

Texas State campus community voices opinions about campus carry

By Aissa Martinez

Individuals with a concealed handgun license will be able to carry a concealed weapon on public university campuses in Texas beginning Aug. 1, 2016. The bill was passed into law by Governor Abbott in June 2015.

With August drawing near, the policy has sparked debate throughout the Texas State University campus community. Faculty, staff, students and even some parents are weighing in on the discussion over campus carry.

Some students exhibited indifference. They said they felt this is because they do not know much about the law and what it means.

Kat Hussey, a junior music major, said that she received emails about campus carry from the university but didn't read them.

"I already knew that it was (happening) so I really felt like I couldn't do anything about it," said Hussey. Other students share Hussey's lack of knowledge because they feel that they were not informed enough by the university.

Of the students who believed they were well-informed was Kristian Vasquez, a 24-year-old student.

Vasquez considers himself to be anti-gun, but he understands why others support the new law as well as how it has the potential to save lives.

"These shootings are happening and people want to protect themselves," said Vasquez.

Crystal Williams, a graduate student, said two campus shootings occurred while she attended the University of Texas at Austin for her undergraduate degree.

"Things could go bad really fast if everyone is trying to be a hero," said Williams. She says that the hostile environment on campus in the days following the shooting make her feel that it would be dangerous to add guns to the mix.

Freshman Rebecca Lara agrees that guns would only add stress to the campus community. She says that the added stress would be a problem while walking to her dorm at night.

"The keys I put between my knuckles are no match for a gun," Lara said.

History Instructional Assistant Bill Brkich says he was not well-informed about campus carry but he is in favor of it anyway.

"I just believe that if you have the right to carry, you may as well carry," Brkich said.

Staff members share their opinions as well. Joe Carter, a janitor, says that he usually finds two to three backpacks during his shifts. He brings up a point against campus carry.

"If one of these kids leaves a backpack with a gun in it, and another kid gets to it before I do, well that won't be a good thing," says Carter.

Other opinions from the campus community come from the parents of students and the parents of children participating in programs on campus.

William Cooper has a child in the String Project at the School of Music. He says he is uncomfortable with the idea of guns being allowed on campus.

"Weapons either stay at home or at the firing range," said Cooper. "Just because (people) have guns doesn't mean they're responsible."

For more information about campus carry, visit the Office of the President's website at <http://www.president.txstate.edu/campus-carry.html>.