

# Assessing the visibility, responsiveness, and empowerment of student marshals

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## Abstract

While student marshal initiatives are increasingly used to support campus safety, limited empirical evidence exists on how such programs are perceived by key stakeholders in higher education institutions, particularly in the Philippine context. Hence, this study assessed the visibility, responsiveness, and empowerment of student marshals as a basis for developing an enhanced campus safety program. Using a mixed-methods research design, the study gathered quantitative data from 316 students and faculty members through a validated survey questionnaire and qualitative data from selected student marshals through interviews. Descriptive and inferential statistics were employed to analyze quantitative responses, while thematic analysis was used for qualitative data. Findings revealed that student marshals were generally perceived as visible, responsive, and empowered in performing their duties, indicating their positive contribution to maintaining campus order and safety. Significant differences in perceptions were observed when respondents were grouped according to role, gender, and department, while age showed no significant effect. Qualitative results identified key challenges related to balancing academic and patrol responsibilities, limited manpower and resources, inadequate training, and varying levels of cooperation from the campus community. The findings underscore the importance of systematic assessment, continuous training, institutional support, and recognition in sustaining effective student marshal programs. The results served as the basis for the development of an enhanced campus safety program that aims to strengthen marshal visibility, responsiveness, and empowerment, thereby promoting a safer, more participatory, and responsive campus safety system.

**Keywords:** *campus safety, student marshals, visibility, responsiveness, empowerment*

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## 1. Introduction

Higher education institutions operate within increasingly complex safety environments shaped by mass gatherings, evolving disciplinary concerns, disaster risks, and broader societal security challenges. Contemporary campus safety governance has therefore shifted from purely centralized security structures toward hybrid and participatory models that integrate administrative oversight with community-based mechanisms (Izumi et al., 2022; Schafer et al., 2016; Roberts et al., 2025). In this context, student-led safety initiatives, commonly referred to as student marshal or peer safety programs, have emerged in various institutions as structured support systems designed to complement formal security personnel.

In the Philippine setting, the responsibility of higher education institutions (HEIs) to maintain safe and orderly campuses is grounded in national education policies and regulatory mandates. The Commission on Higher Education (CHED) requires HEIs to implement institutional mechanisms that safeguard student welfare, promote discipline, and ensure secure learning environments. Similarly, policy frameworks encouraging student participation in governance and co-curricular engagement provide administrative latitude for institutions to organize structured student-led programs under appropriate supervision. While national directives do not prescribe a uniform model for student marshal systems, they authorize institutions to design context-responsive safety mechanisms, provided such initiatives operate within clearly defined role boundaries and remain under institutional control.

Empirical literature suggests that participatory safety mechanisms can enhance institutional resilience and strengthen perceptions of campus security when properly structured and supervised (Mowen & Freng, 2019; Cobb, 2021; Granger, 2023; Okeke, 2024). Institutions implementing student marshal initiatives commonly assign responsibilities such as crowd monitoring during events, reporting safety concerns, assisting in policy enforcement, and supporting communication between students and administrators (Tersona & Loren, 2023; Dela Cruz et al., 2025). These initiatives are often positioned as extensions of student governance and campus order programs rather than substitutes for professional security services. However, institutional experiences also reveal recurring challenges in implementation. Studies highlight issues related to role ambiguity, limited authority boundaries, inadequate training preparation, sustainability concerns, and inconsistencies in administrative support (Loren & Tersona, 2024; Woodside et al., 2022). In some contexts, unclear delineation between peer leadership and enforcement responsibilities may generate resistance or perceptions of bias among students.

Furthermore, while administrative authorization legitimizes student marshal systems, operational effectiveness depends on whether participants are sufficiently prepared, supported, and integrated into broader campus safety protocols (Cabasal et al., 2023).

Emerging scholarship indicates that participatory campus safety initiatives must be evaluated not merely by their existence but by their operational performance across core indicators such as visibility, responsiveness, and empowerment (Encabo & Villaruz, 2025; Dela Cruz et al., 2025; Okeke, 2024). Despite growing recognition of participatory safety models, existing research remains fragmented. Much of the literature examines general campus security climates, preparedness of professional security personnel, or broad safety perception surveys (Del Castillo et al., 2022; Encabo & Villaruz, 2025; Pacapac, 2022). Empirical investigations that specifically evaluate student marshal systems using multidimensional operational constructs are limited. Moreover, there is insufficient evidence examining how stakeholders, particularly students and faculty, perceive the visibility, responsiveness, and empowerment of student marshals within a unified analytical framework. This gap limits comparative understanding across institutions and constrains the development of evidence-informed models for participatory campus safety governance.

To address this gap, the present study provides a systematic empirical assessment of a student marshal system implemented in a Philippine higher education institution. Furthermore, this research analyzes stakeholder perceptions of student marshal visibility, responsiveness, and empowerment as core operational indicators. By systematically assessing these dimensions and identifying implementation challenges, the study contributes evidence-based insights that may inform other institutions considering or refining similar participatory campus safety models.

## **2. Literature Review**

### ***2.1. Campus Safety and Security in Higher Education***

Campus safety has become a critical concern in higher education, as institutions increasingly confront complex security challenges that extend beyond traditional crime prevention to include emergency preparedness, behavioral management, and community trust. Studies consistently affirm that a secure campus environment positively influences students' academic engagement, psychological well-being, and institutional confidence (Maslang et al., 2022; Roberts, 2022). However, while the importance of safety is well established, scholars

note that many campus security strategies remain reactive and personnel-dependent, limiting their effectiveness during large-scale activities and peak academic periods (Izumi et al., 2022; Lowery, 2024).

Recent literature emphasizes a shift toward participatory and community-based safety models, wherein responsibility for campus security is shared among administrators, staff, and students (Mofokeng et al., 2023; Bappi et al., 2025). Such models are credited with enhancing trust, compliance, and situational awareness. Nevertheless, Pacapac (2022) and Aydinan (2023) caution that without systematic assessment and clear role definition, participatory safety initiatives may suffer from inconsistency and uneven implementation. This suggests that while inclusive approaches are widely endorsed, empirical evaluation of their effectiveness remains limited, particularly in developing or localized higher education contexts.

## ***2.2. The Role of Student Marshals and Student-Led Safety Initiatives***

Student marshals have emerged as a practical response to manpower limitations and the need for peer-based safety support within educational institutions. Existing studies describe student marshals as intermediaries between formal security personnel and the student body, performing functions such as monitoring campus spaces, managing crowds, enforcing institutional policies, and reporting incidents (Woodside et al., 2022; Tersona & Von Lloyd, 2023). These initiatives are often credited with improving visibility during events and fostering shared accountability for campus order.

However, the literature presents mixed findings regarding the sustainability and effectiveness of student-led safety programs. While Dela Cruz et al. (2025) found that empowered student marshals demonstrate leadership, accountability, and commitment to campus governance, Barillo et al. (2025) noted that insufficient training, unclear authority, and limited institutional recognition may undermine marshal confidence and legitimacy. Similarly, Del Castillo et al. (2022) observed that student safety units are most effective when integrated into formal administrative structures rather than operating informally.

These findings suggest that student marshal programs are potentially valuable but highly dependent on organizational support, role clarity, and continuous evaluation. Despite growing implementation, there remains limited empirical research examining how such programs are perceived by key stakeholders, particularly students and faculty, and how specific performance dimensions influence overall campus safety outcomes.

### ***2.3. Dimensions of Marshal Performance***

The literature identifies visibility, responsiveness, and empowerment as critical indicators of effective campus safety personnel, yet these constructs are often examined independently rather than as an integrated framework.

Visibility is widely recognized as a deterrent to misconduct and a contributor to perceived safety. Studies by Barte et al. (2022) and Granger (2023) demonstrate that consistent presence in high-traffic areas enhances behavioral regulation and reassurance among campus stakeholders. However, scholars caution that visibility alone is insufficient; symbolic presence without competence may weaken perceived legitimacy (Barillo et al., 2025).

Responsiveness refers to the capacity to act promptly and appropriately during safety incidents. Okeke (2024) and Encabo and Villaruz (2025) found that timely response and effective coordination significantly influence trust in campus safety systems. Nonetheless, prior research rarely examines responsiveness within student-led security contexts, focusing instead on formal security personnel.

Empowerment, grounded in leadership and organizational psychology literature, emphasizes confidence, autonomy, and institutional support. Zimmerman's (1995) Empowerment Theory has been applied in studies of student leadership and governance, with findings indicating that empowered individuals exhibit stronger commitment and accountability (Campos & Campos, 2023; Dela Cruz et al., 2025). Despite this, empowerment is often treated as an outcome rather than a measurable dimension of marshal performance.

Notably, few studies operationalize visibility, responsiveness, and empowerment simultaneously within a single empirical framework, particularly in student marshal or peer-led safety programs. This represents a significant conceptual and measurement gap in the literature.

### ***2.4. Theoretical Framework***

This study is anchored on Social Role Theory (Eagly, 1987), Situational Awareness Theory (Endsley, 1995), and Empowerment Theory (Zimmerman, 1995), which collectively explain how student marshals function as effective agents of campus safety.

Social Role Theory explains how student marshals' visibility and conduct are shaped by role expectations and institutional legitimacy. When marshals clearly understand and enact

their assigned roles, they are more likely to gain compliance and trust from peers, reinforcing order and governance (Dela Cruz et al., 2025).

Situational Awareness Theory provides the foundation for responsiveness, emphasizing perception, comprehension, and projection as essential to effective action in dynamic environments. Applied to student marshals, this theory explains their capacity to identify risks, respond to incidents, and coordinate with authorities, particularly during events and emergencies (Encabo & Villaruz, 2025).

Empowerment Theory explains how training, support, and recognition influence marshals' confidence, decision-making, and sustained engagement. Empowered marshals are more proactive and accountable, contributing to participatory and sustainable campus safety systems (Campos & Campos, 2023; Bappi et al., 2025).

Together, these theories form an integrated framework in which role clarity supports visibility, situational awareness enhances responsiveness, and empowerment sustains effective performance, collectively influencing campus safety and governance outcomes.

### **3. Methodology**

#### ***3.1. Research Design***

This study employed a convergent parallel mixed-methods design, in which quantitative and qualitative data were collected during the same phase, analyzed separately, and then interpreted together to provide a comprehensive assessment of the visibility, responsiveness, and empowerment of student marshals. The quantitative component utilized a descriptive-comparative approach to examine stakeholders' perceptions and identify significant differences across respondent profiles, while the qualitative component explored the lived experiences and challenges encountered by student marshals in the performance of their duties.

The use of a convergent mixed-methods design was deemed appropriate as it allowed the study to triangulate numerical trends with narrative explanations, thereby strengthening the validity of interpretations. Integration of findings occurred at the interpretation stage, where qualitative themes were used to explain, contextualize, and enrich the quantitative results, particularly in areas related to consistency of performance, empowerment, and operational challenges.

### 3.2. Participants of the Study

The participants of the study consisted of 316 members of the academic community, including students and faculty members who had direct interaction with student marshals during the First Semester of School Year 2025–2026. Stratified random sampling was employed to ensure representation across departments. While the sample size was adequate for descriptive and inferential analysis, faculty participants comprised a smaller proportion of the sample, reflecting their limited numerical presence relative to students within the institution.

Given that data were drawn from a single higher education institution and were dominated by student participants aged 20 years and below, the findings of the study are interpreted as context-specific and are not intended for broad generalization. Instead, the results provide empirical insights applicable to similar institutional settings with student-led campus safety programs.

**Table 1**

*Profile of the participants*

Profile	Variable	Frequency	Percentage
Role	Student	304	96.2
	Faculty	12	3.8
Age	20 and below	268	84.8
	21-30	42	13.3
	31-40	6	1.9
Gender	Male	138	43.7
	Female	162	51.3
	Prefer not to say	16	5.1
Department	COC	131	41.5
	CCBA	185	58.5

Table 1 presents the demographic profile of the 316 participants. The majority were students (96.2%), while faculty members comprised a small portion (3.8%), indicating that the study primarily reflects student perspectives as direct beneficiaries of campus safety initiatives. Most participants were 20 years old and below (84.8%), highlighting that the sample largely consisted of young adults at the early stages of their higher education journey. Gender distribution was nearly balanced, with females (51.3%) slightly outnumbering males (43.7%) and a small group (5.1%) preferring not to disclose their gender. Participants were drawn from

two departments: the College of Criminology (41.5%) and the College of Computing, Business, and Administration (58.5%), ensuring representation from students with varying exposure to campus safety operations. This consolidated view demonstrates that the findings on the visibility, responsiveness, and empowerment of student marshals primarily reflect student experiences, while faculty input provides institutional insights. The diverse representation across age, gender, and department strengthens the study's evaluation of campus safety practices and highlights the perspectives of the main stakeholders directly affected by marshal activities (Encabo & Villaruz, 2025; Dela Cruz et al., 2025; Granger, 2023).

### ***3.3. Instrumentation and Data Gathering Process***

A researcher-made survey questionnaire was developed to measure the perceived visibility, responsiveness, and empowerment of student marshals. The instrument consisted of four sections: respondent profile, visibility, responsiveness, and empowerment. Each construct was operationalized through multiple indicators based on related literature and theoretical foundations, using a four-point Likert scale ranging from 1 (Strongly Disagree) to 4 (Strongly Agree).

To establish content validity, the instrument was reviewed by a panel of subject-matter experts in education, campus safety, and research methodology. The experts evaluated the relevance, clarity, and alignment of each item with the intended construct, and their feedback guided item refinement prior to pilot testing. The revised instrument was pilot-tested among non-participants to assess clarity and internal consistency.

Reliability analysis was conducted using Cronbach's alpha, yielding acceptable internal consistency coefficients for the visibility (Cronbach alpha = 0.82), responsiveness (Cronbach alpha = 0.89), and empowerment (Cronbach alpha = 0.88) subscales, indicating that the instrument was reliable for measuring the targeted constructs.

The final questionnaire was administered through printed copies and online forms, depending on respondent accessibility. Completed instruments were retrieved, screened for completeness, and prepared for data analysis.

### ***3.4. Data Analysis***

Quantitative data were analyzed using descriptive and inferential statistics. Frequency counts and percentages were used to describe respondent profiles, while weighted means and

standard deviations were computed to determine the levels of visibility, responsiveness, and empowerment of student marshals. Independent samples t-tests and one-way Analysis of Variance (ANOVA) were employed to examine differences in perceptions when participants were grouped according to role, age, gender, and department, using a 0.05 level of significance.

Prior to inferential analysis, assumptions of normality and homogeneity of variance were examined to ensure the appropriateness of parametric testing. In addition to significance testing, effect sizes were computed to determine the magnitude and practical significance of observed differences. These effect size measures provided further interpretation of whether statistically significant findings reflected meaningful differences in perception.

Qualitative data from open-ended survey responses and interviews were analyzed using thematic analysis. Initial coding was conducted by the researcher through repeated reading of transcripts to identify meaningful units of information. Codes were then grouped into categories, from which overarching themes were generated. To enhance credibility, themes were reviewed and refined to ensure internal consistency and alignment with the quantitative findings. Representative excerpts were included to illustrate each theme and preserve participant voice.

### ***3.5. Research Ethics***

The study adhered to established ethical standards in educational research. Approval was secured from the college administration and the Office of Student Affairs prior to data collection. All participants were informed of the study's purpose, assured of voluntary participation, and provided with informed consent. Confidentiality and anonymity were maintained by excluding identifying information and securing all collected data for academic use only. Transparency in the use of Artificial Intelligence tools for language refinement was also declared, with full responsibility for content accuracy retained by the researcher.

## **4. Findings and Discussion**

Table 2 summarizes the perceived visibility of student marshals across the three sub-variables: presence in key areas and during school activities (3.31), approachability and accessibility to students and faculty (3.30), and consistency in performing campus monitoring duties (3.27). The overall composite mean of 3.29 indicates that student marshals are generally visible across campus activities. Notably, visibility is strongest during school events and

structured activities, suggesting that marshals are most prominent when organized functions require active oversight.

**Table 2**

*Summary of perceived visibility of student marshal*

<b>Visibility</b>	<b>Weighted Mean</b>	<b>Standard Deviation</b>	<b>Verbal Interpretation</b>
Presence in key areas and during school activities	3.31	0.73	Visible
Approachability and accessibility to students and faculty	3.30	0.68	Visible
Consistency in performing campus monitoring duties	3.27	0.68	Visible
<b>Composite Mean</b>	<b>3.29</b>	<b>0.70</b>	<b>Visible</b>

*Legend:* 1.00-1.49-Less Visible; 1.50-2.49- Moderately Visible, 2.50-3.49- Visible; 3.50-4.00-Highly Visible

The clustering of mean scores within a narrow upper range suggests two important considerations. First, the results may reflect functional effectiveness without optimal consistency, particularly during non-peak periods or routine campus operations. Second, the possibility of ceiling effects or social desirability bias cannot be ruled out, especially given the student-led nature of the program and the institutional context. Participants may be inclined to rate marshals positively while still recognizing underlying operational constraints. This interpretation is supported by qualitative findings that reveal challenges related to manpower, training, and resources, suggesting that high perceived performance coexists with structural limitations.

The results demonstrate that marshals are not only physically present but also approachable, accessible, and consistent in their duties, which reinforces the perception of safety and reliability among students and faculty. This finding aligns with prior research emphasizing that consistent, approachable, and strategically placed security personnel enhance both actual and perceived campus safety (Roberts, 2022; Dela Cruz et al., 2025; Maslang et al., 2022; Encabo & Villaruz, 2025). Consequently, while the visibility scores fall within the “Visible” range rather than “Highly Visible,” the data highlight opportunities to further strengthen routine patrols, daily interactions, and presence during non-peak hours, thereby maximizing the effectiveness of the student marshal program and fostering a safer campus environment.

**Table 3***Summary of perceived responsiveness of student marshal*

<b>Responsiveness</b>	<b>Weighted Mean</b>	<b>Standard Deviation</b>	<b>Verbal Interpretation</b>
Promptness in addressing safety or disciplinary concerns	3.32	0.67	Responsive
Effectiveness in handling emergencies and incidents	3.33	0.67	Responsive
Coordination with the administration and security personnel	3.37	0.63	Responsive
<b>Composite Mean</b>	<b>3.34</b>	<b>0.66</b>	<b>Responsive</b>

**Legend:** 1.00-1.49-Less Responsive; 1.50-2.49- Moderately Responsive, 2.50-3.49- Responsive; 3.50-4.00- Highly Responsive

Table 3 shows that the overall responsiveness of student marshals across all sub-variables has a composite mean of 3.34, indicating that marshals are generally perceived as responsive. The individual sub-variables, promptness (3.32), effectiveness (3.33), and coordination (3.37), demonstrate that marshals perform well in reacting to incidents, managing emergencies, and collaborating with campus authorities. Notably, coordination received the highest score, suggesting that structured collaboration enhances overall responsiveness.

Consequently, these results collectively indicate that student marshals are not only timely and effective in their actions but also function collaboratively within the campus safety system. However, the absence of “highly responsive” ratings suggests that response effectiveness may be conditional rather than autonomous. Qualitative data reveal that marshals often lack formal training in emergency response and rely heavily on referral to authorities. This aligns with Situational Awareness Theory, which emphasizes that effective response depends not only on perception but also on procedural competence and preparedness. Thus, responsiveness among student marshals appears to be collaborative rather than independent, a distinction that contributes conceptually to the literature on quasi-security roles in educational settings.

Table 4 summarizes the overall empowerment of student marshals, showing a composite mean of 3.38, with all three sub-variables—awareness of roles (3.40), confidence and decision-making (3.35), and support from administration (3.40)—falling within the empowered range. Notably, these results indicate that marshals are well-prepared, confident, and adequately supported in fulfilling their responsibilities.

**Table 4***Summary of perceived empowerment of student marshal*

<b>Empowerment</b>	<b>Weighted Mean</b>	<b>Standard Deviation</b>	<b>Verbal Interpretation</b>
Awareness of their specific roles and responsibilities	3.40	0.63	Empowered
Confidence and decision-making ability in performing duties	3.35	0.64	Empowered
Support and recognition provided by the administration	3.40	0.60	Empowered
<b>Composite Mean</b>	<b>3.38</b>	<b>0.62</b>	<b>Empowered</b>

**Legend:** 1.00-1.49-Less Empowered; 1.50-2.49- Moderately Empowered, 2.50-3.49- Empowered; 3.50-4.00- Highly Empowered

Therefore, the findings suggest that empowerment positively affects individual performance and overall program effectiveness. Moreover, consistent orientation, ongoing training, and recognition are critical to ensure marshals remain motivated, capable, and committed, thereby sustaining a safe and orderly campus environment (Dela Cruz et al., 2025; Maslang et al., 2022).

Notably, qualitative findings complicate this narrative by revealing resource constraints, lack of incentives, and irregular training, suggesting a distinction between psychological empowerment and structural empowerment. Marshals may feel trusted and valued yet remain operationally constrained. This nuance contributes to the literature by demonstrating that empowerment in student-led safety programs is multidimensional and may not automatically translate into enhanced capacity or authority.

Table 5 presents the analysis of significant differences in the perceived visibility, responsiveness, and empowerment of student marshals according to the participants' role, age, gender, and department. Significant differences in perceptions were observed across role, gender, and department, though these differences should be interpreted with caution given the uneven sample composition. Faculty members consistently rated marshals higher than students, which may reflect greater familiarity with institutional processes and closer coordination with safety units. This finding aligns with prior research suggesting that proximity to governance structures influences perceptions of effectiveness (Dela Cruz et al., 2025).

Departmental differences were particularly notable, with students from the College of Criminology reporting higher ratings across all dimensions. Qualitative data help explain this pattern, as criminology students possess greater familiarity with safety roles, protocols, and authority structures. This supports the idea that perceptions of safety are mediated by

disciplinary orientation and prior exposure to security-related concepts, contributing to emerging discussions on discipline-based safety perception in higher education.

**Table 5**

*Significant differences on visibility, responsiveness and empowerment of student marshal according to profile*

Profile	Variables	Profile	Mean	F or t-value	p-value	Decision	Interpretation
Role	Visibility	Student	3.28	-2.263	0.024	Reject Ho	Significant
		Faculty	3.65				
	Responsiveness	Student	3.33	-2.051	0.041	Reject Ho	Significant
		Faculty	3.67				
	Empowerment	Student	3.37	-2.309	0.022	Reject Ho	Significant
		Faculty	3.73				
Age	Visibility	20 Below	3.26	1.947	0.144	Failed to Reject Ho	Not Significant
		21-30	3.44				
		31-40	3.45				
	Responsiveness	20 Below	3.31	2.287	0.103	Failed to Reject Ho	Not Significant
		21-30	3.49				
		31-40	3.56				
	Empowerment	20 Below	3.36	2.403	0.092	Failed to Reject Ho	Not Significant
		21-30	3.54				
		31-40	3.56				
Gender	Visibility	Male	3.37	4.573	0.011	Reject Ho	Significant
		Female	3.25				
		Other	2.96				
	Responsiveness	Male	3.41	4.542	0.011	Reject Ho	Significant
		Female	3.32				
		Other	2.98				
	Empowerment	Male	3.47	4.229	0.015	Reject Ho	Significant
		Female	3.34				
		Other	3.12				
Department	Visibility	COC	3.50	5.822	<0.001	Reject Ho	Significant
		CCBA	3.14				
	Responsiveness	COC	3.53	5.212	<0.001	Reject Ho	Significant
		CCBA	3.21				
	Empowerment	COC	3.55	4.930	<0.001	Reject Ho	Significant
		CCBA	3.27				

Gender-based differences also emerged, with male participants rating marshals more positively than female participants. This finding aligns with international literature indicating that perceptions of safety and authority are gendered, shaped by differing experiences of vulnerability and trust in security systems (Flaherty, 2025; Roberts, 2022). Conceptually, this suggests that student-led safety programs must be examined through a gender-sensitive lens to ensure inclusivity and perceived legitimacy across student groups.

The findings from Table 5 provide practical implications for program enhancement. The significant differences based on role, gender, and department suggest the need for targeted interventions, such as cross-departmental awareness campaigns, gender-sensitive training, and faculty engagement programs. These strategies are supported by the literature, which emphasizes that structured communication, clear role definitions, and recognition of security personnel contribute to a more effective, empowered, and responsive safety program (Dela Cruz et al., 2025; Barillo et al., 2025; Roberts, 2022). Ultimately, understanding these differences can guide improvements in marshal visibility, responsiveness, and empowerment, ensuring an equitable and secure campus environment.

**Table 6**

*Summary of themes*

<b>Theme</b>	<b>Core Challenge Identified</b>
1. Student misbehavior and resistance	Difficulty enforcing discipline due to student defiance
2. Limited manpower and resources	Inadequate personnel and lack of uniforms or equipment
3. Balancing duties and studies	Struggle to manage academic and marshal responsibilities
4. Inadequate training	Absence of formal preparation for emergencies and safety duties
5. Need for administrative support	Desire for recognition, meetings, and logistical assistance
6. Low awareness and cooperation	Limited understanding of marshal roles by students/faculty
7. Program improvement	Calls for membership expansion and continuous training

To answer challenges encountered by student marshals, interviews were conducted with selected student marshals to identify the challenges they face in performing their duties related to campus and event security. Thematic analysis of their responses yielded seven major themes.

### ***Theme 1: Student Misbehavior and Resistance to Authority***

Marshals frequently face challenges in enforcing rules due to student noncompliance and defiance. Some students display aggressive behavior or disregard the marshals' authority, especially when addressing disciplinary concerns such as vaping or improper conduct.

*“Matitigas ang ulo, matatayang, hindi nasusunod, maraming nagvavape, inaaway, hinahamon.” (They are stubborn, defiant, do not follow instructions, many are vaping, they provoke conflicts, and they challenge authority) SM3*

This situation highlights the need for behavioral orientation among students and stronger institutional backing for the marshals' disciplinary role.

### ***Theme 2: Limited Manpower and Resource Constraints***

Participants cited insufficient manpower as a recurring problem, particularly during large events. The limited number of marshals and the lack of complete uniforms and communication tools hinder their efficiency and presence.

*“Manpower, limited.” SM1*

*“Uniform para sa colors lang, pero as marshal wala pa kasi ginagawa pa lang.” (The uniform is currently only for colors; there is no official marshal uniform because it is still being developed) SM5*

This theme emphasizes the necessity of organizational support through recruitment, adequate equipment, and resource allocation.

### ***Theme 3: Balancing Academic and Marshal Responsibilities***

Student marshals find it difficult to balance academic commitments with security duties, especially when activities extend late into the evening. Their dual role leads to fatigue and time management challenges.

*“Break time, time management, gabi na ang tapos.” (Break times, time management, and finishing late in the evening are challenges) SM2*

This highlights the need for flexible scheduling or academic adjustments to accommodate service responsibilities.

#### ***Theme 4: Inadequate Training and Procedural Knowledge***

Several marshals admitted lacking formal training in emergency response, safety protocols, and incident management. This lack of preparedness affects their confidence in responding to unexpected situations.

*“Walang training on basic life support” (There is no training on basic life support) SM1*

*“Naiilang, protocol, proper procedure, simulation exercises.” (There is discomfort due to the lack of clear protocols, proper procedures, and simulation exercises) SM3*

Regular workshops and simulations are needed to enhance competency and ensure preparedness for various campus incidents.

#### ***Theme 5: Need for Greater Administrative Support and Recognition***

Although marshals acknowledged the support of administrators, they expressed a desire for formal recognition, incentives, and more regular coordination meetings to maintain motivation and morale.

*“Sana may extra consideration and incentives or dagdag points” (I hope there could be additional consideration and incentives or extra points) SM2*

*“Meeting but not regular.” SM6*

Institutional recognition and consistent engagement are crucial in fostering a sense of value and belonging among student marshals.

#### ***Theme 6: Lack of Awareness and Cooperation from the Campus Community***

Some marshals reported that certain students and faculty are unaware of the marshal program, resulting in a lack of cooperation or respect for their authority.

*“Hindi alam o aware na marshal ka, sana ma-introduce sa buong community” (They do not know or are not aware that you are a marshal; I hope we can be properly introduced to the entire community) SM7*

This suggests the need for information campaigns and proper introduction of the marshal unit to the entire school community.

### ***Theme 7: Suggestions for Program Improvement***

Marshals proposed increasing membership, setting stricter selection criteria, and conducting more frequent meetings and training sessions to improve their organization's performance.

*“Dadami, membership must be strict and with criteria” (The number of members may increase, but membership should be strict and based on clear criteria) SM8*

*“More trainings, regular meetings.” SM4*

These recommendations demonstrate their proactive approach and commitment to enhancing the marshal program.

The integration of quantitative and qualitative findings reveals a nuanced picture of the PGPC Student Marshal Program. High quantitative ratings reflect perceived effectiveness and trust, while qualitative themes expose operational challenges that constrain performance. This convergence suggests that student marshal programs can be simultaneously effective and limited, functioning well within existing structures but requiring sustained institutional investment to reach optimal performance.

This integrated interpretation contributes to broader debates on community policing and participatory governance in educational institutions. Student marshals function as hybrid actors, neither formal security personnel nor ordinary students, whose effectiveness depends on visibility, responsiveness, and empowerment supported by institutional structures. The findings reinforce the need to view student-led safety initiatives not merely as stopgap solutions but as legitimate governance mechanisms requiring systematic evaluation and support.

## **5. Conclusion and Recommendations**

This study examined the visibility, responsiveness, and empowerment of the PGPC Student Marshal Unit as perceived by members of the academic community. The findings indicate that student marshals are generally viewed as effective contributors to campus safety, demonstrating consistent presence, timely response to incidents, and a strong sense of role awareness and institutional support. These findings are anchored in Social Role Theory, which explains that clearly defined and socially recognized roles strengthen legitimacy and performance within institutional settings. The alignment of quantitative results with qualitative

insights affirms that student-led safety initiatives can play a meaningful role in maintaining order and fostering a secure learning environment when appropriately integrated within institutional governance structures.

While perceptions of performance were generally high, the absence of ceiling-level ratings and the presence of operational challenges suggest that effectiveness is shaped not only by individual commitment but also by structural conditions such as training, resources, and manpower. This finding is consistent with Situational Awareness Theory, which emphasizes that effective safety responses depend on continuous environmental monitoring, timely decision-making, and adequate organizational support.

Beyond the PGPC context, the results offer broader insights into student-led safety structures in higher education. The study demonstrates that visibility, responsiveness, and empowerment function as interrelated dimensions that collectively influence perceived campus safety. From the lens of Empowerment Theory, the findings indicate that perceived authority and institutional recognition enhance student marshal engagement, but sustained empowerment requires ongoing administrative support. These conclusions contribute to existing scholarship by validating these theoretical perspectives within a student marshal setting.

At the regional and national levels, the findings may inform policy development related to campus safety and student affairs. Higher education institutions may draw on this evidence to establish or strengthen student-led safety units guided by clear role definitions, systematic training, and institutional recognition. Educational authorities and policymakers may also consider integrating student marshal programs into broader campus safety frameworks, emphasizing collaboration between students, faculty, and formal security personnel as a sustainable approach to campus governance.

Based on the findings, it is recommended that PGPC administrators institutionalize regular training programs to enhance marshal responsiveness and situational awareness, particularly during emergency and high-risk scenarios. Strengthening logistical support and manpower allocation may also improve consistency in marshal visibility. Faculty members are encouraged to actively coordinate with student marshals during academic and extracurricular activities to reinforce collaborative safety practices, while students are encouraged to engage with and support the program to foster shared responsibility for campus order.

For future research, scholars may replicate the study in other higher education institutions to examine the applicability of the visibility–responsiveness–empowerment framework across diverse settings. Further studies may also incorporate additional variables such as trust, legitimacy, or student well-being, and employ longitudinal or comparative designs to assess the long-term impact of student-led safety initiatives on campus security outcomes.

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### **Institutional Review Board Statement**

This study was conducted in accordance with the ethical guidelines set by Padre Garcia Polytechnic College. The conduct of this study has been approved and given relative clearance(s) by the President of Padre Garcia Polytechnic College.

### **Declaration**

The author declares the use of Artificial Intelligence (AI) in writing this paper. In particular, the author used ChatGPT and Grammarly in checking for grammar and summarizing key points and paraphrasing ideas. The author takes full responsibility in ensuring proper review and editing of contents generated using AI.

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