

Fact Sheet

Violent and Property Crime Rates on the LSU Campus: Trends from 2002-2015

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INTRODUCTION

This fact sheet describes the trends in violent and property crime rates on and near the Louisiana State University campus in Baton Rouge, Louisiana. The data was obtained from LSU Police Department (LSUPD) and includes records of all crime incidents reported to LSUPD between June 2002 and May 2015.

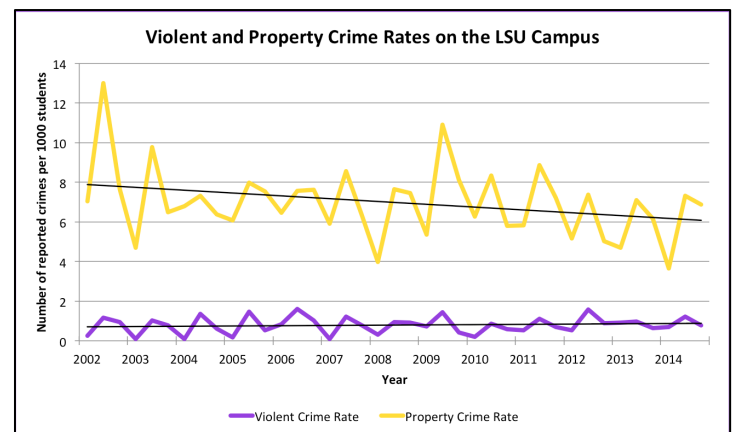
KEY FINDINGS

- Crime on and near campus fluctuates heavily depending on the time of year. Crime rates are highest during the fall semester and lowest in summer.
- Property crime rates are far higher than violent crime rates.
- Despite large fluctuations, the average property crime rate declined between 2002 and 2015, while the average violent crime rate slightly increased.
- Theft is the most frequent property crime.
- Assault is the most frequent violent crime.

TRENDS OVER TIME

The violent crime data represent total counts of incidents involving assaults, homicides, rapes and robberies.

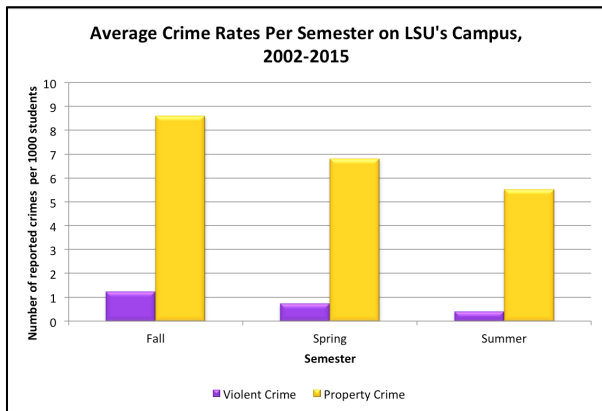
The property crime data represent total counts of incidents involving burglaries, motor vehicle thefts, larcenies/thefts, and arson.



As shown in the line graph above, both property crime and violent crime rates varied annually and by semester. Property crime rates ranged from 3.65 reports (per 1,000 students) to 13.01, while violent crime rates ranged from 0.09 reports (per 1,000 students) to 1.60. The data also indicate that the average property crime rate decreased between 2002 and 2015, while the average

violent crime rate slightly increased. (The slight increase in violent crime is difficult to discern when looking at the line graph above because the violent crime rate is already so low compared to the property crime rate.)

FLUCTUATIONS BY SEMESTER



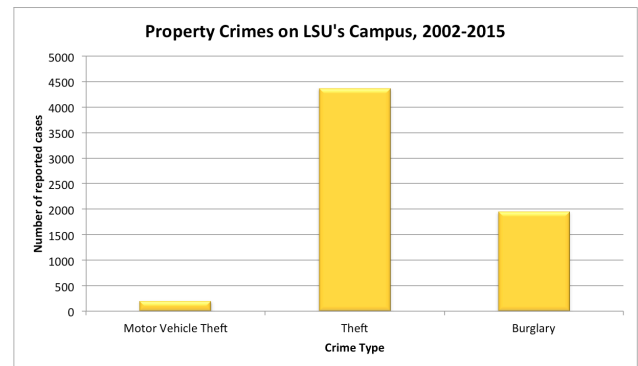
Fall semester crime rates are the highest. In the fall, there is an average of 1.23 violent crime reports (per 1,000 students) and an average of 8.60 property crime reports.

Spring semester crime rates are the second highest. In the spring, there is an average of 0.74 violent crime reports (per 1,000 students) and an average of 6.82 property crime reports.

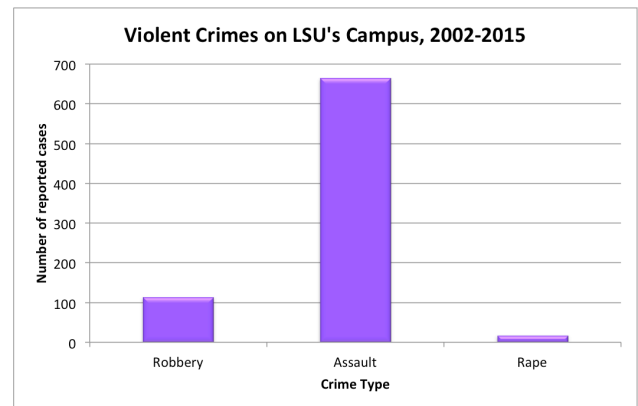
Summer semester crime rates are the lowest. In the summer, there is an average of 0.42 violent crime reports (per 1,000 students) and an average of 5.54 property crime reports.

While we are not able to fully examine the causes for the increased rates of crime during fall semesters, there are two possible explanations. First, student enrollment numbers tend to be higher in fall semester. Second, in the fall there are large tailgating events during home football games, which contributes to greater numbers of individuals on LSU's campus. Both of these explanations mean that as more individuals are on LSU's campus, the numbers of motivated offenders and suitable targets that are present greatly increase the probability that a crime will occur.

MOST COMMON CRIME TYPES



Theft is by far the most frequently reported type of property crime. Between 2002 and 2015, there were 4,369 reported incidents of theft. In the same time period, there were 1,951 reported incidents of burglary, 201 reported incidents of motor vehicle theft, and 16 reported incidents of arson. Arson is excluded from this graph because it is so infrequent.



Assault is the most frequently reported violent crime. Between 2002 and 2015, there were 665 reported incidents of assault. During the same time period, there were 114 reported incidents of robbery, 18 reported incidents of rape, and only 1 reported incident of criminal homicide. Homicide is excluded from this graph because it is so infrequent.

The statistics on rape should be interpreted with caution as it is widely recognized that a substantial proportion of incidents involving rape are not reported to law enforcement.

DEFINITIONS OF CRIME

The **assault** category contains all police reports involving simple or aggravated assault, simple or aggravated battery, fights, domestic violence, and sexual battery.

The **rape** category contains all police reports involving simple rape, aggravated rape, and forcible rape.

The **robbery** category contains all police reports involving simple or armed robbery, attempted robbery, carjacking, and first-degree robbery.

The **burglary** category contains any police report which involves the burglary of a dwelling, business, automobile, or public building. It also includes unauthorized entries of inhabited dwellings or buildings, which LSUPD classified as an attempted burglary.

The **theft** category contains all police reports involving misdemeanor or felony theft, pickpocketing, theft from a building or the exterior or a car, theft by fraud, purse snatching, or theft of one's belongings in a public area such as Middleton library.

Separate from other theft, **motor vehicle theft** only includes police reports of theft of an automobile.

The **arson** category includes police reports of simple and aggravated arson.

Crime rates were calculated three times per year, during the fall, spring, and summer semesters. Student enrollment numbers for those semesters were obtained from the LSU Office of Budget and Planning website at <http://www.bgtplan.lsu.edu/>.

CAPER is an interdisciplinary group of scholars who examine issues related to crime, law, and public policy at Louisiana State University. The research presented in this fact sheet was conducted by the authors. The views expressed here are solely those of the authors, and do not represent the views of other CAPER members, or Louisiana State University. Visit CAPER on the web at <http://lsucaper.weebly.com/>.

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