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Investigation of Factors Relating to the Web-based Presentation of Policy and Information on Campus Firearm Policy and Smoking Policy

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Abstract

In order to explore themes of privilege in regard to policy availability, language accessibility, and underlying bias, policies related to two topics of interest to higher education campus visitors, campus firearm carry policy and smoking policy, are explored to determine how Web-based information is presented to various audiences. Implications of policy accessibility are compelling; language barriers can adversely affect access to campus events and educational services. Representative samples of policies of five states that allow some form of open or concealed campus firearm carry were studied to determine possible factors of importance. Representative samples of two additional states in the more restrictive continuum of the campus carry issue were also studied as a control. In addition, policies relating to smoking were examined to determine themes related to overall policy presentation approach. Findings indicate that few Websites facilitate the provision of translated policy, and that few options exist for easy translation of policies into other languages at the point of origin. In addition, this study presents evidence that the recentness of legislative activity and desire to mitigate visitor concerns may be considered as factors impacting policy availability.

Keywords: policy language accessibility, campus policy

No matter which side of the political fence an institution subscribes to on a given issue, it is a universal truth that policies related to that issue should strive to be accessible and transparent to impacted audiences. While higher educational institutions have historically enjoyed a high measure of trust, institutions are increasingly being called upon to display policies and positions that reflect their values and attitudes. In addition, the policy development process at higher educational institutions is becoming increasingly complex, with multiple levels of review increasingly incorporated. Further, with organizations such as the Association of College and University Policy Administrators (ACUPA) promoting the development of a best-practice approach to policy-making (Bruhn, 2003), an assessment of the state of dissemination practice of two policies related to politicized issues, campus firearm carry and campus smoking, is timely.

Language service policy has long been studied to determine how provision of translation services fosters access to services (Snowden & McClellan, 2013), how political bias has been linked to policy development (Krzyżanowski & Wodak, 2011), and how it can improve quality and performance measures (Regenstein et al., 2008). Policy language restrictions, including the use of English-only policies, have been studied in workplace settings to determine the extent that they foster discriminatory and unethical practices (Castro, 2011; Cavico, Muffler, & Mujtaba, 2013). Yet, in higher educational settings, there is a paucity of studies relating to the importance of providing language access to institutional policy. A parallel study of the use of quality translation in research settings also noted few references in conjunction with university-sponsored research (Hendrickson et al., 2013).

Recent legislative changes in some states, combined with the large non-Native English speaking population of those states, means there should be greater activity and certainly greater need to present policy in other languages besides English. In addition to accessing educational resources, campus visitors may also access healthcare and athletic services as well as entertainment venue resources. Due to institutional sponsorship, policies of interest to campus visitors, in addition to student stakeholders, may have broad audience impact. Even removing language-related factors, public policy for various audiences may be reflecting inherited bias toward some populations in its creation (O'Brien et al., 2013; Pacheco, 2013) and implementation (Watson et al., 2014). Therefore, this paper presents an investigation into factors of how language accessibility privilege, as well as other factors, impacts the Web-based presentation of policies related to two topics of interest to campus visitors: campus firearm carry and smoking.

Literature Review

With only 56% of Californians and 65% of Texans identifying their primary language as English (United States Census Bureau, 2013), these states should be at the forefront of multi-language provision of public materials, such as public policies. As an example, Texas state mandates provision of Spanish language content on state agency Websites (Texas Health and Human Services System, 2016) and all public state-funded institutions are listed on the Website listing of Texas State Agencies (Texas Workforce Commission, 2016). Yet, a study of Texas state government Websites found that language provision compliance was only 50% (Thornton, 2010). The underserving of policy language provision is not a problem unique to the United States. A slightly older study of United Kingdom social service organizations found that 53% had either no policy related to language provision, or the representative respondent did not know of one (Pugh & Williams, 2006). While it is clear that compliance rates are underwhelming, what is less clear is that even if accessible policy resources existed, some populations, especially those who speak little or no English, would take advantage of those resources. For example, research procedural flaws with the way that Hispanics are grouped and classified, fail to yield significant insights into subpopulation group behaviors and experiences (Clayman et al., 2010). Even more discouraging is the overall effect of information and policy provision on recipient action; in a study of climate change, Deryugina and Shurchkov (2016) found that while information provision improved concrete knowledge related to the issue, it had little impact on pressure exerted on legislature and monetary donation to related causes.

Terry and Zhang (2016) would seem to concur; their study of smoking policy effectiveness found that policy enforcement was significantly more effective for reducing smoking rates than simply policy provision. Rose et al. (2015) had similarly low findings of public support for smoking and tobacco control point of sale informational provisions with widespread support only enjoyed with provisions related to restricted access to smoking products by minors.

In addition to linguistic diversity, such as that demonstrated in California and Texas, Ozolins (2010) posited the existence of three additional factors that impact language service policy: reliance on public sector finance, institution-led factors, and cross-sectoral interpreting needs. These factors would seem to argue for a strong presence of multiple language versions of public policy by state institutions, which are financed by public funding. However, Ticu's (2013) study conclusion that decision-makers' needs are primary to the public policies process, may indicate that policies written by stakeholders for audience consumption may be subject to or even enforce inherited bias.

Firearm Policy

While studies show that perceptions of security are not increased by policies supporting the presence of firearms (Thompson et al., 2013), firearm restrictions at various settings are easing or are being sought (114th United States Congress, 2015; 9th U.S. Circuit Court of Appeals, 2016; Boucher, 2015; Rizzo, 2016), including in the higher educational setting (Brooks, 2017). Higher education campus stakeholders seem to consider the campus setting to be ill-suited to increased firearm presence. A survey of statements by thirty-eight (38) private Texan universities revealed concerns on limiting educational discourse and beliefs that carry provisions will not increase campus safety (Watkins & Murphy, 2016). In addition, institutions and state systems are increasingly codifying firearm bans and carry restrictions (Flaherty, 2016; Oklahoma State University, 2016; Ryman & Rau, 2016), even when those restrictions are in opposition to legislative activity (Cheshire, 2016; Townes, 2016). Perhaps due to factors including federal restrictions placed on funding gun control research (McCarthy, 2013), studies regarding campus stakeholder attitudes towards campus carry and governing policy are scarce (Cavanaugh et al, 2012) and owing to factors including the political nature of the subject, may be subject to variation due to the polling method (Wells, et al., 2012).

Expectations of this study are that recent state legislative activity related to the passage of concealed firearm carry in higher educational settings would result in the provision of multiple informational resources as institutions manage their messaging to various audiences. Attitudes towards issues related to campus carry may themselves reflect bias in that support groups for both sides of the issue have a strong correlation to race and gender (Benforado, 2010; Thompson et al., 2013), although studies may be compromised by a failure to accurately aggregate populations into subgroups that may demonstrate pockets of support within racial and ethnic groups (Johnson, 2013). Despite increasing public support for gun rights (Pew Research Center, 2016b) and a rise in the number of legal firearm sales in recent years (Federal Bureau of Investigation, 2014), student (Cavanaugh et al., 2012), faculty (Thompson et al., 2012), campus administrator (Price et al., 2014), and campus police (Thompson et al., 2009) support for concealed weapon campus carry policies is low. While student attitudes mirrored public attitudes up until approximately 2007 (Pew Research Center, 2016a), evidence is mounting that a rise in terrorism-related

deaths (Global Terrorism Index, 2014), homicides by shootings (Centers for Disease Control, 2014), and high-profile mass shootings (Luca, Malhotra, & Poliquin, 2016) as well as the media's reporting of such events (McGinty, Webster, & Barry, 2013) may have shifted public opinion in support of gun rights and policy support.

Concerning bias, there is a paucity of research related to the development of firearm policy. The literature review for this study revealed that a significant portion of current research related to the impact of mental illness on firearm policy development is conducted by a small slate of researchers. Field discussion indicates that other areas of research related to firearms have been impacted by restrictions to funding by the Centers for Disease Control (CDC) and CDC practices related to firearms research (Frankel, 2015; Hiltzik, 2016). In addition, existing implied motivations for researching firearm policymaking include those that may reflect unintentional researcher bias or subjective attitudes, such as fairness of policy initiatives (Swanson, et al., 2015), preventing barriers to mental health treatment (Barry, et al., 2013), reducing firearm trauma (Price & Khubchandani, 2016), and prevention of stigmatization (McGinty, Webster, & Barry, 2014). Intentional researcher bias, typically stated as recommendations to position advocates (Vizzard, 2015), may serve to obscure the missions of empirical investigations stated as policy effectiveness and feasibility studies. Because research support for firearm accessibility and firearm control is problematic due to insufficient studies resulting from issue politicization, McGinty et al.'s (2014) process model may serve as an initial framework for producing data-responsive policies in this research subfield. In addition, there is evidence that opposition to gun control by the majority of members of a particular race is impacted by societal issues (Bernforado, 2010; Pew Research Center, 2013a; Winkler, 2011), so bias may be deeply ingrained across the field, even when different frameworks are employed.

Smoking Policies

The implementation of smoking policies, with a subarea of smoke-free and tobacco ban policies, has grown exponentially in the past twenty years, with policy development covering a transition from mandatory, public space policies to a move towards voluntary, privately-owned spaces. Like firearm policy, smoking policies were highly politicized; however, as that politicization occurred earlier, before partisan shifts regarding public policy and scientific evidentiary support (Gauchat, 2012; Underwood, 2013), the number of studies linking smoking to lung and other cancers may have helped to move public opinion in favor of tobacco restrictions. In fact, Apollonio and Bero's (2009) study on workplace legislation process impacts found that the use of scientific evidence was the most important factor for half of the study sample. Parallel activity by public interest groups have also been cited as being instrumental in the policy development of smoke-free spaces in workplaces, restaurants, and airplanes (Brandt, 2007; Hyland, Barnoya, & Corral, 2011). With new availability in smoking products, including vaping products, many states and higher education institutions have refined or revised their policies, so that the number of smoke-free campuses has grown significantly (Americans for Nonsmokers' Rights, 2016), ensuring that the policy has been revisited recently and remains important to stakeholders. In addition, statewide efforts at developing a statewide smoking cessation policy have increased (Krauth & Apollonio, 2015), with impacts on provision of smoking cessation programs in hospital and mental health treatments

centers sponsored by higher education institutions expected to have an inherited impact. It is due to this recent activity, that both campus carry and smoking were considered viable for study of language accessibility and bias factors for this study.

Compared to research related to firearms, in smoking and tobacco-related research, there is significantly more activity on the development of related policy; for example, the effectiveness of anti-smoking and tobacco policies has been studied to determine its impact on behavior. Some of that research studied policy effectiveness in higher education settings. Seo et al. (2011) found that after a program intervention, smoking behavior decreased, and that smoking norms and perceptions of tobacco use changed in favor of smoke-free goals. Lechner et al. (2011) had similar theme findings, although that program was more effective for male audiences. Fallin, Roditis, and Glantz's (2015) research may best serve as a summarization of field research, as their study paralleled field discussion trends that the stronger the policy, the greater the level of compliance and attitude change occurred. Research also occurred in many societal settings. While cigarette prices may serve as a key impact on consummation behavior, correlations have been found between availability of youth smoking policies and daily smoking practices (Botello-Harbaum et al., 2009). In addition, research into factors that will influence change is necessary to develop effective policy. As an example, policies of affordable residential settings were studied to determine that newer units with a lower occupancy per-unit rate, accessed from an interior hallway, best protect vulnerable groups (Stein et al., 2015). Higher education campus settings have been the focus of some additional smoking policy research. Ickes et al. (2013) studied policy compliance to determine that an action-based intervention method was effective for reducing the amount of smoking occurring on campus. Seitz et al. (2012) examined the positive effect that a student advocacy program had for influencing policy change.

Based on this literature review, preparation for the study method invoked an awareness that the policies presented may be reflective of political attitudes and motivations of local settings. For example, it was expected that studied institutions with a strong history of providing health care and information to stakeholders would continue in this tradition in regard to smoking policy and information provision.

Method

A Web-document content analysis method (Weare & Lin, 2000) that involved a strategic sample of Web-available policies of institutions in states that have adopted some form of campus carry was compared to a sample representative of more restrictive practice in order to determine themes related to language provision of two campus polices likely to impact campus visitors. Samples of institutions of five states (Texas, Oregon, Mississippi, Wisconsin, and Colorado) were selected due to their relatively recent activity concerning campus carry as well as for their regional representation. As a control, institutional Web page samples from two states, California and Pennsylvania, were also analyzed as a form of control as representative samples of states on behalf of the more restrictive domain of campus carry, as well as for their regional representation. Since Texas adopted an opt-in policy for private institutions, all but one private institution have not opted-in (Watkins, 2016). With data from the pilot study indicating similar non-participation from private institutions of other states, the sample population of the research study

was narrowed to include only public institutions. In addition, due to pilot study findings that for some states state law is not yet applicable to institutions categorized as two-year, technical, or open-access institutions, a decision was made not to aggregate findings by institution type. The list of higher education institutions was obtained from state Department of Education Websites. Sixty-two institutional Websites representing the group with recent campus carry activity were searched compared to 20 sites representing the control group. For firearm policies, a total of 166 HTML items, 116 PDF items and one document items were examined. For smoking and tobacco policies, a total of 148 HTML items and 47 PDF items were examined. Each participant institutional Web site was searched for firearm, smoking and tobacco policies that apply to public audiences; policies narrowly targeted to student audiences only were not included unless a public policy version did not exist and the policy was written as additionally applicable to the public. While the finding could be a section in a handbook, in order to be included in this study, the finding needed to be a direct link to that section, not just link to the handbook's title page. In addition, the policy or informational items must have met the standard of a permanent communication item, not a time-sensitive item such as a news item or appearance in a newsletter.

To enhance inter and intra coder reliability, two independent code reviewers received training on the coding procedure. Each of the reviewers evaluated the sample sets with two passes in differing order to insure consistency of response coding. Consensus averages of the coding reviews are presented in this study. In cases with a significant response range, an additional joint review was conducted to determine consensus. Theme analysis involved codifying categories and creating operational definitions based on theory or literature review themes (Saldana, 2000).

In order to develop the coding tool, a template was developed from literature review themes and employed with a sample of institutions from the researcher's home state. Based on this pilot study, one additional theme area, the provision of additional information and links was included in the research coding instrument due to the high number of wellness and healthy living links and advocacy information provided by institutional smoke-free initiatives.

Content Themes

For each policy review, the investigation looked for the provision of the policy in other languages beside English, or the institutional provision of a tool to facilitate translation of text, page, or document. While translation of both PDF files (TranslatePDF, 2016) and HTML pages (WorldLingo, 2016) is supported by multiple, freely available translation tools, provision of policies in HTML format should be more robust due to the ability to position a translation tool or button within the page and re-render the existing page. File attachments would typically require additional steps offsite, possibly including software download and installation. While the provision of translation tools or the fostering of Web resources that have the capacity to be translated certainly contributes to communication aims, for this study, the provision of a translated document is considered best practice due to the high number of grammatical and context errors exhibited in materials rendered by translation programs (Vidhayasai, Keyuravong, & Bunsom, 2015).

The policy itself was examined to determine if it addressed language translation in any form, including the use of campus signage. With legislative activity allowing campuses to opt-out of concealed carry provisions for buildings which display notification signage (National Conference of State Legislators, 2016a), the readability of such signage may emerge as an issue, with best practice recommendations in favor of measures such as non-verbal signage (Schuster, 2012). The provision of a translatable Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs) page or fact sheet was also noted; presumably information provided in this form would be less formal than policy documents, which tend to contain legal terms and statements, and therefore rank higher on the accessibility scale. The existence of pages containing statements from policymakers, such as institutional or system presidents, committee presidents, etc., was also noted for its potential to contribute to a policy reader's assessment of bias. In regard to meta-data, cataloging of the total number of related pages and materials may serve as an indicator of policy importance. Finally, the sponsoring location of materials was recorded to expand on bias themes.

When policies were posted with clear policy adoption or effective dates, the date was noted to compile issue averages. Dates embedded in HTML or URL were not used as those dates may reflect other changes to a web page. Referenced state law dates were also not used as they do not explicitly address when the policy response was developed.

While the study topic of accessibility and bias could extend to policy consumers with disabilities, due to the number of factors related to Website and content accessibility for those with a disability categorization, that investigational theme was not included in this study in order to focus theme development.

Findings and Discussion

While the finding of a preponderance of English-only informational materials in this study can certainly be linked to English being the official language of the United States of America, other factors specific to the issue may be related. For example, racially motivated opposition to gun control measures among Caucasian populations (O'Brien et al., 2013) may contribute to a perception of a need to generate policy and information for that group. Recent research is indicating that a perceived rise in the number of terrorist attacks has a significant impact on development and implementation of security policy (Huddy & Feldman, 2011).

A concerning finding was that only two sites facilitated translation with a prominent button or link available on the institutional menu bar, and therefore, available on the policy page. Both sites had a high population of English-as-a-Second Language (ESL) students. With research on commercial Websites indicating a direct correlation between fostering of native language and purchasing behavior (Forrester, 2009), implications for higher education institutions dependent on enrollment and tuition funding are clear. Studies of various at-risk populations indicate that communication barriers are a significant variable concerning access to human services such as health care and education (Fang et al., 2015; Sattin-Bajaj, 2009; Snowden & McClellan, 2013). While measurement of accessibility errors was not part of the current study, Thorton's (2010) findings that over two-thirds of Texas state government agency Websites had

detectable errors can be an indication of consistency with the findings of this study concerning overall accessibility.

The relatively equal proportion of materials provided as PDF documents to HTML pages seems to reflect field confusion regarding robustness of both mediums. Turro (2008) deployed the Web Content Accessibility Guidelines checklist of checkpoints to catalog PDF's degree of compliance with guidelines and catalog accessibility challenges. While some federal agencies sponsor limited adoption of PDF (United States National Archives, 2016), HTML (United States National Archives, 2014a), and ASCII (United States National Archives, 2014b) formats, interestingly, none of the studied institutions provide policy and materials in Open Document Format, despite its sponsorship by a non-profit consortium for the adoption of standards and recognition by the International Organization for Standardization (Organization for the Advancement of Structured Information Standards (OASIS), 2015a). Additional support for Open Document Format is promoted by full and limited adoption usage by North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO, 2016), and an American state government (Massachusetts Executive Office for Administration and Finance, 2016) as well as field discussion effectiveness (Shah, Kesan, & Kennis, 2008) and commitment to ongoing review of accessibility (OASIS, 2016b). This confusing state of affairs in document standards may be because the United States government hasn't issued a recommendation on document dissemination, although the White House Directive does indicate that online information should be in an open format (Orszag, 2009). In this study, only 2% of institutions are improving their document accessibility by offering the policy in multiple formats.

Given the large number of institutions within the sample that exist under the umbrella of a state system, a surprising finding was that system institutions were not uniform in their policy and information approach. While nearly 50% of institutions identified as a system institution linked to some form of a system policy statement or state law, all institutions identified as a system institution set up their own policy response, resources, and information. No institutions presented evidence of a template approach to policy provision, although evidence in the form of links to other system agencies and statements provided by implementation committees indicate awareness of similar policies and some coordination between agencies as indicated by references to common workgroups, conferences, or system-sponsored events. A positive outcome of this bottom-up approach is that approximately 20% of institutions used this form of local implementation to provide links to local support agencies such as smoking cessation groups, studies, and victims support groups. In about 10% of cases, it may be said that system links served as a supplement for the local implementation in a provision of a larger set of resources.

Firearm Policy

While field findings show that 97% of campuses have a campus firearm policy (Thompson et al., 2009), that study did not address policy provision to a public campus communications portal, so this study's findings that 72% of institutions have posted a firearms policy on a Web-based portal may serve as an initial benchmark of Web-based public accessibility. Taken as a whole, provision of policy is similar for the research group (27% did not provide policy) and the control group (29% did not provide) of this study, which lends credence to field indications that campus carry policy is a national concern and less subject

to regional impacts. For the fall 2016 general election, the National Conference of State Legislatures (2016b) confirms that four states representing three regions (North-East, West, and North-West) have firearm-related statewide ballot measures, which indicates discussion in all areas is current and evolving. Despite these overall results, aggregate analysis indicated that Texas had an outsize influence on the research sample; therefore, it is reasonable to postulate that Texas's facilitation of greater information regarding policy may reflect the more prevalent gun ownership rates in the southern United States (Timmons, 2015) and awareness of the need for policy that addresses that audience in addition to other factors including the relative size of Texas systems of higher education and the need to address a larger, more diverse population. In addition, continuing legislative activity in the state of Texas regarding the campus carry issue (Allbright, 2017) may support this study's contention that legislative activity is a factor in policy information dissemination due to recent observed increases in policy address (Schafner, 2017) and calls for community input (Goard, 2017).

Three of the sample's 24 institutions that did not provide a public policy addressing firearm possession were victims of the type of high-profile mass shooting that would influence action; two of the institutional communications channels have a remembrance page dedicated to the shooting victims, so it is clear that the communicating information about the tragedy is an important institutional mission. While the finding of the lack of policy and confirmed events might be perceived as an outlier, there are no studies confirming this disconnect although field literature argues that mass shootings have an outside effect on community public policy and legislative activity (Luca, Malhotra, and Poliquin, 2016). In fact, Kleck (2009) concludes that due to the irrelevance of specific gun control measures proposed after high-profile K-12 shootings, these events in and of themselves offer poor evidentiary support for gun control legislation. Like other finding aspects of this study, the underlying issue may be multi-layered; one of the non-providing institutions was of such a small size to expect that policy development would be hindered. Vaughter, Wright, and Herbert (2015) would seem to agree that institutional size, extrapolated to mean ability to fund, impacts policy development. Their finding that sustainability policies were more likely to be adopted when the institution provided additional resources to the effort suggests a strong relationship. An additional three institutions of the sample were also sites of high-profile mass shootings; since all three of those institutions belonged to a state system, correlations regarding motivation behind policy provision cannot be stated due to the high number of confounding variables and small sample size.

Perhaps due to the need to coordinate with local and state law enforcement agencies as well as a need to effectively deal with policy enforcement, 35% of gun-related policies of the sample population were disseminated by campus enforcement, rather than another institutional sponsor. These findings seem to align with a larger study of safety audits which linked a 57% sample provision of a weapons on campus policy with campus police operation (Rasmussen & Johnson, 2008).

While findings of the study do not support any claims that implicit bias is impacting campus carry policy formation findings, it is clear that changing opinions will continue to influence the presentation of policies on campus as evidenced by the continuum of restrictions being addressed by higher educational settings (Benning, 2016; Conway, 2016) and legislative and judicial activity (Jaschik, 2016). Further, with examples

such as faculty meeting with students in gun-restricted drinking establishments in order to avoid the campus carry policy (Martin, 2017; Nguyen, 2016), it is clear that policy implementation will continue to evolve as stakeholders grapple with the terms of policy.

Joint Policy Analysis

Recent legislative activity may be the most important factor in policy provision robustness. As an aggregate group, Texan institutions yield much more informative sites since 2016 legislative activity, with an average of 10.1 pages, than the lowest averaging state of Oregon (1.1 pages), whose most recent related legislation was in 2012. Other states with less recent campus carry legislation activity (Colorado, 2012; and Mississippi, 2011) show significantly lower item averages with averages of 1.33, and 1.2 respectively. Wisconsin enacted a ban on weapons inside of campus buildings one week before the writing of this article. It is supposed that institutional response has yet to occur, thereby explaining the low .75 average page rating of this study. For smoking policy, Oregon's 2013 legislative activity is more recent than that related to campus carry; average number of supported pages of four per institution seems to reflect this activity. The recentness of legislative activity may also be impacting the motivation for provision of policy and information. The most commonly featured element in publically available policies and information on institutional campus carry in higher educational settings state that the purpose of campus carry information provision is to ensure or improve safety. However, several Texan institutions state additional motives for material provision that appears to have a direct tie to recent legislation activity including improving compliance (University of North Texas, 2016), protecting the rights of citizens (University of Texas at Austin, 2016) or to provide guidance on law implementation (University of Texas Medical Branch, 2016; University of Texas at San Antonio, 2016) in campus settings. To compare, Californian institutions as a whole tend not to directly address their motivation for providing policy, but seem to imply that the reason for material provision is to inform the public of legal statues and consequences (California State University, Fullerton, 2016; California State University, Long Beach, 2016; California State University, San Bernardino, 2000; University of California at Los Angeles, 2016) as well as serve reporting responsibilities (University of Southern California, 2013).

In addition to the recentness of legislative activity, other factors may contribute to the information robustness of sites in this study. In order to study the potential negative impact on reputation and recruitment activities, an association of University of Texas stakeholders has cataloged 21 incidents related to failure in retention, recruitment, and attraction of visiting speakers and artists (Gun Free UT, 2016). In fact, protection of institutional reputation may serve as a potential source of non-response bias in this study, meaning that institutions may be deliberately avoiding the provision of Web-based materials to avoid community confrontation on a politicized issue or because they feel they are out of alignment with some community stakeholders. In addition, there is field discussion that some policy formation may be in response to preventing confusion in regard to related proposed regulations, including allowing or banning firearms in faculty offices (Flaherty, 2016); protests or refusing to teach or attend class in spaces where guns are allowed or banned (Auyero, 2015); or addressing freedom of expression (Dart, 2016). It is important to note that the provision of policy materials and information are representative of the point

in time of the data collection period of December 2016 and may be affected by political and global events of that period.

Comparing language availability, smoking and tobacco policies as a whole enjoyed a 20% increase in level of provision in other languages, particularly in regard to informational materials and links such as healthy living materials, compared to the provision of firearms materials. Reasons for this increase are obscured by a lack of policy meta-data: while policy adoption or effective dates were found nearly 72% percent of the time, a full history of the revision process was rarely included. So, while there was no significant difference between the average age of smoking and tobacco policies compared to firearm policy, field discussion (Macko, 2015) indicates that smoking policies were likely only changed to address the prevalence of vapor smoking products rather than serve as a substantial change in policy form or purpose. This argument parallels findings by Meernik et al. (2016) regarding the incorporation of changes to include e-cigarettes in hospital campus policy. Therefore, it could be argued that the smoking policies are in effect older, and therefore likely to be subject to a longer scrutiny period and more likely to enjoy additional resource development such as language translation. Because of the limited access of this study, institutional “hit” data (data related to the number of visitors per page) was not collected. It is theorized that this is another underlying factor that may influence policy dissemination practices.

Smoking\Tobacco Policy

The high number of smoking cessation or health living information parallels field findings (Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, 2012) that information resources and interpersonal components were significantly more popular than other provided items, such as policy, which also confirms the large number of policies found only in PDF format. According to Pacheco (2013), “Length of exposure matters for support of future policy interventions: people exposed to smoking bans for long periods of time are more supportive of additional smoking restrictions in public places.” Therefore, a logical conclusion is that Website visitors would support, even come to expect additional smoking cessation resources. In addition, Macy, Chassin and Presson’s (2012) findings that adolescence smoking behaviors and attitudes correlate to later support of smoking cessation policy argues that advocacy in academic communities is a factor in policy dissemination in regard to campus health and well-being information and resources.

Conclusion

While the qualitative study method combined with relatively small sample size results in low generality, it is clear that language accessibility practices still have a long way to go. Further issues regarding Web-based transparency and communication of policy might be explored. A rich avenue for exploration might involve collecting qualitative data from samples of policy developers and stakeholders representing various groups including non-English speakers. Regarding political bias, survey investigations into political impetuses and conscious and unconscious motivations for presenting policy may serve to reveal insights into material and information sponsorship and presenting effective frameworks for varied audiences. Due to the confusion of effectiveness of document formats, studies that explore translation and languages issues would greatly supplement existing research. Studies that seek to correlate policy development to

attitudes regarding population characteristics of race, gender, ethnicity, and personal ability and the resultant impact on social, workplace, and residential settings are also needed. Finally, it cannot be overstated that the research pool exploring firearm policy and management is critically low; of particular concern are studies of policy effectiveness in the higher education setting.

The provision of free, and easy-to-use translation tools appears to be the simplest and most effective way to increase policy access. Positioning of the tool on the institutional menu bar may foster greater access to the entire institutional Web site. In addition, institutional analysis of policies that impact a large number of people or are perceived as having a high ability to damage reputation should be considered on the short list of materials that need to be translated and checked for errors in order to maximize policy effectiveness. These interventions will not only increase accessibility compliance but will serve to model a forward-thinking institution interested in responding to diversity initiatives. For policy developers and implementers, this study makes clear that additional issues concerning document format and alignment with state organizational policy structures should be considered to offer public audiences clear and consistent messaging.

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