4 times a week

Q: Why are you out walking at night?

A: My friends live all around campus, so I find myself commuting from the north side to the south side of campus to see friends.

Q: Where do you tend to walk at night?

A: Between the residence halls, through campus, Red Square, the Quad and by the HUB

Q: How often do you find yourself walking on the Ave?

A: 3 times a week. Usually for food. Sometimes I go to The Varsity Theater or Pink Gorilla.

Q: Do you avoid certain places when walking at night?

A: I avoid past 50th Ave or so and west towards the i5 area. North of 50th Ave is harder to avoid because there is stuff there. But if I am out in that area, I am always in a group of people?

Q: Why do you avoid these areas?

A: To my knowledge, that is the area of higher crime and a higher homeless population. I feel like I'm being self-incriminating because this reveals my own biases.

Q: Do you walk by yourself or in groups?

A: If I'm on the Ave, I'm in a group but when I'm going through Campus, I am usually by myself.

Q: What affects the decision to walk alone or in groups?

A: I walk in groups if we are headed in the same direction as other people. If not, I walk alone

Q: Tell me about a time you had to walk at night?

A: During my Freshman year, I used to go out a lot at night either to walk or to longboard around campus. Usually, it is pretty vacant, or there are a couple of stragglers. I tended to walk around the Hub area because it sounds nicer than the

rest of the places on campus. That or the Rainier Vista Area. I liked to sing into the night like a true a cappella boi. It was relaxing. I feel comfortable being out in the dark instead of in the sunlight. It helps me clear my head.

Q: How do you feel walking when it's dark?

A: Comfortable. If I know I am alone on campus at like midnight than I'm comfortable. On the Ave, there are always people so it is a lot more uncomfortable down in that direction.

Q: What factors affect when you go out walking at night?

A: I won't go for walks if I have homework or meetings. I am an RA and busy most of the time. Occasionally if I am overly stressed i will go on a walk to relax and to calm down.

Q: Do safety concerns prevent you from doing things that you want to do?

A: Like yes and no. I take safety stuff into consideration prior to making the decision to go out to begin with. I feel like I make those decisions in reverse order.

Q: How do you feel as a male walking around at night?

A: I recognize that as a male I don't have to worry as much about being the target of anyone. There's an innate safety that comes with being a male.

Q: Why do you feel this way?

A: As a 6'2 Mexican American with facial hair most of the time I feel like I intimidate a couple of people. I notice when people side-step away from me even though I am thinking the same thing about wanting to avoid them.

Q: Do you family members worry about you walking around at night?

A: I don't really talk to my family about that. I'm an open book, but my family doesn't ask so I tend to omit my night walking.

Q: Have you been in or heard of dangerous situations near campus?

A: I've heard about them but never been in any because I get UW alerts. I have though, been in a situation in South Seattle that I found unsafe and sketchy. I caught a bus going the wrong way, and a homeless man followed me off the bus and kept asking me questions. It was a "moood"

Q: Do you think there was anything that could have prevented this uncomfortable situation?

A: I could have gotten on the right bus. Or I could have paid attention to the other people on the bus. If I had been more observant than maybe I could have noticed the homeless man eyeing me and avoided the interaction.

Q: How does that experience change the way you walk around at night?

A: Not really on campus but elsewhere. I am always cautious and aware of the people around me. Looking for different things.

Q: Do you think walking around U-District is unsafe at night?

A: Enough of the UW alerts come out that it's a little unsafe.

Q: What methods are you currently using to stay safe when walking around in the dark?

A: because I am so used to walking with headphones in, I look around even more at night. Occasionally, I check behind me and even take my headphones off for a second to listen to the things around me.

Q: Have you ever used night safety services here at UW?

A: No

Q: Do UW alerts change your night walking?

A: They do. Especially being in Lander next to the ave where most of the stuff happens. I either stay in the buildings or take a bus instead to get where I am going. Residence have back to the building who have passed incidents that have been reported on UW alerts.

Q: How did you observe the residence feeling after passing said incidents?

A: They seemed scared but not like frightened to the bone. Calm but visually scared.

Q: What would help you feel better walking at night?

A: Walking around with a group. If I used night walk that would be a good thing to use and stay safe. The area U-District itself is really what makes me feel uncomfortable. IT comes down to why is there crime and how can we reduce it. It's legal and not really student based.

Q: Is there anything else you would like to add or ask?

A: No