Report on crime and criminality at UCT

Report to Council (October 2018)

Synopsis

This report provides a description of the safety and policing resources at the University of Cape Town (UCT), as well as an analysis of crime and criminality that has affected the UCT community since 2010. In terms of crime, the main focus is on robbery and theft, as these crimes are the crime categories that are mostly experienced by students, staff and visitors. An analysis of assault is also provided. This report shows that robberies, particularly off-campus robberies, have been increasing significantly in recent years, with the number of reported robberies having increased by more than 200% since 2010. Theft remains a problem at UCT, especially theft of cell phones and laptops; theft from motor vehicles; and theft of motor vehicles and bicycles. Nonetheless, there have been some positive developments in that some suspects that were allegedly responsible for bag and bicycle thefts have been apprehended by CPS; and robberies have declined in some of the more typical crime hot spots as a result of improved patrolling and visibility from security personnel.

Provision of safety and security for the UCT community

Campus Protection Services (CPS)

UCT employs a dedicated campus protection and campus policing department (CPS) that is located within Properties and Services. CPS's approach to campus safety is comprised of four components, which are as follows:

- Visible policing: Uniformed CPS staff patrol the campus on foot and in vehicles, with the objective of deterring and preventing crime.
- Target hardening and surveillance: Equipment and assets have been installed in an effort to improve safety and security of the UCT community. This includes fencing, gates, access control and closed-circuit television (CCTV) cameras.
- Education: Various meetings and workshops are held with students and staff to create awareness of security issues and provide advice on how to deal with various situations.
- Enforcement: CPS will take whatever appropriate action is necessary to maintain order and security on campus, in cooperation with SAPS where required.

CPS staff also assist with the manning of roadblocks on UCT properties and, when requested, escort staff and students, especially after dark.

Community Improvement Districts

Safety and security of members of the UCT community are enhanced through the presence of Community Improvement Districts (CIDs). There are three that have direct relevance for the upper, middle, lower and medical campuses. These CIDs employ private security personnel who patrol the designated areas on a 24-hour basis and deal with public safety-related issues. Furthermore, there is often a strong focus on street cleaning and general cleanliness, and the improvement and maintenance of public spaces. There is generally good cooperation between the three improvement districts.

Groote Schuur Community Improvement District (GSCID)

The GSCID was established in 2010 to service the areas in and around Main Road, between Dean Street (Newlands) and Anzio Road (Observatory). In addition to utilising a private security company to patrol the GSCID area and provide personnel for mobile security kiosks, the GSCID also employs a full-time social worker to assist

and support homeless people in the area. UCT makes a significant contribution to the GSCID budget and three UCT staff members are on the GSCID board.

Recently the GSCID has contracted a dedicated City of Cape Town Law Enforcement official for the GSCID area, through the City of Cape Town's "rent-a-cop" programme, with this official assisting the GSCID with the enforcement of by-laws and traffic regulations. The GSCID has also recently installed sophisticated CCTV cameras and established a surveillance and control room. The CCTV cameras have vehicle licence plate-recognition capability and will be integrated into the City of Cape Town's extensive CCTV network. There is a very good working relationship between the GSCID and UCT Properties and Services.

Observatory Community Improvement District (OBCID)

The OBCID was created in 2009 with similar objectives to the GSCID and encompasses the area between the N2/Settlers' Way and Rochester Road, and Main Roadd and Liesbeek Parkway. This area is a popular residential area for students and some UCT staff.

Little Mowbray Rosebank Improvement District (LMRID)

LMRID was established in 2016 and is bounded on the south by Alma Road, on the west by Liesbeek Parkway, to the north by the N2/M5 highways, and to the east by the M5 and Rondebosch Common.

South African Police Service

The SAPS Act (Act no. 68 of 1995) requires the SAPS to: ensure the safety and security and uphold and safeguard the fundamental Constitutional rights of all persons in South Africa; and cooperate with "the communities it serves" to reduce crime; and submit to civilian oversight (Republic of South Africa, 1995). The SAPS approach to policing has been guided by the National Crime Combating Strategy (NCCS), which was launched in 2000. The principal emphasis of the NCCS has been serious and violent crime, as well as organised crime, with the aim being to substantially reduce the incidents of such crime. It has also focused on policing service delivery in order to provide more visible and immediate accomplishments (Burger & Boshoff, 2008). Joint meetings are regularly held between the two SAPS station management teams and CPS to discuss issues related to crime and safety.
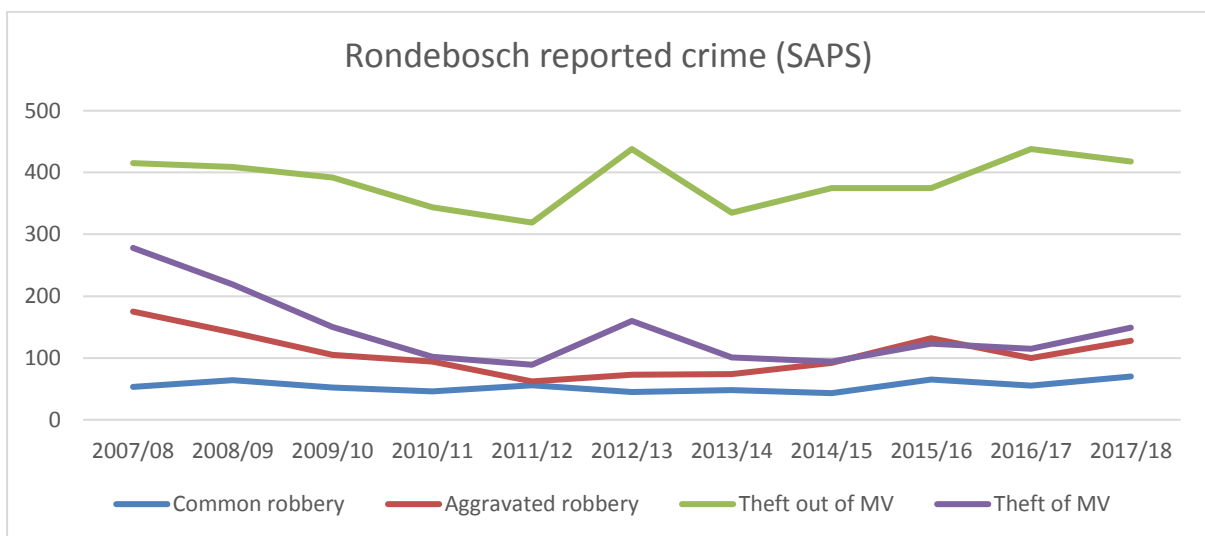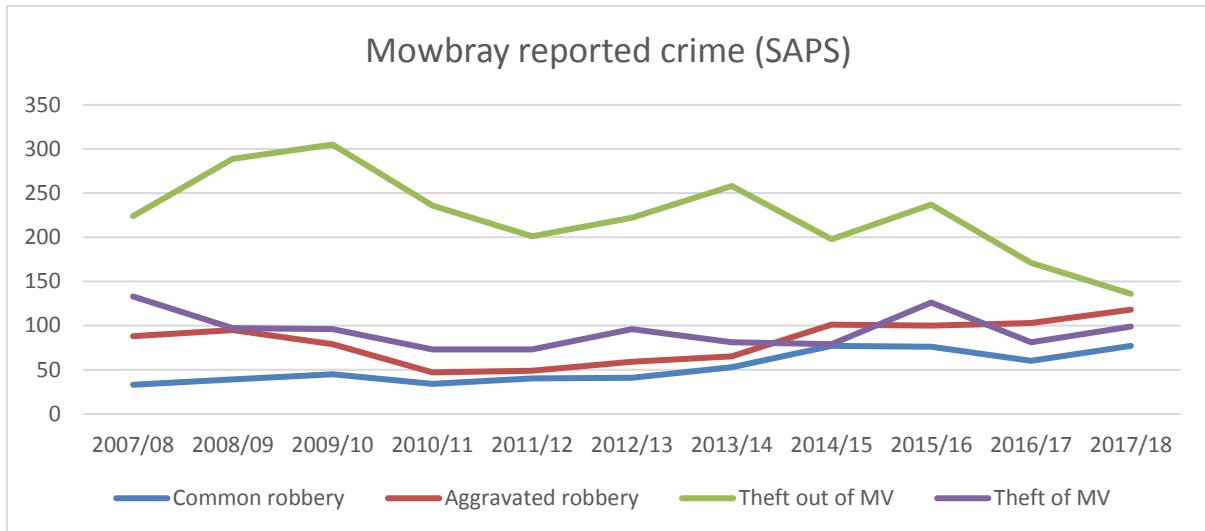
The UCT crime environment

UCT is an open campus, and a number of UCT properties, particularly student residences, are in residential areas that are currently experiencing elevated crime levels. Although UCT does provide safe and free student and staff transport, numerous students, members of staff and visitors regularly walk in the area. Members of the UCT community are regularly victims of crime, particularly robbery and theft.

There are two SAPS police stations in and around UCT's upper, middle, lower and medical campuses (SAPS Rondebosch and SAPS Mowbray). SAPS Cape Town Central services the Hiddingh and Graduate School of Business campuses. The SAPS data for the Mowbray and Rondebosch policing areas is discussed below in relation to robbery and theft. SAPS Cape Town Central crime data is not discussed as Hiddingh campus is a very small area within this policing precinct, as is the population of UCT students and staff as compared to the general population that lives, works and visits the central Cape Town area. Most of the crime that affects the UCT community takes place in the Mowbray and Rondebosch policing areas.

In the Mowbray policing area, common robbery has been elevated over the past five years compared to the previous five-year period, with common robbery having increased by 28% between 2016/17 and 2017/18, from 60 cases to 77. Robbery with aggravated circumstances has increased by 15% and theft of motor vehicles by 10%. However, theft of motor vehicles has decreased considerably in recent years, from 237 in 2015/16 to 136 in 2017/18 (43% decrease).

Similar patterns are observable in relation to reported robbery and theft cases in the Rondebosch policing area, with noticeable increases in common robbery (27% increase), robbery with aggravating circumstances (28%) and theft of motor vehicles (30%) between 2016/17 and 2017/18. There was a slight decline in the number of
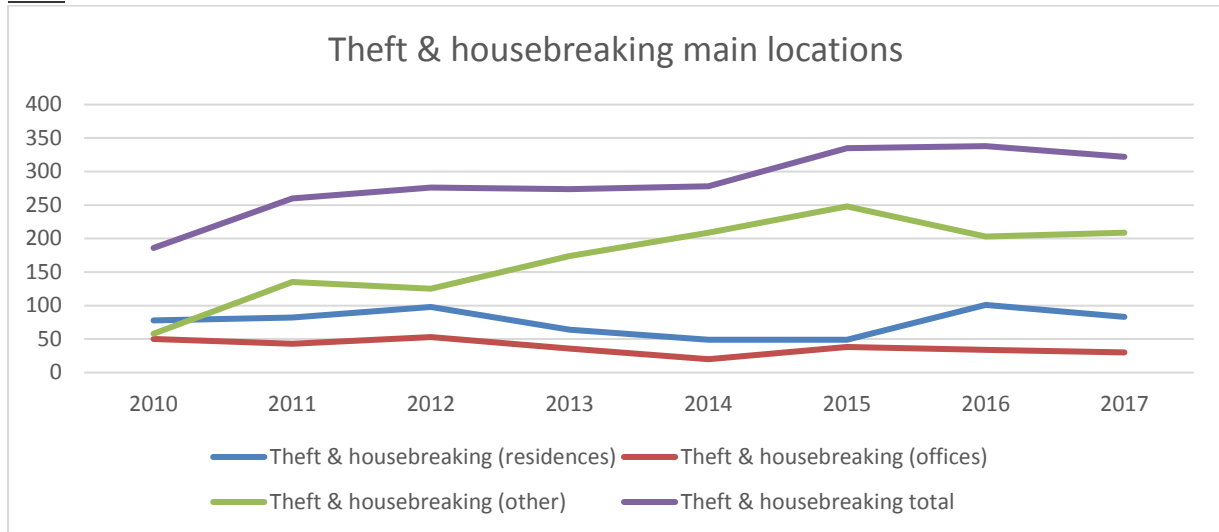
thefts out of motor vehicles over this period, but this crime category had been increasing considerably since 2013/14. These recent trends are at odds with the aggregate Western Cape provincial crime data, which has shown minor declines in these categories of crime, with the exception of common robbery, which increased by 1% across the province.

Mowbray reported crime (SAPS)

Rondebosch reported crime (SAPS)

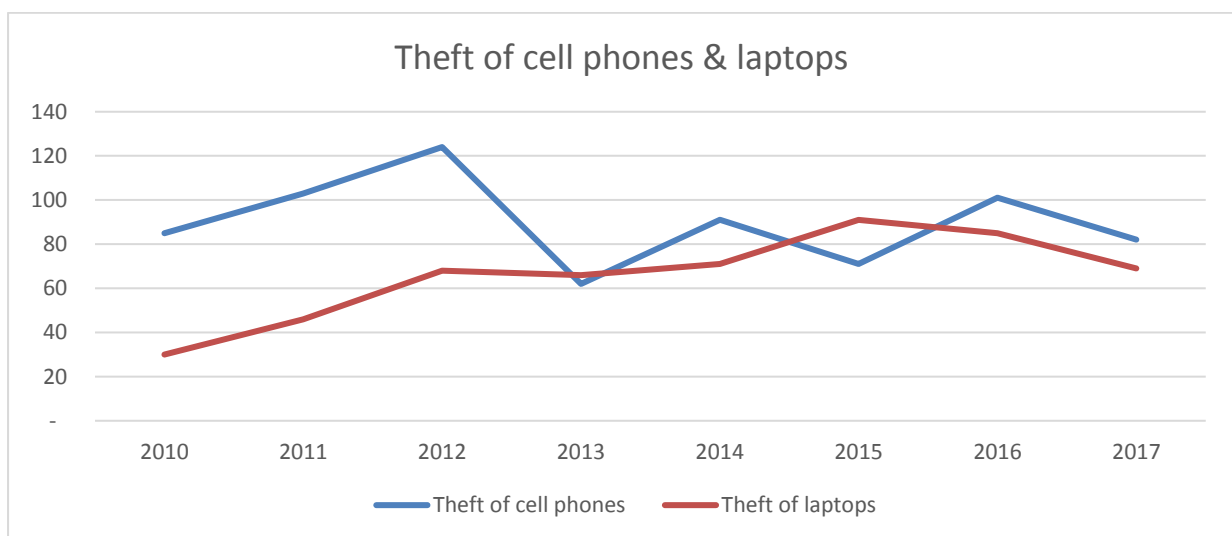**Crime and criminality directly affecting the UCT community: Annual trend analysis 2010-2018**

The section below provides a description and analysis of the main crimes affecting the UCT community, particularly theft, robbery and assault, for the period 2010 to 2017. It also includes a description of crime data up until 31 August 2018, but such data is not included in the charts below as it does not represent a full year.
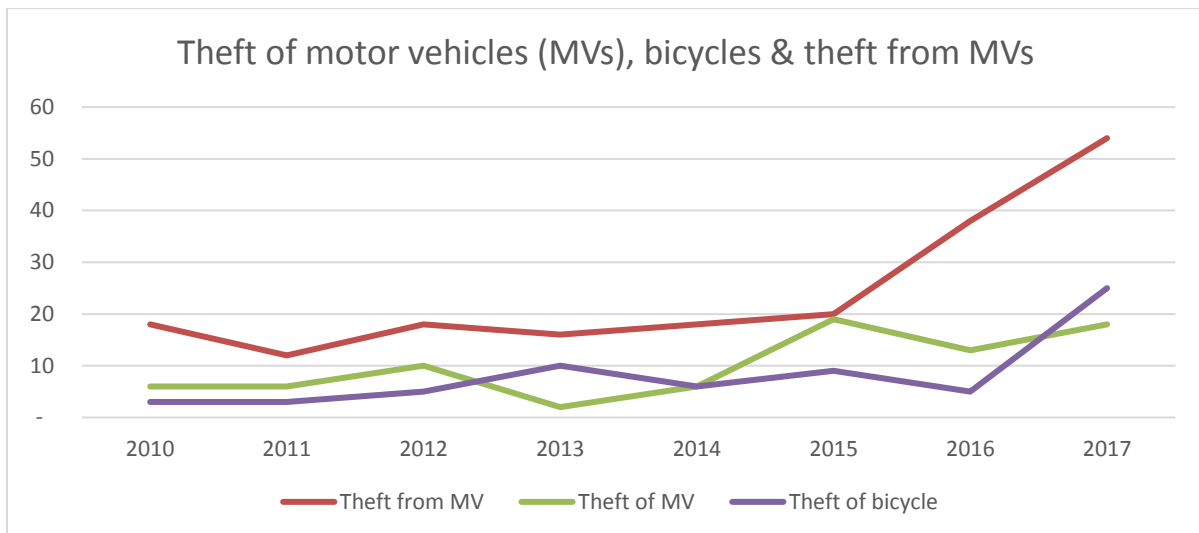
Theft & housebreaking main locations

Between 2010 and 2016 there was an upward trajectory of reported cases of theft and housebreaking by members of the UCT community, with total theft increasing by 82% from 186 cases in 2010 to 338 cases in 2016. Most theft cases are classified as "other" and typically involve the theft of items (mostly personal property) in spaces such as food courts, lecture theatres, sports facilities, libraries, computer labs and public areas. Between 2016 and 2017 there was a slight decline in theft cases, which was mainly related to reductions in thefts in residences. Thefts in student residents are significant and increased by 166% between 2015 and 2016, and then declined by 14% between 2016 and 2017. Sports facilities are a problem in terms of theft, and this is possibly due to a shortage of lockers or safe spaces for students to store their property while partaking in sporting activities.

The theft of laptops has increased considerably since 2010, from 30 cases in 2010 to 91 cases in 2015 (300% increase), but then declined to 69 laptop thefts in 2017. The general increase in laptop theft may be attributed in part to the fact that over the past eight years more students have personally acquired laptops. The reported theft of cell phones has nonetheless fluctuated since 2010 but has been in a general upward trajectory since 2010. As of the end of August 2018, there had been reports of 55 laptops and 41 cell phones that had allegedly been stolen. Therefore, it is likely that by the end of 2018 more laptops and cell phones would have been reported stolen as compared to 2017.
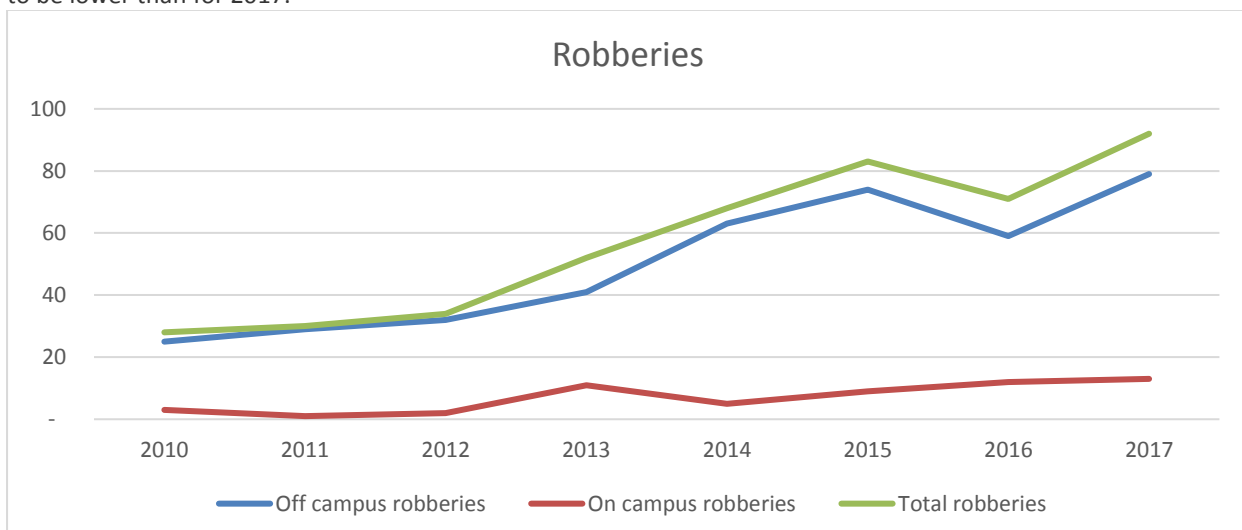
Theft of cell phones & laptops

Theft from motor vehicles has escalated dramatically in recent years, from 20 in 2015 to 54 in 2017. Theft of bicycles has seen a 500% increase between 2016 and 2017, from five to 25 reported cases. Theft of motor vehicles has also been at elevated levels since 2014, with theft of motor vehicles increasing from six to 18 between 2014 and 2017 (300% increase). It is therefore entirely possible that syndicates focusing on theft from vehicles, and theft of vehicles and bicycles, have been active in and around UCT campuses. As of 31 August 2018, there had already been 19 reported thefts of motor vehicles, which means that the total number of such thefts is likely to be significantly higher in 2018 compared to previous years. In addition, there were 14 reports of stolen bicycles in 2018. It is possible that the total number of bicycle thefts may be lower than in 2017 after CPS apprehended a suspected bicycle thief with three bicycles in his possession that had been stolen from UCT students.

Theft of motor vehicles (MVs), bicycles & theft from MVs

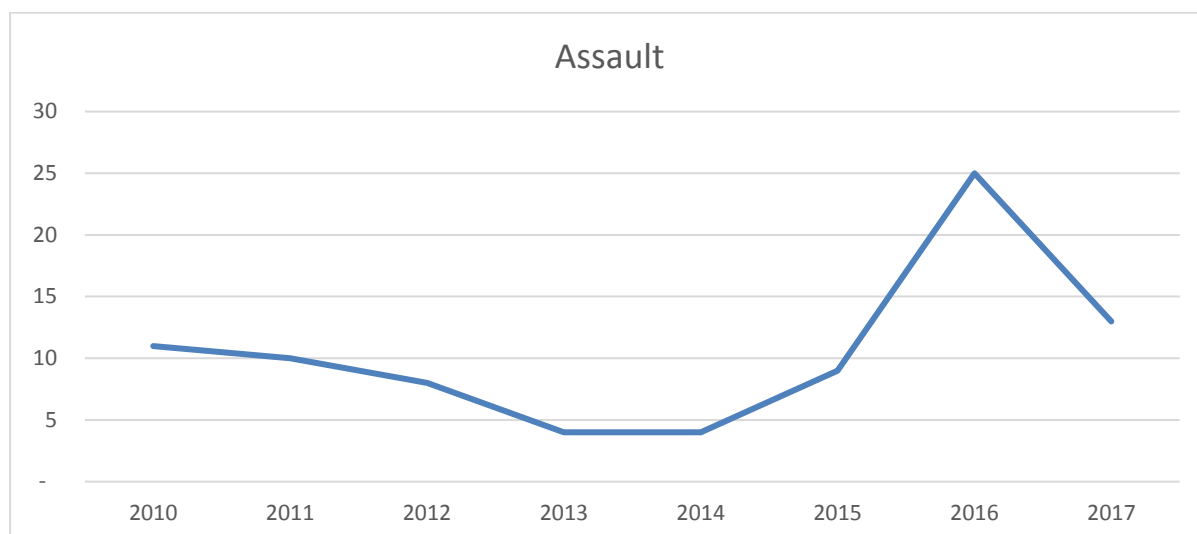Legend: Theft from MV, Theft of MV, Theft of bicycle

Robbery

There has understandably been a general upward trajectory both in terms of reported on-campus and off-campus robberies since 2012, with the majority of robberies being reported in areas outside of UCT properties. This corresponds with increases in robberies in the Mowbray and Rondebosch policing areas. This data in the chart below includes armed and unarmed robberies, with armed robberies being committed with a knife or firearm (or a replica thereof). Many of the unarmed robberies have entailed the threat of force. The total number of reported annual robberies increased by more than 200% between 2010 and 2017, from 28 in 2010 to 92 in 2017. There was a 20% decline in off-campus robberies between 2015 and 2016 but the number of robberies increased again between 2016 and 2017, by 34%. However, as of the end of August there had been 32 off-campus robberies and seven on-campus robberies, which means that the total robbery figure for 2018 is likely to be lower than for 2017.

Robberies

Legend: Off campus robberies, On campus robberies, Total robberies

Assault

Cases of assault declined gradually between 2010 and 2014 but escalated significantly between 2014 and 2016. This was primarily related to the student protests on campus in relation to the statue of Cecil Rhodes, tuition fees, student accommodation and insourcing of certain categories of outsourced staff. Between 2016 and 2017 there was a 48% reduction in the number of reported cases of assault. There were seven reported cases of assault as at the end of August 2018, which means that the total number of assaults for 2018 will likely be lower or on a par with the 2017 cases, unless there are more violent protest actions on UCT campuses within the year,

Detailed analysis of select robbery, theft and kidnapping cases: 1 September 2017 – 31 August 2018

The following is an analysis of most crimes reported to CPS during the period of 1 September 2017 to 31 August 2018. The difference between the previous period and this one is the types of crimes that have emerged. There has been an uptake in bicycle theft, as well as motor vehicle theft from university parking areas. There has also been a spate of reported kidnappings, as well as a syndicate operating in the food court on upper campus. Some clear trends and hot spots have emerged, and will be discussed in terms of robbery, theft and assault.

Robbery
There have been 52 cases of robbery reported to CPS over the specific period. Of those cases, 25 were unarmed and 27 were armed. Weapons used included knives (14 cases), firearms (11 cases), a glass bottle, and a pair of scissors. Cell phones are the most commonly stolen personal item (35 cases), while bags are often targeted by offenders in the hope that they contain laptops, wallets and other valuable items. Besides bags (10 cases), laptops (nine cases), and wallets (seven cases), other items targeted by robbers include cash, bank cards, textbooks, wristwatches, student cards, bicycles and clothes.

The victims were mostly targeted when they are alone (44 cases) and in the process of walking or sitting in public. Most of the perpetrators approached the victims on foot (34 cases). In cases where a vehicle was involved (18 cases), perpetrators either accosted the victims on foot and then fled in a waiting vehicle, jumped out of vehicles to rob victims and then immediately fled, or they attempted to pull victims into vehicles. Of the 18 robberies from vehicles, three involved minibus taxis and eight involved white vehicles of different makes, most commonly Toyotas and Volkswagens. Most robbery incidents (25) involved a single offender, 18 cases involved two offenders, and nine cases involved more than three offenders.

Main Road (between Rondebosch and Observatory) is the zone where most off-campus robberies have taken place during the period (16 cases). However, the robberies take place in various sections, including in Rondebosch (six cases), Mowbray (five cases), Observatory (three cases), and Rosebank (two cases). Besides

Main Road, there were also four cases reported on Woolsack Drive, Rosebank. There were also two cases each reported in Penzance Road, Observatory; Lover's Walk, Rondebosch; Cecil Roadd, Mowbray; and Burg Road, Rondebosch. It is also worth noting that of the outliers, six cases were reported in Mowbray, and four cases each were reported in Observatory, on upper campus, and on lower campus.

Table 1 shows the number of robbery cases reported at specific times. The most common times for robbery are in the late afternoon to early evening. The most vulnerable times for robbery appear to be the hours between 4pm and midnight. Taking all of the above into consideration, we can safely assume that students who are making their way to Main Road towards public transport or their places of residence after classes or studying in the library, and who are carrying laptops and cell phones, are at highest risk for robbery.

Table 1

Time of day	Number of cases
00:00 – 04:00	6
04:00 – 08:00	4
09:00 – 12:00	5
12:00 – 16:00	11
1600: - 20:00	13
20:00 – 00:00	13

Kidnapping

The recent incidents of kidnappings in and around UCT campuses are mostly related to robbery. However, the specific modus operandi of kidnapping robbers warrants its own analysis. There were several previous cases, and the trend has continued into the September 2017 to August 2018 term. There were four cases within this period, all of which took place on Main Road. Two of these cases involved occupants of a Toyota Quantum, presenting themselves as a minibus taxi. Students would then enter the taxis, after which they were robbed of their cell phones. In one case, a student was forced to give their bank PIN number to the perpetrators. In another case, a ransom of R4000 was demanded from a student's boyfriend. Both students were released afterwards. There were also two cases of attempted kidnapping, one which involved the student getting robbed before managing to escape, and another where a student was forced at gunpoint to a waiting vehicle before managing to flee. All four victims of the reported kidnappings were female. However, the times of the attempted kidnappings, and the number of perpetrators, varied in each of the cases.

Theft

There were 314 reported cases of theft over the analysed period. Of these, 122 cases were due to inattentiveness. In 102 cases, complainants had left their property unattended (24 cases for less than 30 minutes; and 78 cases for longer than 30 minutes). Twenty cases were the result of complainants leaving their offices, residence rooms, or cars unlocked. Of the 314 theft cases, there are 15 in which it was not possible to determine whether complainants were inattentive or not, but it is likely that they were due to residence rooms being left unlocked and bicycles not being properly chained.

When examining the 102 cases where property was left unattended, there are distinct hot spots in terms of buildings, campuses and residences. The majority of theft due to inattentiveness takes place on upper campus (65 cases); followed by lower campus (32 cases) and middle and Hiddingh campuses (eight cases each); and finally the medical campus (six cases). The residences where students should be more attentive in terms of their personal property are Graça Machel residence (seven cases), Forest Hills residence (six cases), and Kopano residence (three cases). Furthermore, students and staff should be careful not to leave items unattended in the following buildings: Sports Centre (12 cases), Robert Leslie Social Science building (nine cases), Menzies building (eight cases), and the Oppenheimer library (three cases).

Of the 314 theft cases, 42 were cases of theft from residence rooms. Mostly laptops, cell phones, food and clothing were taken. The most problematic residence for the 2017/18 period was Graça Machel residence, with 12 cases of theft from residence rooms. In comparison, the other more problematic residences are Forest Hills (six cases), Leo Marquard (five cases) and Kopano residence (four cases). For nine of these 42 cases, it is certain that rooms were left unlocked. However, in many of the other cases it is unclear whether negligence was involved.

Another problem in terms of theft is how often items are stolen from sports facilities at UCT. The Sports Centre alone has had 15 cases of reported theft. The UCT gym has also had seven cases, and the Kopano soccer field has had four. During this period, the Cissy Gool food court was also a hot spot for theft. A syndicate appeared to have been operating at the food court, targeting students who leave their bags under tables near their feet as they eat. The syndicate appeared to have typically operated between 1pm to 4.30pm. The syndicate was operative between September 2017 and May 2018, during which time nine cases of theft were reported before suspects were eventually arrested.

Bicycle theft
During this period, 21 cases of bicycle theft were reported. Only two of these cases are unclear about whether or not the bicycles were locked. However, the otherr cases involved padlocks and chains being cut. Five of the bicycles were reported stolen from Robert Leslie Social Science building, four from the Maths building, and two from the RW James building.

Theft out of vehicles
There have been 35 cases of items being stolen from vehicles. A large majority of these cases took place on upper campus (19 cases), with middle campus having nine reported cases, and lower campus having five. Seven out of the nine reported cases of vehicle theft on middle campus took place in the P1 parking area. On upper campus, six cases were reported in the P1 parking area. The P4, P7 and P15 parking areas on upper campus all had two cases of theft from vehicles, while the P17 and P5 parking areas on upper campus each reported one. Many of the items that were stolen from vehicles were items that were visible inside the vehicle, including cell phones on the front seat and GPS devices on the dashboard. However, the items most commonly stolen out of vehicles were car batteries and car radios (eight cases each).

Theft of vehicles
There have been 27 cases of stolen vehicles during this period, and six cases of attempted vehicle theft. The majority of these take place on lower campus (15 cases), with middle campus and upper campus having nine and seven cases respectively. The two most problematic areas for vehicle theft are the College of Music parking area (six cases) and the Woolsack Residence parking area (three cases).

Assault
There were eight cases of assault during the reporting period, with two taking place in the Clarendon Residence. Three of the cases involved students as the alleged perpetrators, where they reportedly attacked fellow students. A further two of the cases reportedly involved students allegedly assaulting staff members (a warden, and a food manager). One case involved a staff member allegedly assaulting another staff member. Two cases involved unknown persons attacking students off-campus; one while walking in Main Road, Mowbray, and the other at the Zoo parking area.

Successes

Apprehension of suspected offenders

There were five cases where CPS apprehended alleged suspects and handed them over to SAPS. The most successful case involved an undercover operation that resulted in the apprehension of a syndicate that were stealing bags in the food plaza on upper campus. Furthermore, as mentioned above, CPS also apprehended a suspect who had allegedly been stealing bicycles from UCT campuses.

Reduction of crime in previous robbery hot spots

Up until early 2018 there were a series of crime hot spots where members of the UCT community were being regularly mugged. These hot spots were as follows:

- M3 footbridge, Mowbray
- Falmouth Road, Observatory
- Cecil Road, Mowbray

- Selby Road, Mowbray
- Rosebank train station (and surrounds).

Reported robberies in these hot-spot areas declined significantly, which can most likely be attributed to more visible and strategic patrolling by GSCID and the CPS security personnel. In the case of the M3 footbridge, a GSCID-manned mobile security kiosk was installed and much of the overgrown vegetation was cleared (which had previously provided a hiding place for would-be criminals).

Challenges

In terms of improving safety in and around UCT campuses, the following challenges exist:

- <u>Determinants of robbery and theft</u>: Violent crimes and property crimes are typically driven by high levels of inequality, poverty, unemployment, substance abuse and dysfunctional family dynamics. CPS and the CIDs do not have the mandate or resources to address such issues.
- <u>Geographical nature of upper, middle and lower campuses</u>: The fact that these campuses are relatively open to the public and are spread out over a relatively large geographical area makes it very difficult for CPS to adequately patrol the entire area with their current level of personnel and resources.
- <u>Antiquated CCTV infrastructure</u>: The existing CCTV hardware and software is relatively dated and limited in terms of it capacity to prevent crime. It does not have the capacity to incorporate more recent technological innovations, such as licence-plate recognition, facial recognition, gait recognition and crime prevention predictive algorithms. Furthermore, a number of the CCTV cameras are not performing optimally, especially in relation to the recording of video footage. The UCT CCTV network of cameras can also not be effectively linked to the City of Cape Town's extensive CCTV camera network.
- <u>SAPS and CPS</u>: SAPS and CPS do regularly interact in relation to crime investigation and prevention. However, the feedback from SAPS, particularly in relation to the investigation and outcome of cases, could be improved considerably.
- <u>CPS's relative marginalisation in relation to the rest of the UCT community</u>: There are no systematic and institutionalised systems and processes that allow for information flow and interactions between students/staff and CPS, with most of the interactions taking place after a crime has taken place. There is currently no formal mechanism through which students and staff can directly communicate with CPS regarding issues that make them feel unsafe. Nonetheless, CPS is generally response and attentive when there are calls for assistance.
- <u>The need for innovations in crime prevention and visible policing</u>: There have been a number of positive evidence-based innovations in place-based policing in other countries that show that theft and robberies can be significantly reduced if more targeted and "smarter" policing strategies and management approaches are adopted. Hence, there is need for CPS to work more closely with policing and crime prevention scholars at UCT.

Report compiled with the assistance of Guy Lamb and Lauren October
Safety and Violence Initiative: UCT