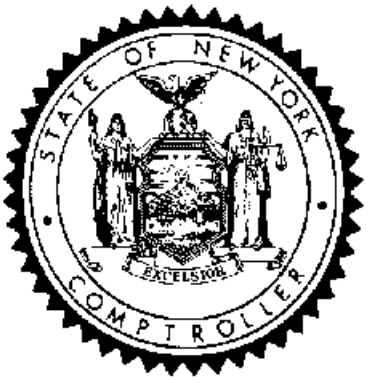
State of New York
Office of the State Comptroller
Division of Management Audit

STATE UNIVERSITY OF NEW YORK

CONTROLS OVER PUBLIC SAFETY STAFFING AT SELECTED CAMPUSES

REPORT 96-S-61



H. Carl McCall

Comptroller

State of New York
Office of the State Comptroller

Division of Management Audit

Report 96-S-61

Dr. John W. Ryan
Chancellor
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Albany, NY 12246

Dear Dr. Ryan:

The following is our report on controls over public safety staffing at selected State University of New York campuses.

This audit was performed pursuant to the State Comptroller's authority as set forth in Section 1, Article V of the State Constitution and Section 8, Article 2 of the State Finance Law. Major contributors to this report are listed in Appendix A.

Office of the State Comptroller
Division of Management Audit

September 24, 1997

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Executive Summary

State University Of New York
Controls Over Public Safety Staffing At Selected Campuses

Scope of Audit

There are 29 State-operated campuses within the State University of New York's (SUNY) system of higher education. Each campus maintains a Public Safety Office to provide a safe and secure campus environment. Officials at individual campuses have the authority to decide the size and composition of public safety staffing according to locally determined need. The public safety staff at all but one of the campuses are State employees. The most common title among campus public safety staff is that of Public Safety Officer (PSO-2); other positions include Supervising Officers, Security Services Assistants, Investigators and administrative officials. SUNY employs over 650 public safety staff. During calendar year 1996, the total payroll cost for public safety staff was about $22 million. Overtime pay accounted for $2.3 million, or nearly 11 percent of this amount.

Our audit addressed the following questions about SUNY's controls over public safety staffing for the period January 1, 1994 through December 31, 1996:

- Do officials at SUNY campuses maintain controls over public safety staffing to ensure that staffing provides the level and type of service they believe is required?

- Are campus controls adequate to ensure that overtime cost is minimized?

Audit Observations and Conclusions

We examined controls and practices for public safety staffing at five campuses (the Health Science Center at Brooklyn, the University Center at Stony Brook, the University Center at Buffalo, the College at Buffalo and the College at Purchase). Our audit concluded that the campuses have implemented certain important controls for ensuring that overtime costs for public safety are minimized. For example, campuses have established controls to reduce attendance abuses, such as misuse of sick leave credits, which can cause additional over time. However, we also concluded that campuses lacked documentation needed to assure that the necessary public safety coverage was provided.

When we analyzed public safety overtime expense for SUNY, we found that the SUNY system average for such expense for the calendar years 1994 through 1996 was 11 percent of total public safety payroll. Overtime expense was the highest at Brooklyn, where it represented 23 percent ($748,000) of the campus' calendar year 1995 public safety payroll of $3.2 million. Brooklyn's overtime expense is more than twice the system average, and represents more than 30 percent of all public safety overtime used in the SUNY system. A total of 53 Brooklyn public safety staff each earned more than $5,000 in overtime in 1995; two supervisors earned nearly 100 percent of their salary in overtime, and another supervisor's overtime pay more than doubled his salary. To avoid incurring excessive overtime cost to pay for ordinary security coverage, we recommended that Brooklyn, and other campuses with high overtime cost, consider using alternatives such as part-time or contract employees to supplement their staffing needs. For example, Brooklyn currently pays $9.52 an hour for a private security guard at an offsite location. However, it cost Brooklyn over $15 an hour to provide overtime coverage using Security Services Assistants. (See pp. 9-11)

Our audit also found that some campuses assigned professional staff in PSO-2 titles to duties, such as providing dispatch services and issuing parking permits, that could be performed by lower cost staff. This practice may contribute to higher than necessary payroll cost. We recommended that campuses, wherever practicable, assign these jobs to non-professional staff. (See p. 13)

Comments of SUNY Officials

SUNY officials from the campuses and from System Administration generally agree with our recommendations. Officials at the Health Science Center at Brooklyn did not agree with several of our observations and conclusions.

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Introduction

Background

The State University of New York (SUNY) is one of the largest higher education systems in the nation. Its teaching, public service and research mission is conducted by 29 State-operated campuses and 5 statutory colleges. Each of the statutory colleges is operated under a contract with a private university. A 16-member board sets SUNY policy, and a System Administration Unit (System Administration) provides direction and leadership for the SUNY system.

Each SUNY campus maintains a Public Safety Office to ensure a safe and secure environment which can help to further the academic goals of the campus. In addition, SUNY believes that the public safety function contributes to the overall campus by providing some peace of mind to students, faculty, employees and visitors.

Each campus has the authority to determine the size and composition of its public safety staff according to locally determined need. In general, the public safety office at each campus is staffed by Public Safety Officers, Supervising Officers, Security Services Assistants (SSAs) and Investigators, and is administered by a Director and, at some campuses, by an Assistant Director(s). The most common title among campus public safety staff is that of the Public Safety Officer II (PSO-2). Trained at the State Police Academy, PSO-2 staff are sworn peace officers, and generally assume the patrol duties at the campuses. The size of the staff at each campus is also dependent on the duties assigned to the Public Safety Office. For example, Public Safety Officers monitor campus parking on some campuses, but not at others.

HSCB Response to Audit: Health Science Center at Brooklyn (HSCB) officials pointed out that PSO-2 positions at their campus accounted for 12.6 percent of public safety staff, while lower-cost SSA positions accounted for 75.7 percent of staff.

SUNY employs over 650 public safety staff. During calendar year 1996, the total payroll for public safety staff exceeded $22 million, of which overtime pay accounted for $2.3 million (nearly 11 percent). Public safety payrolls in the same year ranged from a high of $3.2 million at the Health Science Center at Brooklyn to a low of $151,000 at the School of Optometry. According to payroll information from the Office of the State Comptroller, payroll and overtime amounts appear to be consistent for calendar years 1994, 1995 and 1996.

All campuses use State employees to provide public safety services except for the Health Science Center at Syracuse (Syracuse), which spends $1.5 million annually to contract for the services of about 46 public safety staff. Only the Director and Assistant Director at Syracuse are State employees.

Audit Scope, Objectives and Methodology

We audited controls and practices associated with public safety staffing and the use of overtime for the period January 1, 1994 through December 31, 1996. The objectives of our audit were to determine whether controls over public safety staffing are adequate to ensure that staffing is appropriate to meet the level and type of service campuses believe is required, and that overtime costs are minimized to the extent practical. To accomplish our objectives, we reviewed and compared payroll costs for all SUNY campuses during calendar years 1994, 1995 and 1996. In addition, we visited public safety offices at five campuses: the Health Science Center at Brooklyn (HSCB), the University Centers at Stony Brook and Buffalo, and the Colleges at Purchase and Buffalo. At each campus, we reviewed control procedures, examined personnel records and tested relevant transactions and records. We interviewed management staff at the five campuses and spoke to officials at SUNY System Administration. We also interviewed officials at two private colleges in the Albany area to compare their public safety costs, practices and staffing levels to those of SUNY campuses.

We conducted our audit in accordance with generally accepted government auditing standards. Such standards require that we plan and perform our audit to adequately assess those operations which are included within our audit scope. Further, these standards require that we understand the applicable internal control structure and compliance with those laws, rules and regulations that are relevant to our audit scope. An audit includes examining, on a test basis, evidence supporting transactions recorded in the accounting and operating records and applying such other auditing procedures as we consider necessary in the circumstances. An audit also includes assessing the estimates, judgments and decisions made by management. We believe our audit provides a reasonable basis for our findings, conclusions and recommendations.

We use a risk-based approach to select activities to be audited. This approach focuses our audit efforts on those operations that have been identified through a preliminary survey as having the greatest probability for needing improvement. Consequently, by design, finite audit resources are used to identify where and how improvements can be made. Thus, little audit effort is devoted to reviewing operations that may be relatively efficient and effective. As a result, our audit reports are prepared on an "exception basis." This report, therefore, highlights those areas needing improvement and does not address activities that may be functioning properly.

Response of SUNY Officials to Audit

A draft copy of this report was provided to SUNY officials for their review and comment. Their comments have been considered in preparing this report and are included as Appendix B.

Within 90 days after the final release of this report, as required by Section 170 of the Executive Law, the Chancellor of the State University of New York shall report to the Governor, the State Comptroller and the leaders of the Legislature and fiscal committees, advising what steps were taken to implement the recommendations contained herein, and where recommendations were not implemented, the reasons therefor.

Planning for Public Safety Staffing

The size and the composition of a public security staff at a SUNY campus should be determined by a written plan documenting how campus needs are being met with appropriate personnel. Such a plan helps to assure campus management that it is providing needed security coverage at an appropriate cost. Moreover, the Internal Control Act of 1987 requires managers to document such critical decisions, both to help them control operations and to provide others with a means of analyzing campus operations. Written staffing plans can also be helpful to future managers who need to be aware of the underlying reasons for decisions. The number of posts and the mix of titles at the five campuses we visited are shown in the following chart which is based upon 1995 payroll data.

Campus	Patrol Officer	Supervising Officer	Investigator	SSA	Assistant Director
Stony Brook	36	9	4	27	4
HSCB	12	6	2	79	4
Purchase	13	3	0	0	1
Univ. Buffalo	39	8	4	4	2
Buffalo College	20	3	3	1	1

The campuses presented in the chart vary in nature, size and location. For example, the University Centers at Stony Brook and Buffalo have many students and cover large geographic areas. Other campuses such as Buffalo College and the HSCB are located in large cities. These unique factors impact on the security staffing needs of each campus. However, none of the administrators at the campuses we visited could provide us with written plans that documented that the staffing levels shown in the chart were the most appropriate for their campus. Therefore, we concluded that management at these campuses lacked the assurances intended from such written staffing plans.

SUNY System Administration Response to Audit: System Administration officials responded that they would review staffing plans with campuses during upcoming site visitations.

According to documentation provided by SUNY System Administration staff, there is no exact method to determine the optimum number of public safety staff necessary for any given campus. However, SUNY has adopted a staffing methodology using a formula developed by the International Association of Chiefs of Police. Campuses may use this to approximate the number of patrol officers (generally those in PSO-2 titles) needed on campus. The formula is based on the demands of the campus community. While the formula yields the number of patrol officer staff deemed necessary to meet campus needs, it does not indicate staffing levels for staff other than patrol officers, such as SSAs, Investigators, Supervising Officers and Assistant Directors. Furthermore, SUNY System Administration officials state that current staffing levels are apt to be the result of recommendations made by a consultant in the early 1970s and by budget decisions.

Nevertheless, using the formula, we found that at four of the five campuses we visited, the number of officers actually assigned to patrol staff was somewhat less than the formula required. At the fifth campus, HSCB, we found that patrol officer staffing was higher than the formula required. On a typical day, the HSCB assigned 26 total staff on the day shift, 22 on the evening shift and 16 on the night shift, plus supervisory staff. We asked HSCB officials why their campus needed so many public safety staff, since our review of comparative crime rates at campuses statewide indicated that HSCB had relatively few reported crimes. Campus officials told us that they need additional staff to deter crime and to restrict unauthorized access in a high crime neighborhood. They added that staffing decisions resulted from consultation with various groups that rely on public safety services. Again, without a documented staffing plan, management lacks needed assurances that the security staffing in place is appropriate.

HSCB Response to Audit: HSCB officials responded that they reject evaluating staffing levels against benchmarks because benchmarks do not factor in local conditions. They stated that the campus has a 24-hour, 7-day a week hospital and that it is difficult to protect an inner city health care facility that has multiple entrances. They stated that they must routinely deploy large numbers of public safety officers to create a visible sense of security so that persons with a negative perception of New York City, Brooklyn, and the 67th Precinct will continue to come to HSCB to study, work or receive medical care. Officials stated that the HSCB should not be compared with dissimilar facilities and that auditors were provided with documentation as to how HSCB determined minimum staffing.

Auditor Comments: We acknowledge that the HSCB has unique security requirements. However, as our report points out, materials provided to us did not document that established staffing levels were the most appropriate levels.

We assessed the effectiveness of HSCB public safety officials' efforts to achieve the security coverage they believe necessary with the staff they have available. To do this, we compared the total number of staff actually assigned to the various shifts with the minimum staff required per shift according to HSCB's schedule. We concluded that some shifts did not have enough staff assigned to meet the shift requirement. As a result, almost any absence, including a scheduled absence, required a replacement at the overtime rate to meet the stated security needs. The most obvious example of the gap between the actual staff and the desired staffing level is at the shift supervisor level. HSCB officials maintain that two supervisors are preferred on each shift, but there are only six supervisors on the payroll. Each of these supervisors would have to work seven days a week to meet HSCB's desired staffing levels; instead, they work significant amounts of overtime.

Officials at HSCB told us they have 16 vacant positions at the Parole Officer (PO) and SSA level. They stated that these vacancies are responsible, in part, for the apparent gap between the desired staffing level and actual staff assignments, and the resulting extensive use of overtime. Officials also noted that a recent hiring freeze and the cumbersome civil service system added to the difficulty of replacing staff.

Since HSCB does not appear to have enough employees to meet its stated needs for coverage, we believe campus officials should explore other means of meeting shift requirements. In the following section, we discuss the scope and impact of HSCB's overtime costs, and some alternative ways of both meeting public security needs and minimizing overtime costs.

Recommendation

1. SUNY System Administration should emphasize to campuses the need to have written public safety staffing plans documenting how campus needs are being met with appropriate personnel.

Controlling Overtime Cost

It is reasonable to expect that campuses incur some overtime expense for public safety staffing. The most common reasons cited by campuses for the use of overtime was the need to fill shift vacancies due to unexpected illness or other time off. Other reasons necessitating overtime use included vacations, special events on campus, staff training, investigations in progress and attendance at pre-shift briefings. We found that each of the campuses we visited had instituted adequate controls to reduce attendance abuses, such as abuse of sick leave credit, which contribute to the use and cost of overtime.

Overall, we found that overtime expense for public safety at 20 of the campuses was less than the SUNY system average of 11 percent of total public safety payroll. Overtime expense was the lowest at Stony Brook and Cortland, where it represented 3.3 percent of total public safety payroll at both campuses. At HSCB, we found that public safety overtime amounted to 23 percent of total public safety payroll costs; the highest percentage among the SUNY campuses. During calendar year 1995, HSCB had about $748,000 in public safety overtime cost out of a total public safety payroll of $3.2 million. We found that six supervisors at HSCB earned $146,500 in overtime during calendar year 1995. One supervisor more than doubled his salary in overtime in 1995. This officer's regular salary was $33,500, and his overtime pay was $47,500. Two other supervisors earned nearly 100 percent of their salary in overtime. Other staff, in addition to supervisors, also earned high levels of overtime at HSCB. A total of 53 staff each earned over $5,000 in overtime in 1995 or a total of about $660,000. Officials at HSCB stressed their desire for deterring crime and restricting unauthorized access in a high crime neighborhood as reasons for these conditions. Officials at HSCB also told us that they had 16 vacant positions at the PO and the SSA level. They stated that these vacancies are responsible, in part, for the previously discussed gap between the desired staffing level and actual staff assignments and the resulting use of overtime. Officials also noted that a hiring freeze and the cumbersome civil service system added to the difficulty of replacing staff.

HSCB Response to Audit: In response to this audit, HSCB officials added that during 1995 one-time training requirements for SSA1 officers further contributed to overtime costs. Officials state that 1996 overtime figures show a 13.5 percent reduction from the 1995 overtime costs which are used in this report.

Auditor Comments: HSCB overtime costs remain significant even with the 13.5 percent reduction in 1996.

We believe it is both costly and inefficient to fill regular shift positions with staff working on such an extensive overtime basis. The SUNY campuses, especially HSCB, need to consider other alternatives when confronted with significant overtime requirements. For example, hiring additional staff is one approach to reducing overtime. Another option that should be considered is contracting for private security staff. We found that HSCB already has a contract for security staff used at a remote location, therefore, there is a precedent for using contracted security staff on the campus. HSCB currently pays a private security company $9.52 per hour for a private security guard. This rate is about $6 an hour less than what HSCB pays an SSA to work overtime.

HSCB Response to Audit: HSCB officials stated that the use of contracted security staff pertains only to a new and additional clinic facility that was physically distant from the main facility. Therefore, contracting was feasible from an economic, labor relations and quality control point of view.

SUNY System Administration Response to Audit: System Administration officials responded that, based on existing collective bargaining rules, it would not be possible to use contract security at the main campus. System Administration officials also stated that the Office of the Assistant Vice Chancellor for Student Affairs and Public Safety will review staffing plans and overtime controls with HSCB officials.

Auditor Comments: Contracting for security staffing is only one of several options to consider. We acknowledge that contracting may only be feasible and desirable in unique circumstances.

Another option for reducing overtime is to leave less critical posts unattended when staff is not available. HSCB has used this approach in the past. Stony Brook frequently uses this approach to reduce the need for overtime. According to Stony Brook officials, they usually assign about five patrol staff to each shift, but they are prepared to operate with as few as three. Therefore, they can absorb some absences without incurring overtime. As a result of this approach, Stony Brook is among the lowest users of overtime of the SUNY campuses.

Using part-time security staff is another alternative to paying overtime to full-time staff. When we reviewed public safety staffing at two private colleges in the Albany area, we found that they used part-time staff to provide additional security coverage. Both of the private colleges used part-time staff, working irregular shifts, to provide extra coverage during peak activity hours and at special events. Security administrators at both institutions indicated that using

part-time staff allows greater flexibility and reduces the need for overtime. Using part timers at HSCB would also save money as they would be paid at their salary rate versus the overtime rate.

Recommendation

2. SUNY System Administration should emphasize to the campuses the need to control overtime by exploring the possibility of filling vacant public safety staff positions, contracting for public safety staff, leaving less critical posts unattended when staff is not available, and by using part-time staff to further control the cost of overtime.

Performing Non-Professional Duties

We also found that some campuses assigned public safety officers to non-professional duties, which may also contribute to unnecessary costs for campuses. We found that some campuses use PSO-2s, salary grade 12, to perform non-police duties. For example, three campuses; HSCB, Purchase and the University of Buffalo, use the PSO-2 position to provide dispatch services. This function could be performed by non-professional personnel. At Purchase, professional staff issue parking permits and ID badges to students. Purchase lists using public safety staff in these functions as the third leading reason for overtime use, accounting for 12 percent of overtime used. At the College at Buffalo, public safety staff issue parking tickets.

System Administration recently negotiated with Civil Service for a Public Safety Officer-1 (PSO-1) position at salary grade 9. The position is designed to be that of a desk officer with a special emphasis on filling communications positions, such as dispatcher. Prior to establishing the PSO-1 position, campuses, including the ones we visited, had to use the PSO-2 as dispatcher.

With the introduction of the PSO-1 position, campuses can now use staff with communications skills to fill the dispatcher role and, at the same time, save as much as $5,000 a year in salary cost (compared to the cost of using the PSO-2 position). In addition, using the PSO-1 as dispatcher would free PSO-2 staff for additional police work. This would be especially helpful on campuses with shortages of professional staff, such as HSCB and Purchase. Recently, the College at Buffalo and Stony Brook have begun to use the PSO-1 in the dispatch role. We believe that other campuses should also make use of the PSO-1 as soon as practical.

State University of New York at Buffalo Response to Audit: Officials at the University at Buffalo pointed out that if the PSO-1 positions were used, the staff in these positions could not be used for special event needs or special details which require a fully armed public safety officer. Officials added that use of the PSO-1 positions would not be in addition to grade 12 positions currently allocated, but rather would be in lieu of these positions.

Auditor Comments: We believe that the PSO-1 position should be considered to the extent that it is possible to increase overall cost effectiveness through the use of this position.

Recommendation

3. SUNY System Administration should emphasize to campuses that, to the extent possible, non-professional staff should be used to perform duties not requiring a trained peace officer.

Major Contributors to This Report

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JUL 29 1997

ROBERT H. ATTMORE
DEPUTY COMPTROLLER

July 29, 1997

Mr. Robert H. Attmore
Deputy Comptroller
Office of the State Comptroller
The State Office Building
Albany, New York 12236

Dear Bob:

In accordance with Section 170 of the Executive Law, enclosed are our comments regarding the draft audit report on Controls Over Public Safety Staffing at Selected Campuses, State University of New York (96-S-61).

Sincerely,

Brian T. Stenson
Vice Chancellor for
Finance and Business

Enc.

State University of New York
Controls Over Public Safety
Staffing at Selected Campuses
96-S-61

Campus Comments

State University of New York at Buffalo

Staffing and overtime continue to be ongoing problems. Each campus is under-staffed and relies heavily on overtime dollars to cover the gaps in coverage. One comment we have is in reference to the notation for four SSAs (Security Service Assistants) in the chart on page 4. The SSAs are not part of the Public Safety operation. They report directly to Campus Parking.

In the report there is a statement that none of the five campuses visited could provide documentation showing how present staffing levels were determined. This is true in regards to the actual number of FTEs in the department, but we did provide to the auditor the model we shared with everyone in 1990 for the minimum staffing formula.

Finally, there is mention of the use of PSO II staff as dispatchers. Our position on the use of the PSO II position is that they are more functional than the PSO I position. In order to effectively staff our desk operation year round, we would need six positions. If these individuals were in the PSO I position, we would not have the ability to use them for special event needs or special details such as surveillance for major crime problems which require a fully armed Public Safety Officer.

Another point we would like to make in reference to dispatcher positions is that if the PSO I positions are utilized, they would not be in addition to the Grade 12 positions that are currently allocated. They would be in lieu of and would reduce our response capabilities even further. Based on the minimum staffing formula, the University at Buffalo should be at approximately 50 patrol officers versus the current 40 filled FTEs.

State University of New York at Stony Brook

Planning for Public Safety Staffing

Stony Brook's Public Safety Department continuously analyzes campus trends and updates public safety staffing patterns to meet campus needs.

Controlling for Overtime Cost

Stony Brook agrees that overtime use and cost should be controlled and, as noted in the Comptroller's draft, has effectively done so.

Performing Non-Professional Duties

Stony Brook agrees that, to the extent possible, non-professional staff should be used to perform duties not requiring a trained peace officer and, as noted in the Comptroller's draft, has taken advantage of opportunities to do so.

Health Science Center at Brooklyn

The SUNY Health Science Center at Brooklyn agrees with the OSC recommendation that the HSC review and find alternatives to the use of overtime to provide campus security services. However, the two specific alternatives suggested by OSC, contracting out and hiring part-timers, are not feasible. Instead, the Health Science Center at Brooklyn has cut overtime by reducing the number of security posts and by filling vacant full-time positions. The Health Science Center takes exception to the following.

- The report criticizes staffing levels at the Health Science Center at Brooklyn by evaluating them against benchmarks that had been rejected by the campus because they do not factor in local conditions. As the report itself acknowledges, these benchmarks approximate staffing at SUNY campuses. The report indicates that higher-cost PSO-2 positions are the most prevalent position used in the SUNY system. At HSCB these positions represent only 12.6% of the Public Safety staff. Lower-cost SSA positions, on the other hand, represent 75.7% of Brooklyn's Public Safety staff.

- The report inaccurately depicts the situation with regard to professional staff performing dispatch services. Documentation was provided to the auditors which clearly indicated that HSC at Brooklyn was bound by the union contract which constrained management's ability to change these staffing patterns. Since the audit, union negotiations have allowed campuses to fill these non-professional positions with lower-cost staff.

- The report does not factor in local crime conditions. It does not fully address the unique security needs of a health science center criss-crossed by inner-city streets, as compared with those of campuses that are isolated by geography or are physically contained.

HSCB is unlike any other campus cited in the preliminary report. It is located in the 67th Police Precinct, in Brooklyn, New York. According to NYC Police Department statistics the 67th Precinct ranks 6th highest among the city's 76 police precincts in the number of criminal incidents reported in the FBI's 7 major crime index categories. The table below provides a clearer breakdown:

NYC - CITYWIDE STATISTICS - 1995

Ranked #5	Homicides	Ranked #5	Rapes
Ranked #5	Burglary	Ranked #24	Grand Larceny from Person & Property
Ranked #7	Shooting incidents		
Ranked #3	Felonious assaults	Ranked #27	Grand Larceny Auto

This is why the Health Science Center at Brooklyn must routinely deploy large numbers of Public Safety officers: to create a visible sense of security so that persons who have a negative perception of New York City, Brooklyn, and the 67th Precinct will continue to come here to study, work or receive medical care.

HSCB is the only campus included in the report that operates a 24-hour, 7-day-a-week hospital within New York City (141,600 outpatient visits annually). One only has to read the local newspaper to understand the inherent danger and difficulty of protecting an inner city health care facility that must offer public access through multiple entrances. Such a facility should not be compared with dissimilar ones.

Planning for Public Safety Staffing

The size and the composition of the public safety staff at HSCB has been determined by several factors. The Health Science Center's location serves as a determining factor in the size and composition of the staff and deployment of same. The auditors were provided documentation as to how the minimum staffing is determined. The staffing plan is part of a well thought-out safety program at HSCB. This current staffing plan continues to evolve after twenty years and draws upon expertise in the field of law enforcement and a specific knowledge of the area in which the campus is located.

HSCB does not base its staffing levels on the methodology cited by OSC as having been developed by the International Association of Chiefs of Police (IACP). The HSCB's staffing patterns focus on deterrence, control over access to the campus and quick response to those crimes that do occur. This is one of the reasons for HSCB's heavy reliance on SSA1 Officers (Grade 6), thus permitting HSCB to staff its many entrances at less cost than would be required for CPSO2s.

Controlling Overtime Cost

Use of overtime for FY 1996/97 has been greatly reduced. The following two factors are the major contributors to the past use of overtime at the HSCB:

During 1995, the HSCB was faced with complying with the New York State Security Guard Act of 1992. This legislation mandated that all SSA1 Officers (75.7% of HSCB Public Safety Staff) receive a minimum of 8 hour pre-employment training course, a 16 hour on the job training course and an additional 8 hour annual training within the audit period. At HSCB this training was provided on a straight time basis but the personnel replacing these officers for their regular tour were assigned on an overtime basis. This was a one-time aberration that was beyond the control of local management.

Secondly, a protracted hiring freeze impacted greatly on public safety, leaving it with many vacant positions during the audit period. This freeze also contributed to the use of overtime by public safety at the HSCB, which must staff its Public Safety Department in New York City's very competitive labor environment. As a result of the hiring freeze, extended staff openings

became fairly common. Unfortunately this resulted in a large amount of overtime.

The 1996 overtime statistics are lower. In fact, 1996 overtime figures show a 13.5% reduction in overtime hours from the period reflected in the audit.

On page 7 the report indicates that HSCB has two contracts for security staff. However, there is actually one contract for security staff at one remote location. The decision was made that the physically distant location of this clinic and its status as a new and additional facility made contracting out for security services feasible from an economic, labor relations and quality control point of view.

State University College at Purchase

We have reviewed the audit report on Public Safety staffing and agree, in concept with all of the findings and recommendations contained therein. At Purchase, we have taken action to control overtime and are examining the possibility of using alternative staff to provide lower level security support.

In reality, our problem has been one of resources and personnel policies that impede efficiency. For instance, as soon as our officers are trained (at our cost) they take the first job that comes along in a local police agency where both pay and benefits are better than those provided by SUNY. Another issue of some significance is the fact that dispatchers are classified as clerical positions in the State and it is nearly impossible to hire qualified dispatchers from "the list". Therefore, our officers are often required to cover dispatch because we cannot fill the permanent positions.

State University of New York System Administration Comments

Recommendations

(OSC) 1. SUNY System Administration should emphasize to campuses the need to have written public safety staffing plans documenting how campus needs are being met with appropriate personnel.

(SU) 1. The formula for staffing developed by the International Association of Chiefs of Police (ICAP) and adopted for staffing studies by the New York State Department of Criminal Justice Services, Bureau for Municipal Police, is based upon calls for service to determine the amount of patrol posts and staff needed to fill these posts. A post may include a patrol zone, dispatch area, parking lot or building. A shift is normally an eight-hour tour of duty that encompasses three periods: A Line (midnight to 8:00 a.m.); B Line (8:00 a.m. to 4:00 p.m.); C Line (4:00 p.m. to midnight). Once management defines a post based upon calls for service or the need to deploy personnel, it takes a minimum of six people to staff the post 365 days a year, 24 hours a day.

This formula for patrol officers includes Security Service Assistant's (SSA), since SSA's are often assigned to fixed posts such as building entrances or parking lots. For supervisors, a campus will attempt to have one supervising officer assigned to a zone or shift in order to provide for a one supervisor to five officer span of control. Very often, a supervisor may be assigned to a swing shift to provide a level of coverage between two shifts.

Investigators and assistant directors are not included in patrol staffing plans as their assignments are based on the level of follow-up activity for criminal incidents and management assignments.

Current staffing is based on individual campus complexity which includes geographical size, population density, past practice defined in local collective bargaining agreements and, perhaps most important, budgetary resources. As indicated to the audit team, a consultant reviewed campus operations in the 1970's and made staffing recommendations based on campus size and number of buildings. In 1992, the Bureau for Municipal Police made a presentation to SUNY directors of public safety on the use of the IACP staffing formula. Application of the formula by many campuses found that the number of officers assigned to patrol was less than the formula required. This was the same conclusion found by the audit team.

The Office of the Assistant Vice Chancellor for Student Affairs and Public Safety will review staffing plans with campus directors during upcoming site visitations to refine campus plans. Based on the comments made about staffing at HSC Brooklyn, the Office will work with officials at Brooklyn to review the present configuration of posts. It must be stated, however, that the low crime rates for the facility were due to the deployment of the public safety staff, which is based on the need for fixed posts at key locations.

(OSC) 2. SUNY System Administration should emphasize to the campuses the need to control overtime by exploring the possibility of filling vacant public safety staff positions, contracting for public safety staff, leaving less critical posts unattended when staff is not available, and by using part-time staff to further control the cost of overtime.

(SU) 2. Overtime occurs when the number of available staff is either not deployed in a rational manner or non-routine emergencies occur which create the need for additional personnel to respond to an incident or a planned event. Overtime can also occur when there are not enough personnel to fill available posts or their are sudden disruptions to the number of available staff due to illness, retirements, turnover and personal situations.

It is the position of the University that overtime costs are kept under control.

This section of the audit dealt mainly with overtime at the HSC Brooklyn, which was based on labor costs for 1995. The reasons for the high overtime costs cited in the report were explained by campus officials as follows:

(1) implementation of training and security checks mandated by the Security Guard Act;
(2) a campus freeze on public safety hiring.

Because of its location, Brooklyn has a high turnover rate among SSA and is often forced to hire new staff; the freeze in 1995 resulted in 15 vacancies, which in turn, contributed to overtime costs;

We agree that the campus must hire additional staff to reduce overtime. In fact, overtime costs have substantially declined in recent years with the filling of these vacancies. Based on existing collective bargaining rules, it would not be possible to use contract security for posts at the main campus. The lower costs cited in the report are based upon lower wage scales and no employee benefits. Our experience with contract employees is that there is high turnover and a lack of identification with the goals and mission of the campus.

At this present time, the civil service job description for SSA does not deal with part-time status. This is an option that will be explored. We also agree that filling less critical posts is a possibility that will be further discussed. Accordingly, the Office of the Assistant Vice Chancellor for Student Affairs and Public Safety will review staffing plans and overtime controls with Brooklyn officials.

(OSC) 3. SUNY System Administration should emphasize to campuses that, to the extent possible, nonprofessional staff should be used to perform duties not requiring a trained peace officer.

(SU) 3. We agree with this recommendation and emphasize that this indeed has been the position of the Office of the Assistant Vice Chancellor for Student Affairs and Public Safety and most campus directors. The creation of the grade 9 position of Campus Public Safety Officer I was completed with this recommendation in mind.

The University Center at Stony Brook, the College at Purchase, and many other campuses are planning to create CPSO I positions in the near future.