Using The Balanced Scorecard To Reform University Policing: An Illustrative Example

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ABSTRACT

Since the death of George Floyd, protestors nationwide have called for police reform, including on college campuses. This paper provides an illustrative example of how a balanced scorecard approach was utilized in the strategic reform of a campus police department. The study highlights how decision-makers can integrate the balanced scorecard's use to successfully reform the campus police department and to create buy-in throughout the process.

Keywords: Balanced Scorecard, University, College, Police Reform, Strategic Performance

The tragic death of George Floyd and the ensuing demonstrations nationwide have turned into a large-scale public outcry to defund the police; at the very least, protestors demand widescale police reform. This outcry has permeated all aspects of law enforcement and has made its way to the police departments of universities. These protests could lead to the reform of campus police departments. However, universities tend to evaluate and reform organizational performance through financial measures (Kaplan & Norton, 2005), which often leads to changes that focus on meeting short-term budgetary outcomes. Such fiscal reforms often lack a basis in a long-term vision, and with the budget challenges caused by the COVID-19 pandemic, even these short-sighted reform efforts could be hampered.

The balanced scorecard is one mechanism that entities like university police departments can utilize to reform and realign their strategy and to more effectively deliver services. Scholars have generated a large body of literature since the early 1990s to develop the technique (Lueg, & Vu, 2015), which has helped advance management control efforts. The balanced-scorecard approach has been implemented by over half of Fortune 500 companies (including Apple) and government entities at all levels (e.g., the U.S. Navy, the State of North Carolina, the City of Charlotte; de Koning, 2004). This paper highlights how a campus-based law enforcement agency can design and implement a balanced scorecard approach leading towards reform efforts.

BACKGROUND

Campus Policing

Campus safety is a fundamental obligation of any college or university. Approximately two-thirds of more than 900 U.S. college campuses and universities containing a student population of 2,500 or more had sworn police officers providing law enforcement on campus in 2011-2012 (Reaves, 2015). Only about 38% of private universities maintained similar law enforcement capabilities. However, overall, law enforcement capacity has grown on campuses, if for no other reason than to satisfy the requirements of the Clery Act (Anderson, 2015).

University policing is unique in that it operates within two systems: the traditional law enforcement system and an internal university-based administrative system. Regarding crimes, minor offenses tend to be handled internally, whereas more severe offenses, such as a clear instance of sexual assault, are taken over by the traditional legal system (Hancock, 2016). Campus police witness a full range of criminal violations (Wilson & Wilson, 2011) and are often the first responders to a campus crime, but they must then work with the administration to decide how to proceed. In the past, crimes committed on campus were handled solely through the institution's administrative judicial system rather than being referred to the external legal system where they may have come under greater public scrutiny. This

began to change with the passage of the Clery Act in 1990, which mandates reporting of certain offenses. The 1990s saw an upsurge of campus police departments (Knowles, 2020) and a concomitant explosion of referrals from campus to local police agencies (Friedman, Grawert, & Cullen, 2017). With the mandated reporting, campus law enforcement found itself in conflict with university administrators working to sell the campus as a safe product.

Measuring Campus Law Enforcement Efficiency, Effectiveness, and Performance

The overview above does little to adequately detail the diverse nature of the various measurements employed to determine the efficiency and effectiveness of campus-based law enforcement agencies. If anything, it provides information that may only serve to distort the image of a campus-based police department, not clarifying its unique nature as a peer organization in a local jurisdiction. The current metrics used in policing, such as crime rates, crime clearances, arrests, and response times (Sparrow, 2015), are of little use to campus-based law enforcement organizations because of their divergent requirements.

Evaluating the effectiveness and efficiency of campus police performance is challenging. Campus police departments perform many tasks, ranging from fundamental efforts to maintain safety (Langworthy, 1999) to services not directly related to crime (e.g., locking doors, drug and alcohol education). Campus police departments might perform differently across the complicated set of tasks before them, and, therefore, any performance metric should consider not only the department's results but also its goals and the procedures it had put in place to achieve them. Overreliance on traditional metrics, such as crime rates, response times, and arrests, will not provide the data needed to stimulate organizational growth and police accountability due to the differing requirements between campus and local law enforcement organizations. Recognizing this, campus law enforcement departments need to move towards a more comprehensive evaluation system which include strategic objectives. The balanced scorecard approach can serve as an instrumental in which to create a more appropriate system in which to align department efforts with strategic efforts.

INTRODUCTION TO THE BALANCED SCORECARD

The balanced scorecard is an organizational performance measure developed by Kaplan and Norton (1992). The tool was designed to help business managers clarify and translate their vision and strategy, communicate and link strategic objectives and measures, create strategic plans, set targets, align initiatives, and enhance employee development and learning. Specifically, strategic objectives are operationalized and evaluated for their relationship to the business's strategy. A host of indicators (e.g., finances, customer satisfaction) can be used to assess and improve performance (Kaplan & Norton, 1992). The balanced scorecard has since been used by companies, organizations, government agencies, and law enforcement alike.

A notable contribution of the balanced scorecard is that it allows managers to identify and evaluate cause-and-effect relationships from the perspectives of the customer, internal business processes, and shareholders. This creates a *balance* among the various measures of performance drivers. The results of balanced-scorecard analyses help managers develop and communicate a strategy and clarify steps and resources to achieve that strategy.

This article focuses on the integration and use of the balanced scorecard approach in a university police department setting. The narrative details the use of the balanced scorecard to provide for the ability of campus law enforcement to develop a strategic approach to align employees efforts to the department's mission in order to support reform.

DESIGN

The first step in designing a balanced scorecard in a university police department is to analyze the department's strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats (SWOT analysis). Managers then meet with constituents to include both university administrators and employees to clarify expectations, roles and responsibilities in order to reform the department's vision and mission. Management can then begin to create a balanced scorecard aligned with both.

Strategic objectives then must be identified and documented to develop a "map" of the department's new strategy. The strategy map describes the tasks that the department must accomplish to achieve success. The strategy map is

updated alongside organizational changes and becomes the tool through which changes are recorded and communicated.

The next step is to use the map to identify a few, targeted success indicators. Success indicators are selected after creating the strategy map to avoid the tendency to adjust the department's strategy simply because of a lack of obvious indicators.

The last step is to establish links between the balanced scorecard and the performance of individual employees and teams. This creates accountability by linking every work process to a strategic objective. Managers can then use the strategy map to understand causes and effects over time.

Templating

The balanced scorecard template for a university police department consists of four key perspectives: community, internal processes, learning and growth, and financial. The community perspective seeks to capture how constituents of the campus community perceive the department. To construct the community perspective, answers should be sought for questions such as "When we think of the university community, just who are we talking about?" and "What does the community expect from us, the police?"

The internal processes perspective identifies operations that contribute value to and satisfy the needs of the campus community and meet the department's mission. The department must strive for exceptional performance in these functions.

The learning and growth perspective compliments both the community and internal processes perspectives. It is the learning and growth of the department's staff that helps advance the latter two perspectives. When identifying this perspective's objectives, extensive thought must be put into the skills and abilities that the various department members must learn to effect improvements and innovations within the department.

Finally, the financial perspective addresses the university's view of the police department as a steward of the funding it receives. It is within the financial perspective that the university's desired financial goals for the police department are determined.

Within each perspective, objectives are established. These objectives are simply the strategies that should be accomplished within a given perspective. Within the community perspective, examples of objectives include "improve the perception of public safety," "create a positive perception of the campus community towards police," and "reduce crime." within the internal processes perspective, the example objectives were "educate the campus community in matters of public safety," "increase crime prevention activities," and "detect and apprehend criminals." objectives for the learning perspective could include "leverage technology," "maintain a positive employee climate," and "improve employees' capabilities." Finally, the example objectives for the financial perspective are to "maximize the benefit-cost ratio," and to "seek additional funding sources."

Once the perspectives and objectives have been identified, the next step in the creation of a university police department's balanced scorecard is to establish metrics for each objective. For example, regarding the community perspective, a survey could help determine the effectiveness of the department's efforts to improve the campus community's perception of public safety. Moreover, positive reviews and complaints could be tracked, and the ratio of compliments to complaints could be used as one metric of the police department's performance. To create a positive perception of university police, the department might track the total number of documented acts of public service. Finally, to determine whether campus crime has lessened, the department could calculate the ratio of the Uniform Crime Report offenses to the total number of offenses committed on campus (see Figure 1).

The metrics associated with the internal process perspective could include documenting teachable moments for community members. Teachable moments can be informal, such as an officer explaining, during a traffic stop, the benefit of properly maintaining a motor vehicle's lights. An example of a more formal teachable moment is a planned lecture regarding the use of alcohol and narcotics to a group of incoming freshmen. Another metric associated with

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the internal process perspective could be the number of documented patrols and crime prevention events conducted by the department. Finally, to detect and apprehend criminals, the department might track how many covert investigations it participates in, alongside the traditional metrics of arrests made and citations issued (see Figure 2).
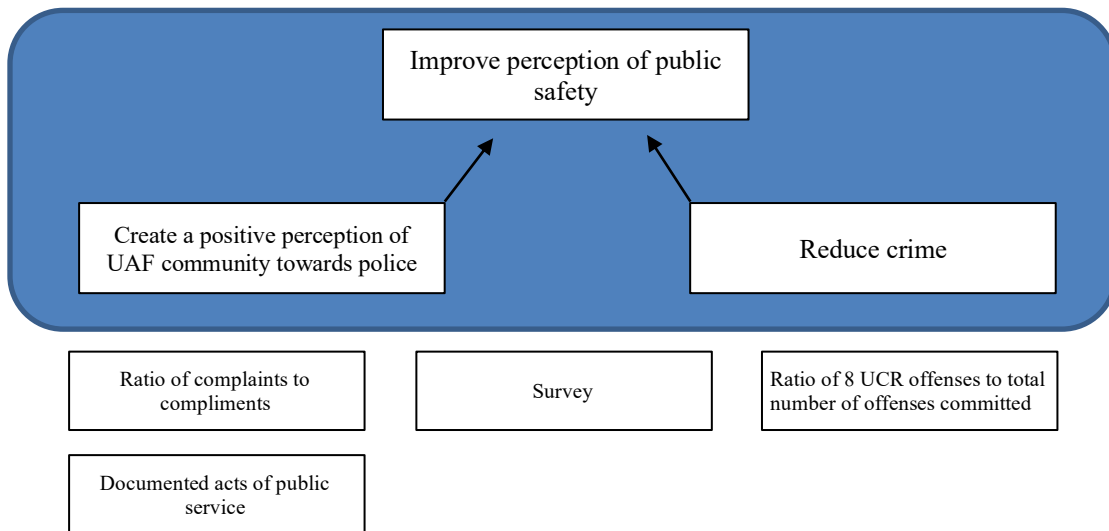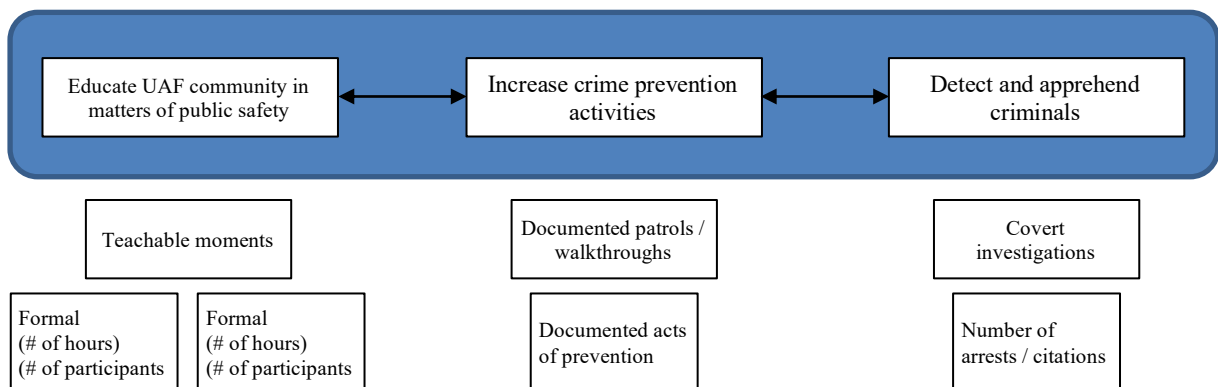
Figure 1.

Community Perspective

Figure 2.

Community Perspective

In the learning and growth perspective, the "leverage technology" objective includes documenting the number of incidents where technology has been used to assist in an investigation, as well as the number of technologies reviewed by department members. To gauge whether the department maintains a positive work climate, administrators can track both the rate of employee turnover and the number of sick leave hours taken by employees. Finally, to demonstrate that police and other staff members are working to improve the department, administrators could track the number of hours each employee spends in training and the number of department members who are certified instructors in a given subject (see Figure 3).

Figure 3.

Learning and Growth Perspective
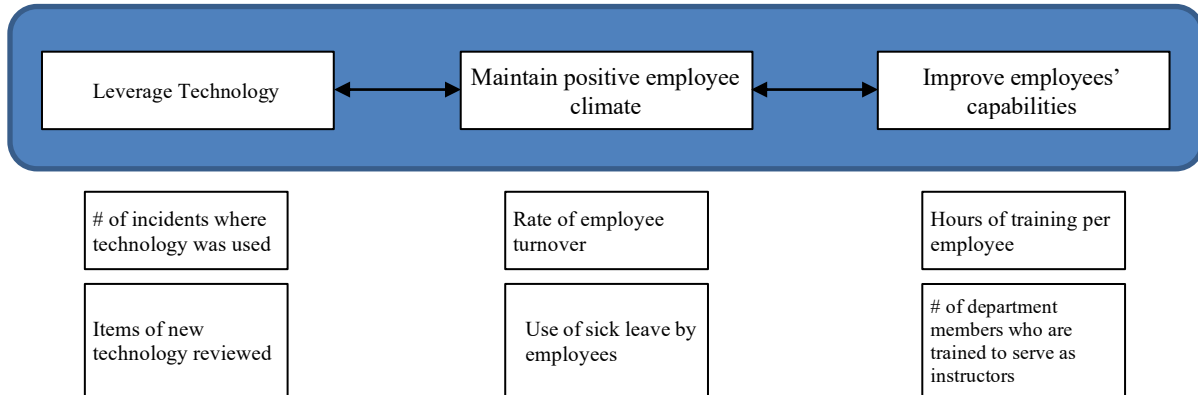
Lastly, in the financial perspective, managers attempt to maximize the ratio of money retained in cost-saving initiatives to as compared to money spent previsoulsy. The metrics associated with seeking additional funding sources include the number of sources identified in addition to the number of dollars received (see Figure 4).

Figure 4.

Financial Perspective
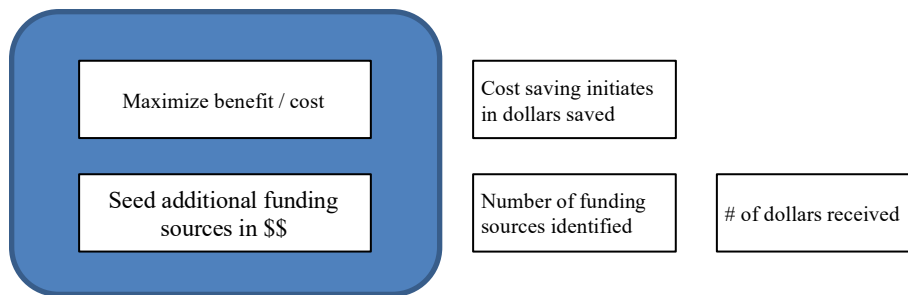
Once the perspectives, the objectives, and the metrics linked to each objective have been identified, the last step in developing the balanced scorecard is to establish the links between the four perspectives and the newly developed strategic objectives. The connections between the perspectives and objectives create a chain of cause-and-effect relationships. For example, improvements in learning and growth might, in turn, drive improvements as part of the internal processes, which can contribute to improvements in community member satisfaction. For a university police department's balanced scorecard, improvements in employees' capabilities could lead to improved detection and apprehension of criminals, and consequently, less campus crime and community perception of a safer campus (see Figure 5).
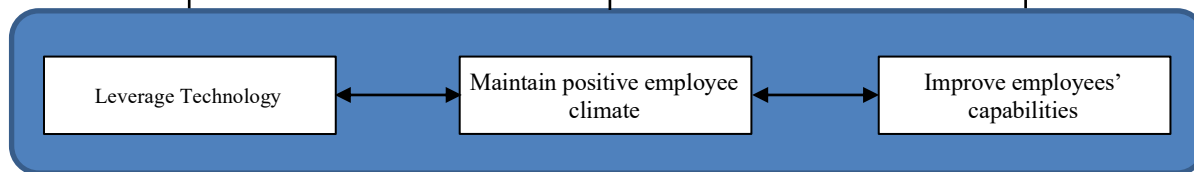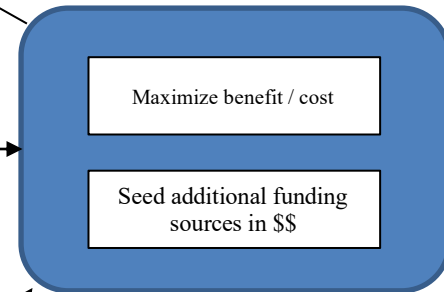
Table 5.

Community Perspective
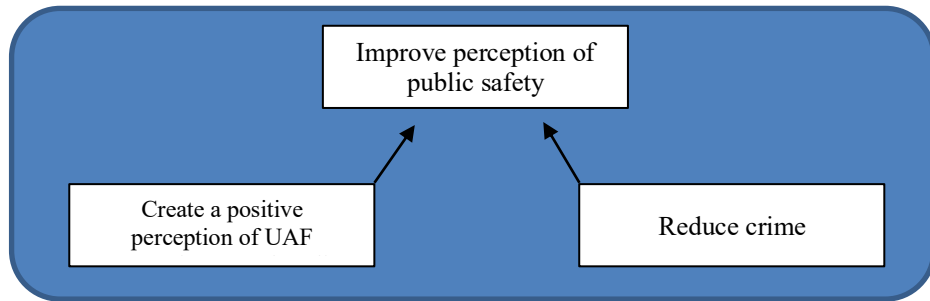
Internal Process Perspective
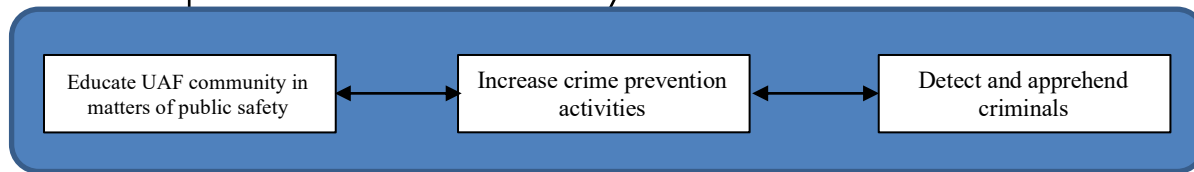
Learning and Growth Perspective

Financial Perspective

CONCLUSION

The balanced scorecard framework has been utilized effectively in numerous for-profit organizations for years. Recently, the model has also been effectively utilized in nonprofit organizations with similar results. This paper presented an example of the type of balanced scorecard that could be designed and employed within a university police department and serve to support reform. It presents a balanced scorecard design that meets the unique demands of this type of department and would assist in creating a positive change—for both the department and the campus it supports. In creating a balanced scorecard, an emphasis was placed on the community perspective and the learning and growth perspective. This focus was taken due to the department's requirement to carry out a new or reformed primary mission, supporting the constituents of the university while providing a well-educated and developed workforce.

The balanced scorecard's greatest potential lies in its ability to assist organizations in translating lofty strategies into actionable and measurable tasks. Simultaneously, it helps department members to understand how they can help achieve the department's desired outcomes. Thus, developing and using a balanced scorecard is not a short-term project and can only provide results with commitment and buy-in from all department employees.

Because buy-in from all the staff of a university police department is essential, the balanced scorecard must be relevant to each position. Linking employee performance measures to the department's mission will promote newfound success in achieving strategic goals. The "cascading" of department goals down to the employee level allows for the staff's efforts to align with the department's overall strategy. This ensures that everyone is focused on key department objectives. The balanced scorecard renders high-level goals in a manner that enables them to become clear objectives for every staff member. Thus, the scorecard creates unity, allowing each department member to understand how their day-to-day actions contribute to the department's overall success.

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