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November 1, 2007

Dear Friends:

On behalf of the Task Force on Campus Safety, I am pleased to provide our Final Report. This dedicated group of campus and community leaders from across the state has worked diligently to explore the preparedness and safety of Wisconsin’s students and campuses.

Wisconsin’s colleges and universities are the envy of the nation, and attract students from all over the country and the world. Students at our higher education institutions, and their families back home, have a lot on their minds. One thing they shouldn’t have to worry about is whether their campus is prepared for an emergency.

Tragic events in Wisconsin and across the United States remind us we must always remain vigilant, and work to ensure our campuses are safe and prepared. I want to thank all the task force members, the co-chairs, and all the campus and community leaders for their dedication to the safety of Wisconsin’s colleges, universities, and technical colleges.

This Final Report recommends long term solutions – from implementing new and innovative technologies across campuses to finding resourceful ways to get students, faculty, and staff the help they need. Threats to the security of our schools are complex and always changing, but we must constantly work to update our readiness. This report serves as an in-depth assessment of how campuses can and are providing student and campus safety.

Though each campus and community has different resources and needs, these comprehensive recommendations will serve as a guide to ensure safe and prepared campuses for years to come.

Sincerely,

Jim Doyle
Governor
# Governor’s Task Force on Campus Safety

## Task Force Co-Chairs

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Dr. Bruce Shepard, Chancellor</th>
<th>Roger Leque, Chief of Police</th>
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<tr>
<td>University of Wisconsin-Green Bay</td>
<td>River Falls Police Department</td>
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ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

The Task Force would like to acknowledge the significant contributions of Chief Sue Riseling, UW-Madison Police Department; Doug Tripp, Director of Public Safety at Milwaukee Area Technical College; Maggie Balistreri-Clarke, Vice President of Student Development and Dean of Students at Edgewood College; Dr. Gary Pavela, University of Maryland; Chief Adam Garcia, Reno Nevada Police Department; Assistant Attorney General Dave Perlman from the Wisconsin Department of Justice; and Dr. Lei Wei, Associate Professor in the Department of Electrical and Computer Engineering at the University of Central Florida. We also thank the many individuals who attended and addressed the Task Force at public summits in Milwaukee and Eau Claire this summer. A variety of perspectives were expressed and each was valuable to our discussions.

We are especially grateful to staff at the Office of Justice Assistance and the Office of the Governor for their hard work, dedication and contributions to producing this report:

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

In the wake of the tragic events at Virginia Tech in April 2007, Governor Jim Doyle established the Task Force on Campus Safety to review current campus safety practices, develop best practices criteria and offer recommendations to ensure the safety of students and staff on Wisconsin campuses.

The Task Force convened two public summits, engaged state and national experts and marshaled the experience and diverse perspectives of law enforcement, student health and academic services, parents, administrators and students to reach the best practice criteria and final recommendations.

Prescriptive campus safety solutions ignore the complexity and diversity of safety issues faced by individual colleges and universities as well as the resources available to them. Instead, the Task Force offers a set of best practice criteria for campuses to consider when reviewing current plans or adopting new safety practices and procedures. The criteria fall into four categories: prevention and preparedness, intervention, response and post-event activities. In each category, examples from campuses around the state and nation illustrate how the recommended criteria could be used in the field.

To prevent and prepare for disasters, including major crimes, campus officials should:

- Conduct risk assessments to inform and develop emergency plans for all types of disasters.
- Use the concepts of Crime Prevention through Environmental Design to deter criminal activity and provide greater security while increasing the comfort and functionality of campus areas.
- Establish clear procedures for identifying and reporting threatening or dangerous behavior.
- Address the abuse of alcohol and other drugs—a ubiquitous problem on college campuses and a factor in many serious crimes.
- Increase student access to mental health treatment by eliminating financial, cultural and logistical barriers to receiving services.
- Create a sense of urgency and shared responsibility for the safety of campus by including students organizations, families and community members in outreach and educational activities.

To effectively intervene when dangerous or threatening behavior has been identified, campus officials should:

- Create a multi-disciplinary review team comprised of academic, mental health and law enforcement officials to address reports of troubling behavior.
- Conduct a thorough assessment of every report of troubling behavior to ensure an appropriate response.
- Implement standardized assessment and screening procedures.
- Develop procedures and mechanisms, including modifications to academic codes of
conduct, to ensure that identified individuals complete whatever requirements the team imposes.

To ensure an **effective response** to a crisis, campus officials should:

- Develop relationships with local authorities and coordinate emergency response planning.
- Adopt the National Incident Management System (NIMS) as the campus emergency response command structure.
- Ensure that campus security and emergency responders can share radio communications during a crisis.
- Develop a variety of emergency alert capabilities to broadcast timely and informative notifications to students on and off campus.

To effectively **recover from a disaster or major crime**, campuses should:

- Develop disaster recovery and continuity of operations plans that consider the needs of employees, students, families and the larger community.
- Develop contingency plans for loss of power, telecommunications and the need for physical relocation.
- Develop partnering agreements with other campuses to provide for displaced students, faculty and staff if operations are interrupted.
- Designate a single point of contact for external communication during and after an emergency to ensure consistent messages and eliminate confusion.

- Provide timely updates and status reports to all stakeholders including students, parents, alumni, employees and community members.
- Develop communication plans for events that occur at other campuses—consider the need for emotional support, organized events and concerns for copycat crime.
- Assess and plan for the potential needs of students and employees following a major disruption, including offering financial assistance, temporary lodging and transportation.

**Campus safety technology** can be used in every safety category, from prevention to response and recovery. The Task Force recommends that campus officials:

- Conduct an assessment of current IT capabilities and creatively consider how they might be leveraged to address security vulnerabilities.
- Use technology as a ‘tool’ to implement prevention, early intervention, emergency response and post-event recovery strategies—technology in and of itself will not create a safe campus.
- Technology can be defeated by students and employees who are unwilling to adjust their behavior. The selection process for any technological solution should take user acceptance into consideration.

Policies regarding **information sharing must emphasize the safety of the campus community**.
Each campus should:

♦ Establish a centralized reporting system to collect reports of threatening behavior, share the information with appropriate authorities and ensure that situations are resolved safely.

♦ Review policies regarding the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA) and Health Insurance Portability and Accountability Act (HIPAA) with campus safety in mind – neither federal law was intended to act as a barrier to campus or student safety.

Currently, only 4-year University of Wisconsin System schools have the statutory authority to establish a **sworn police force on campus;** private and technical schools rely on private security or agreements with local law enforcement. In order to make all law enforcement options available to campus administrators, the Task Force recommends:

♦ A statutory change that would allow private and technical colleges the ability to pursue a sworn police force on their campuses.

♦ The **Jeanne Clery Disclosure of Campus Security Policy and Campus Crime Statistics Act** requires colleges and universities to annually disclose information about crime on and around their campuses. The Task Force recommends that:

♦ Crime data collected for Clery Reports be used to better identify crime trends and influence the allocation of police resources to particular areas at specific times.

♦ Campuses supplement Clery crime data collection with information about other contributing factors, such as victim or offender use of alcohol or drugs at the time of the offense.

An increasing number of students are enrolling in online courses and joining social networking sites on the internet. **Online students** are at risk for stalking and identity theft and have the same potential to suffer emotional turmoil as on-campus students. The Task Force recommends that:

♦ Administrators evaluate safety vulnerabilities of online students and develop training programs to help them stay safe.

♦ To the extent possible, campuses provide assistance to online students who are experiencing psychological and emotional stress.

**Creating a culture of shared responsibility** for a safe campus must become a top priority. An engaged community, armed with a shared mind-set, access to information and effective mechanisms to respond to threats before violence occurs is a formidable force and one that will have an immediate impact on improving the overall safety of our colleges and universities.

The Task Force has found numerous examples of commendable safety practices already in place at Wisconsin colleges and universities. This report highlights those practices and provides essential information to help other campuses implement them in their unique environments. The report also provides recommendations that we hope will be thoughtfully considered and adopted as deemed appropriate given the unique needs and resources of each individual campus.
PART I
INTRODUCTION

Colleges and universities are special institutions where students, faculty and staff join together for academic growth and personal enrichment. While students excitedly begin classes each fall, parents and families hope that their child’s college experience is rewarding, successful and, most importantly, safe. In April 2007, students, families, faculty and staff at colleges across the nation were awakened to the fact that college campuses are not sanctuaries. In a few brief moments at Virginia Tech University, 32 lives, some just beginning, were ended.

It was in this context that Governor Jim Doyle established the Task Force on Campus Safety, appointing 23 members who represent student affairs, mental health services, law enforcement, college administration, families and students. The governor directed the Task Force to review safety practices on campus in Wisconsin and across the nation and provide an interim report of recommendations and best practices that higher education officials can use on their campuses immediately.

A nationally significant event like the shootings at Virginia Tech raises new questions and poses significant challenges to colleges and universities. How can schools protect against such a senseless act?

Central to campus safety is a culture where students, faculty and staff look out for one another and consider the safety of all a personal responsibility. Colleges and universities must work with students and faculty to de-stigmatize resources that help a person in need. An environment must be fostered where students, faculty and staff are aware of the needs of their peers and help them when appropriate. Campus safety can no longer simply be delegated to some particular office or staff but, rather, must become the responsibility of all.

College campuses are unique environments where students and faculty must be able to freely share and passionately challenge any and all ideas. This core component of a truly higher education requires an atmosphere characterized by mutually respectful relationships and an absence of intimidation. Indeed, unusual or eccentric behaviors have been the traits of some uncommonly noteworthy Americans.

We must shed our ignorance and prejudices regarding mental illness and more fully support those in our communities, in our extended families and on our campuses working so hard and so successfully to triumph in spite of mental health challenges. We must understand that mental illness per se is seldom associated with violence. While working to provide those with mental illness the services they need to succeed, we must look beyond tendencies to stigmatize and understand that threats to campus safety are
much more likely to flow from other sources; for example, from alcohol and drug abuse.

Part I of this Final Report presents a set of best practice criteria and ‘From the Field’ practices from colleges and universities across Wisconsin and the nation. In his executive order, Governor Doyle directed the Task Force to find best practices that address the coordination between campus officials and local law enforcement, security and threat assessments, timely and effective identification of high-risk students and prevention strategies and services for at-risk students. To accomplish this, the best practice criteria are organized by four topics: prevention and preparedness, intervention, response and post-event activities. The Task Force appreciates, however, that campus safety is not a simple, linear process. Clear delineations do not exist between prevention and early intervention activities nor is it clear when an emergency response becomes a recovery operation.

The best practice criteria do not contain prescriptive campus safety solutions for colleges and universities in Wisconsin. Each campus has unique characteristics and security needs and campus administrators, students and other community members should decide what is best for their individual institution. The Task Force does not recommend mandated solutions for any college or university, rather offers the best practice criteria as a set of guiding principles for college and university officials as they implement new or review current safety practices. ‘From the Field’ examples are offered as real-world illustrations of how colleges and universities can implement best practice criteria. College and university officials should consider how to adopt these criteria and practices into their own unique campus environment.

In Part II of this report, the Task Force addresses other campus safety issues called for in the governor’s executive order, including campus safety technology, information sharing and communication and law enforcement on campus, among other topics. The Task Force used its diverse membership, testimony from public summits and presentations from state and national experts to produce a series of topic papers addressing these important issues.
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Violence prevention and emergency preparedness should be seen as part of the broader mission of any institution of higher education, namely, to create a context in which all students, faculty and staff flourish both academically and personally.

Often, responses to violence focus on reacting to specific incidents, typically relying on disciplinary measures or the criminal justice system. Such efforts are essential for maintaining a safe campus environment, and strong enforcement sends a clear message about a school’s intolerance for violent behavior.

But a comprehensive approach to violence is needed—one that includes complementary measures aimed at prevention and early intervention. In addition to well trained and equipped law enforcement and first responders, campuses must also work to minimize the broad spectrum of factors that contribute to violence while preparing for times when prevention isn’t possible.

Given the complexity of violent behavior and the diversity of settings, structures, cultures and students among campuses, there is no simple one-size-fits-all solution for violence in higher education settings. Officials at each institution must design a program that meets their particular circumstances and needs.

“The citizens of Wisconsin can take some comfort in our finding that, across the campuses of the State, commendable practices are in place. That is good news. We also have found that there are opportunities for continuous improvement as we learn from each other. That, also, is good news.”

Dr. Bruce Shepard
Chancellor, University of Wisconsin-Green Bay and Co-Chair of Governor Doyle’s Task Force on Campus Safety
Beloit College executed its first full-scale emergency management exercise in 2001. A complex scenario involving a residence hall fire provided local first responders and campus officials with a realistic opportunity to test local preparedness plans in the unique environment of higher education.

Lessons learned from the experience resulted in improved procedures, development of an incident command structure and establishment of emergency operation centers. Each year, the emergency response plan is revisited, and modifications are made based on changes in the campus environment and capabilities of local responders.

This fall, over 50 agencies and hundreds of first responders from Wisconsin and Illinois converged on Beloit College for a full-scale exercise. This time, emergency officials were presented with an even more complex situation—including multiple explosions in campus buildings—to test a coordinated regional response to a major disaster in a higher education setting.

In preparation for the 2007 event, the campus participated in a tabletop exercise and the mock activation of area emergency operation centers. As in 2001, a thorough review and critique was conducted and lessons learned will be used to further improve the safety of Beloit College and surrounding communities.

For more information about the multi-state exercise, email Ron Nief, Beloit College Director of Public Affairs at niefr@beloit.edu

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In 2006, the U.S. Department of Homeland Security (DHS) conducted and prepared an assessment on the characteristics and common vulnerabilities of higher education institutions. Following the assessment, DHS encouraged schools to develop plans for events that might:

- Shut down or degrade the operation of the entire institution
- Impede or destroy research efforts
- Cause the release of hazardous materials to the surrounding area
- Interfere with academic studies and research projects

Following recent high profile acts of violence on college campuses, higher education crisis response plans should also identify vulnerabilities and prepare for events that threaten the physical or emotional well-being of an individual or others, increase perceptions of an unsafe campus, or violate campus codes of conduct.

While most schools have plans in place for weather-related disasters or man-made events like a fire or bomb threat, plans to address terrorist acts and random acts of violence are less well-developed.

Even with the return of students and pressing academic year operational matters, campus officials are encouraged to make risk assessment and crisis planning a top priority.

The assessment and planning process should include local public safety, public health and emergency response officials. The process should also include the active participation of regional homeland security planners.

Drawing on the expertise of campus law enforcement and coordination with non-campus public safety and emergency response institutions and other agencies will improve the quality of risk assessments and the comprehensiveness of crisis plans.

“Recent events on college and university campuses underscore the need for campus public safety departments to engage in planning and training programs to prevent, deter, and respond to acts of terrorism, and other potential high consequence events.”

Priscilla A. Stevens
Director of Public Safety
College of Southern Maryland
and President of the International Association of Campus Law Enforcement Agencies
1. Identify Your Risks and Vulnerabilities

Geographic features; urban or rural location; residential, commuter, online, or in-person student populations; and special events on campus create unique situations and settings, which may lead to a variety of risks for higher education. Threats include:

- Weapon crimes with indiscriminate injury of students and faculty
- Natural disasters and other weather-related incidents
- Hazardous materials that might be found in campus labs
- Violent crimes and property crimes

Multidisciplinary assessment teams should be formed to identify and prioritize individual campus vulnerabilities and potential threats based on local conditions. The process should identify assets available to either eliminate the threat or respond effectively if necessary.

Teams should also use crime data reported in compliance with the Clery Act and gather survey data from students and staff to help campus policy makers, facility planners and law enforcement officials identify hotspots and assess perceptions of campus safety.

Risk and threat assessment tools developed specifically for colleges are now available. However, the assessment process is complex, and officials may want to consider obtaining the services of a trained law enforcement officer or security specialist to assist the campus team.

From the Field...

The International Association of Campus Law Enforcement Agencies (IACLEA) offers a comprehensive threat and risk assessment tool to assist campuses in identifying and prioritizing vulnerabilities and potential threats.

The tool has been field tested at a large public university in Illinois, a small private college in Minnesota and a two-year college in Florida.

More information about using the tool for your campus-wide assessment can be found at [www.IACLEA.org](http://www.IACLEA.org).

Coordination, risk assessment and a realistic disaster simulation involving students, first responders and campus officials are all part of the crisis preparedness efforts at Beloit College.
2. PLAN FOR THE COMMON TO THE UNTHINKABLE

Following a risk assessment, a cross-disciplinary team should be convened to write emergency response and recovery plans that address likely events from a variety of perspectives. Members of this group should include:

- Chancellor, President, or designee
- Campus security or law enforcement
- Local, county and state law enforcement and emergency management
- Campus and community health and mental health providers
- Student Affairs/Dean of Students
- University housing officials
- Buildings maintenance or grounds staff
- Faculty members
- Academic advising
- Students

Crisis response plans should consider a variety of emergencies or crises and have plans and procedures in place for a response to each particular incident. The response to a gunman will vary greatly from that of a tornado or residence hall fire.

Emergency preparedness and response plans should be written consistent with the National Incident Management Systems (NIMS). Plans should also incorporate an incident command structure and detail the roles and responsibilities that each member plays.

Back-ups and redundancies should also be included to prepare for the possibility that a member of the incident command structure is not available to carry out their duties or the event lasts longer than anticipated.

Checklists and protocols should be available, easy to read and kept up to date to help members of the incident command team quickly implement the emergency plan.

Unique populations, including international or disabled students, faculty and staff, should also be considered during emergency planning. For example, student populations generally do not have reliable methods of private transportation. International students will struggle financially and logistically to return home should the campus be closed. And disabled populations will need special assistance evacuating and returning to campus.

3. COMMUNICATE ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

Emergency plans need to be communicated to faculty, staff, students, parents and members of the community in order to assure a quick, safe and effective emergency response. It is essential that those affected by an incident on campus understand response procedures and the role they must play.

Simple notices in brochures, pamphlets, websites and presentations at orientation are only one piece of this effort. Sustained marketing and ongoing communication are crucial to educate students and staff on emergency procedures. While new threats are identified and the campus community
Being prepared when a critical event strikes isn’t an accident. It takes cooperation, planning and practice. It’s hard work.

Our long standing collaboration with Beloit College has helped each of our organizations be better trained, better organized and provide better service to taxpayers and the campus community.”

Chief Sam Lathrop
City of Beloit Police Department

continues to turnover, communication strategies will have to follow these changes.

4. EXERCISE AND PRACTICE

An emergency response plan that gathers dust and is infrequently tested or revised will likely be an ineffective resource during a time of crisis. Emergency response plans need to be continually tested, exercised and updated to ensure maximum effectiveness.

Tabletop and full-scale exercises will expose flaws of current plans or present unforeseen scenarios that will create the need for additional emergency response planning. Exercises should be done in a collaborative manner that includes local, county, state and federal resources as they are identified.

Plan testing may be instructive on the effectiveness of important technology including interoperable communications, the appropriateness of supply placement or provision and the back-ups or redundancies built in the emergency response plans.

From the Field...

During a recent faculty/staff in-service day, an ‘intruder with weapons’ drill was held at Southwest Wisconsin Technical College. In the exercise, two students posing as intruders entered a classroom with weapons drawn. Participants needed to respond safely and quickly.

They found that several weaknesses in the emergency response plan needed work:

- The media relations person was ‘shot’ and no back-up had been identified
- Local law enforcement officials were not included
- Written plans were too lengthy and difficult to understand
- 9-1-1 call volume overwhelmed intake capacity
- First aid kits weren’t placed in areas where needed

Without advance testing of the plan, these deficiencies may not have been detected until an actual emergency.

For more information contact Rita Luna at (608) 822-3262 ext. 2701
Environment influences behavior. This fundamental tenet is the basis for Crime Prevention Through Environmental Design. CPTED is a multi-disciplinary approach to developing and maintaining buildings and grounds in ways that reduce crime, increase perceptions of safety and improve the quality of life.

CPTED is preferable to more traditional campus security approaches because it provides security while also increasing the level of comfort and functionality of built space. The holistic approach brings together architects, landscapers, facility managers, law enforcement and community residents to develop plans that maximize opportunities for natural surveillance, increase a sense of purpose to all spaces and enhance natural access control.

1. Natural Surveillance

Perceptions of surveillance are as important in preventing crime as actual surveillance. Research into criminal behavior shows that the decision to offend is influenced more by the perceived risk of being caught than the likelihood of high rewards or ease of entry. Consistent with this research, CPTED-based strategies emphasize enhancing an offender’s perceived risk of detection and apprehension.

Natural surveillance involves creating areas where people and their activities can be seen. This can be accomplished by designing landscapes that allow clear, unobstructed views of surrounding areas, improving visibility with lighting or transparent building materials and blocking entrapment areas like building alcoves, stairwells and dense shrubbery.

Cost effective steps that campuses can take to immediately increase natural surveillance include:

- Prune low hanging branches and high shrubs
- Light up potential problem areas including pathways, stairs, entrances/exits, parking areas, ATMs, phone kiosks, mailboxes, bus stops, recreation areas, laundry rooms, storage areas and dumpster/recycling areas
- Place lighting along pathways and other pedestrian-areas at proper heights for lighting the faces of the people in the space (and to identify the faces of potential attackers)
From the Field...

Marquette University staff are available 24 hours a day to address issues relating to doors, windows, security equipment, lighting and landscaping. Public Safety works collaboratively with the members of the Facilities Services staff to resolve any safety or security-related matter.

CPTED trained specialists also participate in the planning and preparation stages of new construction projects on campus. Building design and layout, as well as the development of security policies and procedures are developed through coordination with Public Safety, Facilities Services and other university administrators.

Marquette’s Public Safety Crime Prevention Specialists consult regularly with the University’s landscaping experts in applying the principles of CPTED to campus areas. This includes maintaining existing trees and shrubbery and strategizing about new plantings and landscaping projects.

For more information, contact Lt. Paul Mascari at paul.mascari@marquette.edu
3. **TERRITORY REINFORCEMENT**

Delineation of private space does two things: it creates a sense of ownership where legitimate users have a vested interest and are more likely to challenge or report intruders, and it creates an environment where ‘strangers’ stand out and are more easily identified.

By using buildings, fences, pavement, signs, lighting and landscape to express ownership and define public, semi-public and private space, natural territorial reinforcement occurs.

- Maintain premises and landscaping to communicate ownership and occupation
- Display security system signs at access points
- Schedule public activities in common areas to increase use, attract more people and increase perceptions of area control
- Restrict private activities to defined private areas. For example, house parties might take place in the backyard rather than on the front porch, which implies a universal welcome.

Crime Prevention through Environmental Design is a cost-effective way to lower the incidence of crime. It is not, however, a universal remedy for crime and it will not eliminate the need for traditional crime prevention and law enforcement efforts.

Implementing CPTED on college campuses will require community education, new levels of cooperative planning and initial investment when retrofitting an existing environment. Incorporating CPTED principles during new construction planning is less expensive than post-build crime prevention methods and should be considered by campuses as they develop strategic plans and implement capital improvements.

---

**From the Field...**

**Secure Facilities Checklist Now Available**

The National Clearinghouse for Educational Facilities at the U.S. Department of Education’s Educational Resources Information Center (ERIC) offers an online checklist for campus administrators to assess facility safety and improve the security of school buildings and grounds.

The checklist combines best practices in school facility assessment measures into one comprehensive online tool, including the basic principles of Crime Prevention Through Environmental Design.

Nationally recognized school facilities experts participated in the checklist’s creation and oversee its periodic updating. An online version of the checklist is customizable to address specific types of facilities and security concerns.

For more information visit [http://www.edfacilities.org](http://www.edfacilities.org).
Prior to causing the largest loss of life on a college campus in U.S. history, Seung-Hui Cho was accused of stalking two young women. He was evaluated at a mental institution following a report that he may be suicidal, and after being dismissed from a class, Cho was described as being “mean” and a “bully”. His writing submissions in class were laced with violence and he was urged to get counseling.

Should these behaviors and actions have raised an alarm for university officials and law enforcement? A yes-no assessment is difficult given that strange behavior is not altogether uncommon or a predictor of future violence.

Campus administrators understandably struggle with their roles and responsibilities with respect to influencing student behavior. While some incidents of violence are unpredictable, it is possible to identify and reduce the factors that make violence more likely.

By identifying and adequately addressing local conditions that contribute to violence, individual campuses reduce the probability of harm, while also enhancing the learning environment.

"It is true that people like Cho and the Columbine shooters exhibited some aberrant behaviors that, with 20-20 hindsight, might have tipped off sensitive observers," said Dr. Jeff Victoroff, Associate Professor at the University of Southern California, to Psychology Today, a mental health publication, “but we don’t usually attend to those warning signs because they are so common among adolescents.”

However, faculty, staff, students and family members must be able to identify threatening or endangering behaviors and report them. Systems need to be in place that will handle these reports. Additionally, because off-campus behavior often acts as a precursor to on-campus incidents, partnerships between the university and off-campus communities should be encouraged.

Most importantly, the responsibility to ensure a campus safe from violence and crime must fall on all members of the campus community.

From the Field...

Last fall, faculty at the Massachusetts Institute of Technology (MIT) received information on how to identify academic, psychological and social indicators of students in distress. Examples included problems ranging from a decline in academic work or performance to reports from peers, RAs, advisors or others with serious concerns about a student’s welfare.

The 7-page pamphlet on the topic provides tips on how to approach a troubled student, when to be concerned about a student’s state of mind and information on campus health services and emergency resources available.

For more information on the MIT faculty outreach campaign, visit http://web.mit.edu/medical
1. **Know the Warning Signs**

Roommates, friends and fellow students, faculty, employers, residence hall and academic advisors, and family members have regular contact with students, faculty and staff and will be the most likely to notice changes in behavior or development of significant threatening tendencies. To ensure that these potential warning signs do not get overlooked, colleges and universities need to employ strategies for educating students, faculty and family – among others – on what to look for. (See MIT example on page 16)

While warning signs which may lead to committing a violent act, against self or others, vary greatly and should be specifically identified by trained mental health experts, strategies for educating the campus community on warning signs already exist.

2. **Establish Reporting Processes**

After warning signs have been spotted, campuses need a centralized process for submitting and analyzing reports of dangerous, threatening or troubling behavior. The reporting process should be straightforward, easy to use, secure and sensitive to privacy concerns. This may be best served by permitting anonymous reporting and by requiring confidentiality in handling tip information. To ensure that different cultures or student groups are not neglected, multi-lingual reporting should be available.

A web-based tool that uses secure log-ins with confidentiality provisions could be accessible to students on and off-campus, achieve both anonymity and confidentiality and allow for multi-lingual entries.

---

**From the Field...**

The Early Alert Referral System at the Milwaukee School of Engineering is designed to identify and reach out as quickly as possible to students who are experiencing academic, learning, behavioral or personal concerns.

Faculty and staff can use the secure on-line system to report concerns about students when problems cannot be resolved directly. An Early Alert Coordinator will meet with the faculty or staff member to discuss the referral and then meet with the student. When appropriate, the student is referred to an academic advisor, the Learning Resource Center, Counseling Services or the university’s Student Support Services.

For more information, visit [https://www.msoe.edu/ears/](https://www.msoe.edu/ears/).
**BEST PRACTICE CRITERIA**

It is important to ensure that false reports do not tarnish the credibility or reputation of students, faculty or staff. However, after seeing the devastating outcome of overlooked potential warning signs, colleges and universities must be able to monitor troubling or threatening behaviors.

**3. RAISE AWARENESS**

A process for reporting warning signs will only be effective if the campus community is aware of the process and submits reports when deemed appropriate. Strong social marketing campaigns to students and faculty on campus, as well as parents and community members, will be needed to raise awareness and comfort with the reporting process.

Care should be taken to communicate that the process is not punitive to those reported nor will someone who reports a threatening behavior be considered less loyal to friends or classmates. Rather, administrators should appeal to the social responsibility that students and staff have for ensuring campus safety. Identifying and reporting troubling behavior, even one’s own behavior, should be portrayed as courageous and helpful.

Colleges and campuses should clearly communicate the reporting process as well as the university’s potential actions following a report to help assuage the fears of reporting that students and faculty may have.

Outreach efforts need to be inclusive of diverse populations, recognizing that some groups may be distrustful of mental health services or may have cultural aversions to reporting the behavior of others.

**4. CREATE MULTI-DISCIPLINARY REVIEWS**

A multi-disciplinary team should be created to review and respond to concerns reported through an established campus reporting process. While composition of the review team may vary across colleges and universities, it is critical that a collaborative team exist to review each and every report of disturbing or threatening behavior.

The review teams and their processes and procedures are explored further in the section on intervention.

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**From the Field...**

At Cornell University, satellite counseling services are located in high traffic areas where students with especially high levels of stress are likely to pass. Centers are currently located in campus libraries, the law school, residence halls and the student union.

Drop-in services at convenient locations make it easy for students to ask for help and higher visibility for the services is helping diminish any stigma attached with mental health care.

For more information, visit [www.gannett.cornell.edu/CAPS](http://www.gannett.cornell.edu/CAPS)
Alcohol and other drug abuse (AODA) lie at the heart of many safety issues on college campuses. In particular, alcohol abuse is a pervasive problem that is associated with crimes ranging from property damage and vandalism to sexual assault and homicide. Alcohol abuse is also often associated with student suicide.

A 2002 study estimated that 31 percent of college students met the criteria for alcohol abuse while another 6 percent met the criteria for dependence. Clearly alcohol and drug use is a serious problem that affects the well-being of students.

AODA issues have received widespread attention on Wisconsin college campuses and from a variety of state and federal agencies, victim advocacy groups, the psychiatric community and higher education organizations. There are a significant number of effective practices available and many are currently being utilized in the state.

Since specific practices must be customized to address individual campus norms and community assets, rather than enumerate a host of evidence-based approaches available, the Task Force focused on three critical components of a quality AODA prevention and intervention program. Campuses are encouraged to evaluate their efforts against these criteria and make use of the many AODA prevention and intervention resources available online and through professional organizations.

1. Screening

There are many types of screenings available for different situations but, regardless of the screening chosen, it should be as comprehensive as possible. Cookie-cutter approaches are not very effective, and priority should be given to local problems identified through crime data and interviews with law enforcement, clinicians, hospitals and students. Attention should not be limited to just heavy-abusing, dependent students—but also include high-risk populations and infrequent users.
BEST PRACTICE CRITERIA

Campus officials should screen for other AODA-related problems including self-medication and prescription drug sharing.

2. CAMPUS CULTURE AND EDUCATION

Campuses are encouraged to promote consistent policy, practice, education and enforcement on campus and surrounding communities that support a healthy learning environment and discourage high-risk drinking.

Campuses are also encouraged to use multiple and innovative strategies to educate students about alcohol and other drug abuse. Websites and flyers are simple ways to address education about AODA, and education can also be infused into routine health visits and even the regular curriculum.

3. INTERVENTION

There are many different types of intervention strategies for AODA issues. Campuses are encouraged to research different strategies and find those most appropriate for the individual and campus community. Limited resources are provided below, but should not be considered exhaustive of those available on this issue.

For more information on AODA, visit www.HigherEdCenter.org or www.CollegeDrinkingPrevention.gov

From the Field...

The University of Wisconsin-Eau Claire used a $300,000 grant from the U.S. Department of Education to launch a comprehensive program to reduce drinking among first-year students. Program collaborators included UWEC’s Center for Alcohol Studies and Education, the Eau Claire City-County Health Department, local law enforcement, alcohol distributors, students and parents.

The program was designed to increase awareness for negative consequences of drinking, implement zero tolerance for underage drinking, reduce student driving while under the influence, combat high school student perceptions regarding drinking as a "rite of passage" and reduce the incidence of underage and high-risk drinking among first-year students. Strategies included:

- Discussions about alcohol laws and policies with parents and students during new student orientation
- Increased enforcement of drinking age laws
- Promotion and enforcement of campus alcohol policies
- Education about high-risk drinking and personal liability
- AODA prevention marketing campaign
- Curriculum inclusion and faculty-student collaborative research projects
- Outreach education in local middle and high schools

In addition to funding a full-time project director, a public awareness marketing campaign and 16 faculty-student research projects were funded to explore physiological and social aspects of alcohol abuse and to identify best practices for reducing high-risk drinking among college students.
ACCESS TO TREATMENT

College officials say that a growing number of students arrive on campus with a history of mental illness and a prescription for psychotropic drugs. While newspaper headlines would have us believe that these students present a threat to the safety of others, it is more likely that these students will become crime victims rather than offenders.

Recognizing that mental health is as critical to academic success as physical well being, many campuses are providing services that help students adjust to college life, assist them when they encounter emotional and social difficulties, and provide them with mental health counseling and referrals as needed.

Some Wisconsin universities and colleges offer one-on-one counseling and support groups free of cost while others with more limited resources provide referrals to off-campus mental health services. Unfortunately, student demand for these services is outpacing what college counseling centers can provide, resulting in delays in evaluation and treatment for those in need.

Beyond limited campus services, other barriers to accessing mental health care include the social stigma of receiving mental health services; the high cost of treatment, pharmaceuticals and medical plans; inadequate mental health coverage; and lack of awareness of campus resources.

These barriers are exacerbated in vulnerable populations. Some students face language and cultural barriers as well as scarcity of mental health providers in their area.

Even if services are free, many students are unwilling to receive treatment. A recent study by the University of Michigan found that fewer than half of the students reporting significant symptoms of anxiety or depression sought help, despite the fact that the univer-

From the Field...

The University of Wisconsin-La Crosse and Western Wisconsin Technical College are partnering to allow any student at the technical school taking six or more credits to use the UW-La Crosse student health center for a $10 co-pay.

The partnership program covers all routine services including primary care for illness or injury, mental health services and referrals, preventive care, care for chronic health problems, basic lab services, minor surgical procedures and physical therapy. All other more substantial services, such as X-rays, are billed to the student’s account.

Services are available on an appointment or walk-in basis. The arrangement is funded through student segregated fees.

More information can be obtained from Denise Vujnovich at (608) 785-9155 or email vujnovichd@westernmtc.edu
Best Practice Criteria

University offers no-fee counseling services. Students reported lack of insurance, high cost, perceptions that treatment is ineffective and concerns about social stigma as barriers to treatment.

To increase student access to treatment, campuses should develop programs and policies to address the unique needs of their student body, remove the financial barriers that inhibit students from receiving treatment, reduce social stigma related to mental illness and raise awareness of campus counseling services.

From the Field...

Under St. Norbert College’s Freshman Health History Review program, when a physical or mental health issue is identified by an incoming student, that student is invited to meet with a health care provider at Health Services.

Although this is a voluntary program, nearly 70% of the students who receive an invitation make an appointment. Students receive support and assistance with specific medical needs and learn strategies for coping generally with campus life.

Receiving information about health and counseling services early provides an opportunity for students to find the resources that may be most helpful to them before issues arise.

For more information, contact Barbara Bloomer at Barb.Bloomer@snc.edu

1. Remove Financial Barriers

Reducing the financial cost of mental health treatment can be achieved in a variety of ways. Whether requiring incoming students to have and maintain health insurance that includes mental health coverage or offering free or discounted services funded through tuition or fees, colleges and universities must ensure that the cost of mental health services and medications are not so burdensome that those in need will discontinue treatment or be unable to attend college.

The Task Force recommends that schools investigate mandatory insurance or other means of providing low-cost comprehensive care.

For more information, visit www.tshc.fsu.edu/insurance.htm

Florida State University and the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill ensure their students have access to mental health services and medications by requiring health insurance coverage. Students under these systems either must purchase the system plan or demonstrate that mental health services and prescription medication are covered by their current plan.

Plans cost approximately $1500 annually—about half the cost of tuition and fees. These costs can be included under financial aid.
“Mental illness is such an isolating thing”

Alison Malmon
Founder of Active Minds

2. REDUCE THE STIGMA

With reports of rising mental illness in youth entering college and large numbers of students on psychotropic medication, it is increasingly important that the stigma associated with mental illness and seeking treatment be removed. Mental health programs will only be effective on campus if the stigma associated with them is reduced.

Active campaigns are needed to convince students that seeking treatment is a sign of strength and maturity and that they should support friends or classmates seeking counseling to cope with their stress. Another way to reduce stigma is to make the mental health services readily available or part of a standard procedure.

Peer counseling is another effective tool to reach students who are in need of counselor services but hesitant to speak with a professional counselor. (See From the Field: Active Minds, to the right)

3. OFFER TREATMENT IN CONVENIENT LOCATIONS

Every attempt should be made to offer counseling and treatment services in locations and at hours convenient to students, faculty and staff.

Call-in phone lines are also an effective way to help those in need reach a counselor when

From the Field...

Alison Malmon founded Active Minds (originally Open Minds) at the University of Pennsylvania after her college-age brother committed suicide. “Mental illness is such an isolating thing,” Malmon told the New York Times in April, 2007. “It’s not something that’s easy to tell your family and friends about. That is the impetus for [Active Minds].”

Active Minds started when Malmon and two friends met in 2001 to talk about how to increase awareness of mental health issues at the University of Pennsylvania. Now, there are 70 Active Minds chapters across the country and in Canada – including chapters at the University of Wisconsin-Madison and Northland College in Ashland.

Although chapters differ across the nation, Active Minds attempts to increase awareness of mental health issues and resources on campus. Chapters also hold campus wide events that offer help and assistance to students suffering mental illness and to students wanting to know how to help their friends.

For more information, visit www.activemindsoncampus.org

Marquette University teams are trained in QPR (Question, Persuade, Refer) a nationally recognized program that trains students, faculty and staff to help someone they think is at risk. At Cornell University, every student who comes to the University Health Services for any ailment—from a sprained ankle to a severe cold—is routinely screened for depression.
regular services are closed or otherwise unavailable. Phones lines should offer students, faculty or staff the opportunity to reach a live counselor at any time of day seven days a week. When a call-back system is implemented – where students leave a message or reach a call center – calls should be returned in no more than 15 minutes when possible.

4. REACH OUT

Research has shown that cultures view mental health treatment and counseling differently. A University of Michigan study found that Asian or Pacific Island students were less likely to seek mental health treatment than other students. Identifying groups on campus less likely to seek treatment, as well as identifying groups that may be more susceptible to stress will help mental health service providers fine-tune their treatment and screening procedures.

Mental health programs need to concentrate marketing efforts on students from different cultures and those with pre-existing health needs or specific mental health concerns.

Campuses should also offer services appropriate for students from different backgrounds and experiencing different stressors—including gay, lesbian, bisexual or transgender individuals and other students from under-represented populations.
CAMPUS SAFETY

Campus safety is a large and complex issue and a responsibility shared by everyone on campus. Safety needs to be part of the campus culture. A campus culture that is accepting, diverse, compassionate and concerned about safety is the greatest tool a college or university can have to build a safer community.

Outreach and education techniques should include widely distributed information through available media including websites and brochures, events and social networking.

As colleges and universities develop campus safety outreach campaigns, they should consider social marketing techniques and adopting promising programs aimed at shifting cultural norms in higher education settings.

Adding a safety and mental health component to course curricula and encouraging students to participate in annual emergency exercises can help students internalize the important role they play in a safe campus community.

Colleges and universities can partner with student organizations to increase awareness. Including student organizations can empower students to share in the responsibility for their own safety and that of the larger campus community.

As colleges and universities continue to reach out and educate students, faculty, staff, families and the community on campus safety resources, these best practice criteria should be present.

1. ENLIST FAMILIES AND THE COMMUNITY

Many college campuses resemble self-contained cities but the reach of the university extends well beyond its borders.

Colleges and universities must reach out to families and the community to build relationships that will reduce the likelihood of a violent incident and strengthen the response. Neighborhood organizations and community leaders should be involved in emergency planning and volunteers trained and organized for assistance following an incident. The help of landlords and building managers should be requested as they may be in a prime position to notice strange, troubling or threatening student behavior off-campus that might indicate a need for services.

Parents, families and cultural leaders play a significant role in the development of children, and their history and influence with students should not be forgotten when students enter college. Parents should be asked to help students with emergency planning, including how to reach one another in the event of an emergency. Universities should send materials to parents on how to have frank conversations about safe behavior on campus, concerns students may have, and available resources on- and off-campus for when stress or anxiety become overwhelming.

Religious leaders and cultural organizations are additional resources for campus safety. Colleges and universities should reach out to...
these communities to increase the cultural competency of fellow students, faculty and staff and increase options for students experiencing difficulties. Creating liaisons between students, the university and communities may be the best way to reach some students who may be difficult to reach or are resistant of traditional counseling and treatment.

2. Teach Safety Risks

Just as universities create an emergency response plan by assessing campus vulnerabilities, students should develop personal safety practices based on threats known to exist in the community. While highly publicized criminal acts may create perceptions of an unsafe campus, these crimes are generally the exception rather than the rule. Every campus publishes crime data to comply with the Clery Act. This data should be publicized by campuses to increase student awareness about risks they are most likely to face.

Students need to take self-interest in their own safety. Students should be taught and reminded about basic safety precautions: be aware of your surroundings; know the location of emergency call boxes; add emergency numbers to speed dial; park in well lit areas and don’t walk at night alone—call a friend or the campus Safe Walk/Safe Ride program.

3. Teach Response Options

As schools educate students of the true risks on campus, colleges and universities must also publicize safety resources and strategies that help students prepare for, and respond to, dangerous situations – from common to highly feared but less likely incidents such as physical attack.

In the context of greater campus safety, colleges and universities should provide training to students and staff on what constitutes a threat to personal safety; how to de-escalate a potentially dangerous situation; and how to respond when confronted by a threatening or potentially violent individual.

Campuses can also offer training in basic first aid, CPR and self-defense techniques.
From the Field...

Campus-Community Emergency Response Team (C-CERT) classes are teaching students and faculty critical emergency response skills, safety techniques and skills to help first responders following a disaster.

A team of 12 fraternity and sorority members from Indiana University went through C-CERT training. When they returned home, they established and trained volunteer teams of fellow Greek students. “If there was a disaster here in Bloomington and a tornado...knocked over three houses, the Bloomington first responders would be overwhelmed,” said student Evan Summers in an April interview with the Indiana Daily Student. “CERT will step in and act as volunteers and be able to help. Ideally, we would be able to save lives without endangering ourselves.”

Through a grant from the U.S. Department of Homeland Security, Michigan State University offers a free train-the-trainers program for campus groups that want to start C-CERT programs at their universities and colleges.

For more information about the free train-the-trainers program, visit www.c-cert.msu.edu

4. Foster a Culture of Personal Responsibility

Students on campus must feel empowered and responsible for the safety and security of themselves and their fellow students. Reaching out to the campus community with a message that stresses a culture of community safety and elicits active student, faculty, staff and community participation is a critical component of a safe campus.

Colleges and universities can work with student groups to advance campus safety initiatives. Groups should be encouraged to help students embrace their role in keeping the campus safe. Students should feel safe intervening or reporting behavior that threatens the emotional or physical safety of another member of the campus community.
The primary purpose of intervention activities is to respond when troubling or threatening behaviors have been identified. The steps that colleges and universities may take to prevent a dangerous incident from occurring are as diverse and varied as the number of behaviors or actions that may cause concern. The Task Force has determined that it would be impossible to list all of the circumstances or behaviors that may warrant intervention. Moreover, the Task Force believes that it would not be possible to enumerate the actions or responses that colleges and universities should take when threatening behaviors have been identified as each individual case warrants its own unique response.

In the following section on the components of best practice intervention criteria, the Task Force has focused on ensuring that colleges and universities have thorough and multidisciplinary intervention review, assessment and coordination of care processes. Although the steps that colleges and universities take to intervene before a violent incident occurs will vary and are unique to each situation, the fundamental objectives to identify those in need, see that a proper response is determined and is satisfactorily completed, is universal.

1. Leveraging the Diversity of Multiple Disciplines

When an individual has been identified (see Identify and Report for more information on identification and referral best practice criteria) for threatening, dangerous or worrisome behaviors or actions, a multidisciplinary review team can best determine the appropriate course of action. According to the University of Wisconsin Systems report on Campus Safety, eight of the thirteen UW System schools have such a team in place, and

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the rest of the UW system schools have been encouraged to adopt this practice as well.

Multi-disciplinary review teams will vary across campuses but should include members from the Dean of Students office, student health services, academic advising and housing. It is extremely important that the team include representatives from or regular contact with law enforcement or campus security, depending on the law enforcement structure of the campus. The diversity of this team will not only help assess student behaviors but provide a wealth of knowledge of treatment resources.

Review teams should focus on behaviors and gather information from sources related to the individual – like professors, roommates or housing officials. Federal and state legal requirements specify the information that can be shared about a student or faculty member. There are some restrictions on sharing official medical and student academic files. However, information about an individual’s behaviors can be shared amongst university officials.

Repeated disruptive behavior in class, threats of violence, evidence of stalking, persistent or unwanted contacts and harassment are all behaviors that may hint at deeper or more troubling conditions.

Information of this nature will help multi-disciplinary review teams craft appropriate treatment plans for each individual.

2. CONDUCTING THOROUGH ASSESSMENTS

Each referral should receive a preliminary review to determine whether there is merit to the concerns. This preliminary review may be conducted by the Dean of Students, a review team or by the person receiving the report but, wherever responsibility for this preliminary review resides, the body or individuals responsible for conducting it should use uniform assessment tools to ensure that the process is thorough, impartial and culturally appropriate. Standards for intervention should be set with the understanding that having a low threshold for interventions competency. Over 300 faculty and staff have been trained in responding to students in crisis or despair.

The school’s Student At-Risk Response Team meets regularly to discuss information about students who may be at risk and in need of mental health treatment. Team members include faculty, resident hall staff and mental health professionals.

From the Field...

The University of Wisconsin-Oshkosh Counseling Center has developed a comprehensive suicide prevention and mental health program. The collaborative effort is focused on better meeting the needs of populations at risk for depression, substance abuse, suicide attempts and academic failure and for whom the campus creates barriers to accessing care.

The program has sponsored training to address suicide assessment and in-depth training to address white privilege issues and multi-cultural
may result in ‘false positives’ while a high threshold may result in ‘false negatives’. Standard assessment screening tools exist for depression, alcohol and other drug abuse and other problems. However, as the complex issue of campus safety continues to grow and incorporate more mental health and student service factors, screening and assessment tools for determining one’s threat to campus safety are rare. As these assessment tools and guidelines are created, enacted or continued on campus, colleges and universities should consider:

- College campuses are environments that should remain open and accepting
- Odd behavior may be a function of young adulthood or new-found student independence
- Eccentric behavior and mental illness are rarely dangerous

Following an initial assessment, it may be determined that the individual was referred out of error or malicious intent. Individuals in those situations should continue normal campus activity without further interruption.

In situations where an individual is determined to have engaged in questionable behavior, the situation should be referred to the multi-disciplinary review team. Where the review determines that a warning or non-intervention is warranted, a record of the behavior, assessment and determination should be kept by the college or university.

Where there is a determination that some risk is present, the individual should undergo an

**The Legal Parameters of Information Sharing**

Federal and state legal parameters, including the Health Insurance Portability and Accountability Act and the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act, are often cited as barriers to information sharing between law enforcement, student services, mental health and health services professionals.

While student privacy and independence remain fundamental to college life, appropriate information sharing can be life-saving. FERPA, passed in 1974, and HIPAA, passed in 1996, are under continual interpretation.

The Task Force devoted an entire public summit, with a keynote address by nationally-recognized legal scholar Dr. Gary Pavela, on the legal parameters that influence information sharing on campus. Refer to page 61 for additional resources and recommendations regarding these important issues.

“The campus is not powerless to act decisively when threats arise.”

Dr. Gary Pavela
Task Force Summit II
August 9, 2007
evaluation by a professional mental health expert.

To ensure that all students undergo a professional evaluation, these evaluations should be conducted at the expense of the university in cases where a student lacks insurance coverage and must follow a professionally recognized method. Information from the initial referral, preliminary assessment and professional evaluation should be tracked so that patterns can be identified. The review team should act on the advice of the professional evaluator and existing campus policies.

Should an individual not comply with requests made of them – to meet for a preliminary assessment, to see a professional mental health expert for an evaluation or to meet with the multi-disciplinary team – colleges and universities should have policies to ensure compliance.

3. OPTIONS FOR CASE MANAGEMENT

Since each case will have unique qualities, review teams must have a number of tools at their disposal so they can respond in a way that is most appropriate to the situation, is timely and provides the most protection both for the referred student and for the rest of the campus community.

In cases where the preliminary assessor feels that behaviors or actions present an immediate danger to public and campus safety, processes should be in place for the assessor to act on instinct and for the university to manage these immediate risks, while ensuring the individual has a prompt and thorough review.
**BEST PRACTICE CRITERIA**

Absence system can allow for students in need to temporarily leave the university setting without feeling as though they are breaking ties with the school and ending their education.

Schools may want to implement this process as a voluntary proceeding in which students seek help. Schools may also find it necessary to include a provision for involuntary medical leave and allow administrators and mental health professionals to make the decision about a student’s capabilities and risks. Universities must present a clear policy on student transcripts for the semester during which a leave was initiated.

Universities should have a clear published policy regarding the types and levels of behaviors that meet the standards for each official response.

4. **COORDINATION OF CARE**

Coordination of care is essential for ensuring that individuals who receive a treatment plan from the multi-disciplinary team follow through with the provisions in the plan. Without coordination and follow through, it is possible that individuals will neglect to complete treatment or other provisions of their plan and continue to pose a risk to their own safety or others on campus.

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**From the Field...**

As students, staff and faculty interact, conflicts can arise. The Conflict Management Services (CMS) program at Madison Area Technical College offers assistance with conflict resolution.

Staff formally trained and certified in crisis prevention and intervention techniques remain objective and neutral in assisting members of the campus community to address student-related conflicts.

The primary goal is to facilitate “win-win” agreements through which better communication and understanding among community members ultimately improve relationships, increase retention, and promote academic success.

CMS offers a variety of services and resources including counseling, consultation, mediation, crisis prevention intervention and books and videos to help manage conflicts between individuals or within groups.

The CMS staff can help with student code of conduct issues, academic disagreements, interpersonal conflicts, discrimination or harassment allegations, and non-academic student grievances.

For more information visit [http://matcmadison.edu/matk/studentresources/rights/conflict.shtml](http://matcmadison.edu/matk/studentresources/rights/conflict.shtml)
Multi-disciplinary teams may choose to ensure compliance with treatment plans in a variety of ways:

- **Assigning a coordinator:** Members of the multi-disciplinary team or staff monitor the progress of individuals on treatment plans and report to the multi-disciplinary team when individuals complete or do not follow plan provisions.

- **Signing behavioral contract:** Individuals sign a contract with the multi-disciplinary team that outlines the provisions of the plan and consequences if an individual does not follow the plan.

- **Requesting attendance reports:** Requiring students and/or service providers to supply proof of attendance.

The multi-disciplinary team must be empowered to enforce the requirements of treatment plans as fully as the law permits. Although multi-disciplinary teams should focus on treatment instead of punishment and student disciplinary authority usually resides in separate judicial bodies, completion of treatment plans is paramount.

To be released from the case management structure, indicating that a student is no longer a risk, students should present compelling evidence that the condition precipitating the need for an intervention will no longer have an adverse affect on student safety and performance. Schools may want to request that students submit mental health assessment information, letters of recommendation or records of work or education history from any period of leave.

The coordination of care raises privacy concerns, especially with regard to treatment a student may receive. Universities must balance concerns for safety and privacy in designing guidelines under this topic.

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**From the Field...**

*The University of North Texas and Washington University in St. Louis offer a voluntary medical leave of absence for students unable to continue classes for physical or mental health reasons.*

*Students can apply for leave anytime during the semester, and campus departments will advise the student. To return to school, students present a written recommendation from a medical professional. The campus health and counseling services will ensure follow-up and support to meet the student’s needs.*

*For more information visit [www.unt.edu/policy/UNT_Policy/volume3/18_1.html](http://www.unt.edu/policy/UNT_Policy/volume3/18_1.html)*
RESPONSE

When confronted with an emergency, first responders are faced with a myriad of challenges and responsibilities. Following the shootings at Columbine High School, law enforcement’s traditional response to an emergency situation was modified. The shooting spree lasted 47 minutes, and EMS crews did not enter the building for several more hours. After Columbine, the strategy of respond, contain and negotiate was replaced with one of respond, confront and eliminate. Police at Virginia Tech entered Norris Hall in less than one minute. Nine minutes after the first gunshots, the threat had been eliminated.

Responses to emergencies must be immediate and organized. A one-size-fits-all approach will not work. Each campus must design a response and strategies based on the unique characteristics of the individual university. The situation has been likened to how finely one tunes a smoke detector. If too sensitive, the device will wail at any moment a candle is blown out. If unresponsive, a fire can be brewing before any alert is made.

University officials, working closely with campus police or security, local law enforcement and emergency responders should carefully consider when and how to respond to emergencies. While it may be decided that a single policy or set of guidelines cannot determine an emergency response, engaging in these discussions will greatly increase preparedness and the effectiveness of emergency response.

From the Field...

At the University of Wisconsin at Parkside, the Crisis Communication Plan identifies how and when information will be disseminated. Plan components include:

- Approval of all communications by the Chancellor or designee
- Annual mandatory crisis communication training for all members of the Crisis Management Team and others involved in crisis communications
- A current 24/7 call tree with accurate contact lists for the Crisis Management Team, alternates, key community members, and media representatives
- Pre-arranged logistics, including standing arrangements for news conference sites, designated phone lines for media, inventory and availability of equipment and space
- A single campus spokesperson, working in concert with University Police, responsible for executing communications strategies for media, internal and external audiences
- A Crisis Management Team meeting to debrief on what the crisis means for the university community and to develop a follow-up communication plan

More information available at www.uwp.edu/departments/governance/admin/policy/policy55.cfm

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COORDINATION

After the report of a campus fire, active shooter or multiple-vehicle accident, first responders will arrive on the scene while students and faculty leave the site. While the crisis seems chaotic, first responders work together in swift but deliberate action. With extreme organization and precision, they secure the scene and begin rescuing victims. Only through effective coordination will their efforts be safe and successful.

An emergency on campus will involve multiple agencies and officials from the city, county and university. To ensure an effective response that uses all available resources, colleges and universities must have established plans for resource coordination, command structure and communications. These arrangements must not be determined at the site of a crisis but in advance.

1. UTILIZE CAMPUS RESOURCES

Campus law enforcement and security teams must play a central role during an emergency response. An emergency on campus will likely affect more than the college and university. Town, city, county and state police, fire and medical personnel will be prepared to respond. This multi-jurisdictional response will supply plenty of response resources – as well as potential confusion.

Collaboration between University personnel, University Police or Security, and local law enforcement and community resources provides the knowledge and awareness of the campus that can help save lives and protect property.

Frequent multi-jurisdictional emergency training and exercises help law enforcement and emergency responders outside of the campus become more familiar with the campus physical plant and its unique features and population.

2. ESTABLISH ROLES & RESPONSIBILITIES

As emergency responders arrive at the scene of the emergency, a command structure should be in place. Colleges and
university officials, law enforcement or security and local and county police should use the National Incident Management System (NIMS) to organize incident command.

NIMS is a comprehensive set of standardized procedures, preparedness measures and organizational systems based on the Incident Command System (ICS). Using NIMS, a command structure and hierarchy are established for coordinating a multi-jurisdictional response and resources from numerous organizations.

With NIMS, university, local and state medical, law enforcement, and volunteer responders who have not trained together will be able to respond in a unified effort. Compliance with NIMS is mandatory for many Wisconsin campuses and should be considered for implementation at other campuses as an evidence-based practice.

3. COORDINATE WITH LOCAL OFFICIALS

Once an emergency has been reported to local law enforcement or other first responders, top school administrators and the campus’ response team members must be informed. As directed by the university’s emergency plans, efforts should be made to alert the campus community and the university leadership and response teams should gather to execute emergency response plans.

Most importantly, college and university officials must be in constant communication with local law enforcement and emergency responders on the ground. Any delay in notifying the campus community of a threatening situation may endanger students, faculty and staff.

Interoperable communications with emergency responders or a specialized crisis communications system are needed to ensure that university officials work seamlessly with the first responders and stay informed of current developments or ongoing threats. How university officials communicate and coordinate with emergency responders during a crisis should be clearly set in emergency response plans and exercised frequently.

From the Field...

Governor Doyle has designated the National Incident Management System as the state’s official emergency response command structure.

The NIMS incident command model standardizes terminology, organization and chain of command for responses to both emergency and non-emergency situations.

More information is available on the Federal Emergency Management Administration website at www.fema.gov/emergency/nims/index.shtm
When emergency responders cannot communicate, risks go up. Without interoperable radios, first responders use hand and light signals to communicate, in some instances using a flashlight to tell paramedics when it was safe to enter a crime scene. At night, with car lights, sirens and numerous officers with flashlights, confusion can reign.

On September 11, some emergency responders received word to evacuate the towers before they collapsed. Since the communications systems were not interoperable—meaning equipment from different agencies could not operate collaboratively—others did not. Hundreds of fire fighters perished because of these communications failures.

Emergency responders, on campus and off, need the ability to communicate with one another, on demand and in real time to respond effectively and save lives.

1. Communicate with Local Officials

To respond effectively to an emergency, responders must be able to coordinate their actions and exchange information. When conducting emergency planning, colleges and universities need to work with local, county and state emergency responders to develop adequate communication capabilities and ensure that communication systems function interoperably with systems operated by:

- Law Enforcement
- Fire Services
- Emergency Medical Services
- Emergency Preparedness Office/EMA
- Medical Examiner or Coroner
- Public Affairs Office/PIO
- College or University President/Administration
- Public Works Department/Physical Plant
- County/State/Federal Response Agencies
- Residential Life/Dorms Staff
BEST PRACTICE CRITERIA

Since emergency situations are unpredictable, these parties must be kept abreast of any new information. Only with the most current information on a crisis or disaster can emergency plans be carried out quickly and effectively.

2. INTEROPERABLE SYSTEMS

Although almost all first responders have radio communications systems, there are many different types of radios that operate on different frequencies. Unless there are common mutual aid frequencies that any emergency responder can access, they do not have the ability to talk to one another.

Existing radios and systems should be reprogrammed to include mutual aid frequencies that facilitate first responder communication in the event of a multi-jurisdictional response.

New communication system purchases or upgrades should be done consistent with guidelines set by the State Interoperability Executive Council (SIEC). Following these technical provisions will ensure that new communications equipment will communicate with the equipment used by neighboring communities.

Colleges and universities need to ensure that campus law enforcement or security communications equipment, as well as communication systems used by the university during an emergency, meet technical standards set by the state and can communicate with other responding agencies’ radio systems.

FROM THE FIELD...

UW-Madison Police Chief, Sue Riseling, serves as co-chairperson of the State Interoperability Executive Council (SIEC). The Council was created by Governor Jim Doyle to ensure that Wisconsin police, firefighters, EMTs and emergency management officials can coordinate their efforts when responding to a major disaster.

Since 2005, the SIEC has guided the distribution of millions of dollars of federal funds to improve public safety radio communications throughout the state.

With input from local stakeholders, the SIEC has developed a state Technical Plan that provides technical specifications for the statewide system. Local public safety officials receive grants to comply with the standards and are using the funds to either reprogram existing systems or replace those that are obsolete.

For more information on the SIEC, including the state technical plan and future meeting schedule, visit www.SIEC.wi.gov.
Notifying the campus community of an impending, on-going or diffused emergency situation is one of the most critical capabilities that a university or college must have. There are no doubts over the importance of this capability. But how a university achieves the ability to alert students, faculty and staff quickly, accurately and dependably in an emergency situation is not a one-size-fits-all solution.

There are many technological solutions – reverse 911 phone calling, text and e-mail messaging – that will drastically decrease the time it takes for a university to contact hundreds and thousands of students and staff. But technology is not a panacea. Text messages assume that every student carries a cell phone, and according to a Florida study, only 50 percent of students and staff will answer a classroom phone. While students check e-mail regularly, faculty and staff do not.

Colleges with many buildings spread out over acres of campus are often not wired for alert technology like loudspeakers. Dr. Lei Wei at the University of Central Florida conducted a survey of 39 college campuses in Florida. His results showed that using multiple alerting methods, such as hi-tech approaches like text messaging as well as less complex systems like sirens to reach the largest segment of the campus community, are the most effective on college campuses.

Dr. Wei presented his preliminary findings and recommendations to the Task Force at its September meeting. In Part II of this report, the Task Force provides a summary of his findings as well as a broader discussion of considerations for implementing technology to increase campus security. In the appendix to this report, a listing of resources and links to a variety of technological systems is also provided.

Officials at UW-Green Bay can quickly distribute emergency alerts using pop-up messages sent to all computers connected to the campus network.

Users are not required to have their e-mail open to receive these messages. The content of the message is pre-scripted for different types of emergencies to speed up notifications.

Networked computers are locked until the message recipient closes the message box. This serves as acknowledgement that the individual received the emergency communication. If an intended recipient is not using the university network at the time a message is sent, a pop-up will appear when the user next logs on.

Additional alerts are communicated through a Public Address System that can be heard inside and outside all campus buildings. Messages over the PA system can be sent from three separate locations and announcements can be directed to all buildings, a selected group of buildings, or a single building.

For more information, visit www.uwgb.edu
An emergency alert system must be able to deliver a variety of alerts and instructions to students, faculty and staff to address a wide range of emergencies.

When determining which methods or media colleges and universities will use to deliver notifications of an emergency, officials must consider the need to distribute alerts that are both urgent and less time sensitive and specific or general. This level of flexibility can give the university a versatile tool to distribute important, non-emergency information to their students and staff.

While initial alerts are the most pressing, an alert system must also be equipped to convey updates as new information develops.

Current or proposed alert systems must work within emergency plans to reach the desired population on-demand and in any emergency situation. Short of this ability, the alert system will not be entirely effective.

In an emergency, a timely alert and response saves lives. For example, the second attack at Virginia Tech lasted only 9 minutes. Effective systems must instantaneously transmit a message once the decision has been made to issue an emergency alert.

The system must also reach the target population and receivers must understand message meanings. While text messaging via cell phone is familiar to most students...

The University of California-Berkeley has developed an Emergency People Locator System—a web-based program that enables the school’s 60,000 students, faculty, and staff to report their whereabouts and post messages that loved ones and colleagues can access.

In the event of a catastrophic disaster, a student would log on to the site using a CalNet ID and password to post a message. Anyone — including parents, other relatives, friends and co-workers — can access the program to find information about their student or other member of the campus community. They can also respond to posted messages.

Berkeley invested $15,000 for hardware and asked various campus departments to donate time and expertise. (Student Affairs, Information Services/Technology, Human Resources, the Office of the Registrar, etc.) The resulting application is easy to use and its use can easily be expanded for non-crisis communications.

Since a major disaster would most likely take out power, system developers built in redundancy through a server sharing arrangement with UCLA in the southern part of the state.

The new application can handle 30,000 to 40,000 hits an hour – compared to the school’s emergency phone system with 10 lines and capacity for only 10 callers in a queue.
and faculty, instructors generally request that they be turned off or silenced during lectures. If placed correctly, sirens can be heard, but a variety of signals create confusion and may eventually go unnoticed.

Another consideration is that systems that are constantly powered on, use batteries or operate under special frequencies will need regular replacement and testing to ensure that they are operational when needed.

3. REDUNDANT SYSTEMS

Redundancy in alert capabilities can make the difference between success and failure. An alert system must function under emergency conditions which may include power or cellular service outages. For some universities, this might make the most desirable method of alert unavailable.

The possibility of limited electricity or cellular service highlights the need for universities to integrate low-tech methods into any alert notification strategy.

“Clearly, the importance of close coordination, cooperation and communication between law enforcement and campus officials is essential as it relates to safety.”

Roger Leque
River Falls Police Chief and Co-Chair of Governor Doyle’s Task Force on Campus Safety
Robust recovery plans will help to ensure that colleges and universities respond to emergencies and quickly return students to their everyday activities in the classroom.

The outpouring of support from students, donors, alumni, friends and strangers following Hurricane Katrina is not only indicative of the generosity of American campuses but also shows how significantly devastating Hurricane Katrina was to colleges and universities in the Gulf Coast region.

The needs of higher education institutions following Hurricane Katrina and the subsequent national response offer a number of lessons for colleges and universities that apply whether the incident is a natural disaster, active shooter or other crisis. Safety must be maintained, lines of communication must be opened and college and universities officials must be ready for displaced students, faculty and staff.

As has been a theme throughout this report, collaboration is essential for a successful post-event response. An event of major significance will affect the entire community and quite possibly the region or state. By working in partnership with peer institutions, local law enforcement and other
community organizations and agencies, colleges and universities will be better prepared for post-event recovery.

It is often difficult to determine when an emergency response becomes a recovery. Response activities should be conducted with a longer-term recovery in mind, and post-event activities might be characterized as a longer-term continuation of an immediate response. While paramedics triage at a traumatizing incident, the process of locating mental health experts for counseling of victims, witnesses and other affected individuals should begin immediately.

Because of their close association with emergency response plans, it is recommended that post-event plans and preparations be included in, and exercised with, emergency response plans. However, unlike an emergency response, post-event activities may last several months or even longer.

The Director of Emergency Preparedness at the University of Texas at Austin prepares and maintains the human services components of the emergency plan. This part of the plan includes:

- Identifying emergency feeding sites
- Identifying sources of clothing for disaster victims
- Securing emergency food supplies
- Coordinating the operation of shelter facilities
- Coordinating special care requirements for disaster victims such as the elderly, special needs individuals and others

Also included in the Texas plan are counseling and mental health preparedness considerations.

For more information, visit [www.utexas.edu/emergency/emergency_plan.pdf](http://www.utexas.edu/emergency/emergency_plan.pdf) (PDF pages 38-39)
CONTINUITY OF OPERATIONS

Significant incidents will likely cause a disruption to the operation of campuses including instruction, student services and housing. For example, Tulane University in New Orleans was closed for an entire semester following Hurricane Katrina. In the recent tragedy at Virginia Tech, instruction was canceled for a week.

Immediately following the tragedies, officials in Louisiana and Virginia needed to attend to the very serious and immediate needs of victims and their families. Continuity of Operations plans – or the ability to continue essential functions after an emergency – are necessary to achieve a timely and orderly recovery from an incident, protect critical facilities, equipment and records and return the campus community back normal functions.

From the Field...

Wisconsin Emergency Management recommends that Continuity of Operations Plans should be:

- Maintained at a high level of readiness
- Capable of implementation both with and without warning
- Operational no more than 12 hours after activation
- Developed for operations of up to 30 days

For more information, visit http://emergencymanagement.wi.gov/docview.asp?docid=271

1. COLLABORATION WITH STAKEHOLDERS

When writing and executing post-event recovery plans, colleges and universities should bring together a collaborative team of stakeholders that represents university leadership, student housing, mental health and student services, faculty, building maintenance or grounds staff and university, local and county law enforcement and emergency response.

Regardless of the size or scope of an incident, there will be residual physical, mental and psychological effects that linger for some time. Having a collaborative team to lead the recovery from an incident or emergency will help identify critical resources and gather and apply them quickly and effectively.
2. **Regional and Redundant Recovery Plans**

Officials should work with local and regional emergency management to identify important resources to help the university in times of crisis. Campus officials should be included in all county emergency response and recovery planning to ensure that the campus population is sufficiently incorporated into local and county planning. University facilities, staff or volunteers will serve as a great asset to the community should disaster strike an off-campus location.

Individual academic departments should identify a leadership team to guide recovery efforts, identify basic core needs for operation in an off-site location and have plans set for data and records preservation.

Campuses should have redundant systems in place, including alternates for critical roles and back-up communications and other systems for all individuals and processes in the recovery period.

From the Field...

Forced to evacuate their New Orleans campus after Hurricane Katrina, Tulane University administrators moved to a hotel in Houston. Within hours, they had set up a temporary e-mail address for questions. More than 3,000 messages poured in during the first several days. A team of staff members sorted the messages to identify key concerns and posted frequently asked questions to an emergency website.

Tulane also provided a weekly online chat with the university’s president—keeping students, staff, parents and alumni well-informed.

For more information, visit http://campustechnology.com/articles/40565

Ohio State University and the University of Cincinnati have used existing campus IT infrastructures and state resources to develop redundant disaster recovery data centers in case of a disaster.

- Centers maintain student admissions, financial aid and billing information, as well as information on development and alumni
- Coordinated cross-campus efforts resulted in lower costs compared to commercial solutions
- Any Ohio higher education institution or government agency can use the centers for disaster recovery data back-up

Other universities using the centers include the University of Akron, Bowling Green State University, University of Toledo, Cleveland State, Kent State, Ohio, Miami, Shawnee State, and Wright State Universities.

For more information, contact Kathy Bindewald at (614) 247-6980
BEST PRACTICE CRITERIA

3. PEER COLLABORATION

Should a disaster strike a higher education institution in Wisconsin, having established partnership agreements in place with neighboring colleges and universities will quicken response and recovery efforts.

Collaboration with other institutions may be the best way for a university to meet both the academic and human needs of their campus community. The classrooms, residence halls and dining halls of a neighboring school may be able to absorb all or part of the displaced body of students, faculty and staff before the disrupted university is able to resume daily operation.

Having a plan for such partnerships may prevent unnecessary disruption in students’ lives beyond the time of the actual disaster.

From the Field...

Following Hurricane Katrina, Wisconsin universities and colleges responded to assist higher education institutions in the damaged areas to help some of the 100,000 displaced students continue their education with minimal interruption.

- **All UW System and Wisconsin Technical College System** institutions waived fall 2005 tuition. Technical colleges also guaranteed eligibility for resident tuition rates for 3 years.

- **Lakeland College** in Sheboygan waived tuition for 10 students from Dillard University, a liberal arts college in New Orleans.

- **Carthage College** in Kenosha accepted displaced students at no charge. Any tuition collected was sent to the home college.

- **Marquette University** admitted more than 80 students who had planned to attend Loyola University, Tulane University, Dillard University and Xavier University.

- **Northland College** in Ashland offered housing and education for up to 25 students and offered to help find housing and employment for faculty and staff whose homes were lost in the hurricane.

For more information about the technical college response, email Conor Smyth at conor.smyth@wtcsystem.edu.

For more on private colleges, visit [www.waicuweb.org/upload/colleges_katrina.pdf](http://www.waicuweb.org/upload/colleges_katrina.pdf)
CRISIS COMMUNICATIONS

With cell reception spotty because of the massive volume of calls and factual televised information even more scarce, parents and friends of Virginia Tech students went to online sites for information. Within hours of the tragedy, ABC News ran a story, “If You’re Okay, Please Update Your Profile”. Facebook, MySpace and other social networking sites became critical communication links between students and the outside world.

After a situation has been stabilized, the campus community, news media and general public will likely need and desire continuous information. Worried parents and families will want to confirm the safety of their children. Media representatives will need to continue to report on the situation. And students, faculty and staff will need updates on recovery progress and plans for returning to campus and resuming campus operations.

Similar to emergency response procedures, a single spokesperson should be identified to ensure that accurate and timely information is disseminated. Colleges and universities should also provide capabilities for families to call in and receive information about the campus and their student.

Colleges and universities should develop prepared language for emergency messages that can be anticipated in order to save time when an actual emergency occurs. Communication distribution strategies should also be pre-identified so that messages can be transmitted as quickly and accurately as possible.

From the Field...

Depending on the type and level of emergency, the University of Wisconsin–Milwaukee alerts the campus through telephone, voice-mail, text messaging and e-mail systems and provides frequent updates to local and national media regularly.

If phone and data networks are unavailable, staff from the Emergency Operations Center go to each building and advise key leaders to alert others in the building. During a major crisis, or when the nature of the emergency suggests there will be a high volume of telephone inquiries, a special incoming 800 number is activated and made available through the UW-Milwaukee website. This number is also released to local and national news media.

More information is available at [http://www.uwm.edu/Dept/EHSRM/EMERGENCY/EOP.pdf](http://www.uwm.edu/Dept/EHSRM/EMERGENCY/EOP.pdf)
**BEST PRACTICE CRITERIA**

As colleges and universities prepare for post-event communications, the following best practice criteria should be considered.

1. **CENTRALIZE COMMUNICATION**

A single spokesperson to communicate information regarding recovery efforts will reduce confusion and ensure consistency in communications released by campus officials. As individual departments resume operations, procedures should be in place to coordinate communication among them. One source at the university should act as the single repository for information regarding when buildings will re-open, resumption of classes and other services during the recovery process.

2. **KEEP STAKEHOLDERS INFORMED**

During and after a crisis, it will be very important for colleges and universities to effectively manage media relations but it is even more important that officials keep their stakeholders – students, faculty, staff, families and the community – informed as well. Not only will students and staff want to know what to do following a disaster, their family and friends will want to know about progress being made in the relief effort. In addition, volunteers and external service providers will need to know what roles they can play.

Having regular updates through the media and on the web will help keep everyone up to date. It is also recommended that colleges and universities have an all-inclusive call center. This center should serve as a centralized resource for students, faculty, staff, families and community members to ask questions and receive information that they otherwise may not have received through other forms of communication.

3. **ADDRESS ALL EVENTS**

The effects of college tragedies reverberate on campuses across the nation. Students suffer losses even if not on campus, and people are concerned with what their school is doing to prevent or respond to violent acts on their campuses.

With mental health concerns on college campuses, including Post Traumatic Stress Disorder, institutions are advised to issue appropriate and timely communications following events on other campuses that may touch the lives of their own students.
Counseling & Assistance

An immediate and top priority following an emergency is to help survivors, witnesses, family and friends overcome the crisis with counseling. From large campus-wide vigils to individual grief and crisis counseling, colleges and universities need to prepare for the emotional and psychology needs of the campus community following a traumatizing event.

Through an agreement with the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA), the Center for Mental Health Services provides victims of ‘Presidentially-declared disasters’ immediate and short-term crisis counseling, as well as ongoing support for emotional recovery. While this boost of federal support will aid in the largest of crises, colleges and universities should take proactive steps to ensure that mental health and counseling services are available for the campus community in response to any size event.

1. Know Your Needs and Assets

In coordination with campus mental health services, college and university officials should determine and plan for the mental health and crisis counseling needs of the campus community following a variety of different events. While existing campus mental health resources may be sufficient following one tragic incident, university officials should plan for how the campus would respond should another incident occur very shortly thereafter or more students and faculty request assistance than anticipated.

After doing an inventory of crisis counseling resources on campus, colleges and universities should reach out to the surrounding communities to catalog additional counseling personnel. Pre-arranged agreements will also expedite the process of bringing these

From the Field...

Cook Counseling Center and Screening for Mental Health on the Virginia Tech campus offers free and anonymous online screening for depression, alcohol use, eating disorders and anxiety.

The online screening is informational, not diagnostic, and treatment recommendations are not provided. The service is made available to help students determine whether consultation with a counselor may be helpful.

Psychiatric evaluations, treatment and medications are available at the Center and individual and group therapy is provided in collaboration with counseling staff and a member of the Cook Counseling Center is on-call 24 hours a day, seven days a week.

For more information visit http://www.ucc.vt.edu
BEST PRACTICE CRITERIA

resources onto the campus should the need present itself.

2. REACHING OUT TO THOSE AFFECTED

No one who witnesses a disaster is untouched by it. According to Dr. Edward M. Kantor, Director of the University of Virginia Reserve Medical Corps and Chair of the Psychiatric Society of Virginia Disaster Committee, some students may attempt to appear unfazed and function normally, but they will become less effective at what they do.

Survivors may reject disaster assistance of all types, and accordingly colleges and universities need to take an active outreach approach to reach them. Traditional mental health labels should be avoided. And in early counseling responses, traditional methods should be set aside; survivors will most typically respond to active, genuine interest and concern.

Colleges and universities should use all possible methods of communication to advertise available counseling resources, including e-mails, blogs, websites, and social networks such as Facebook and MySpace. Resources should be made available and communicated through employee unions and faculty and staff organizations.

As time elapses, officials should continue to advertise services available on campus to anticipate the longer-term mental impact of a disaster.

Although students, faculty or staff may not desire services immediately following an incident, they may need assistance in the weeks or months ahead.

From the Field...

Cornell University provides a ‘Recovery Guide for University Units’ to help campus departments help students and staff affected by an emergency recover.

Following a crisis, the guide directs academic and administrative units to offer scheduling flexibility and outlines other reasonable accommodations to help students and staff recover. Depending on the circumstances, special services may be made available on campus, including:

- Counseling
- Student loans
- Housing lists
- Transportation
- Child care referrals
- Elder care referrals
- Academic assistance
- University insurance claims

Information about off-campus emergency relief and referrals is also included.

Templates for developing unit-level emergency response plans are available online.

For more information visit www.cornell.edu/emergency/planning/unit
3. Tailoring Services

 Depending on the nature of the crisis and the populations affected, colleges and universities must be prepared to offer a wide variety of counseling services that are tailored to the communities they serve. Counseling should be age and culturally appropriate — which is important for college and university campuses that feature wide age differences and rich cultural diversity.

 Social support systems, such as family, friends, religious communities and leaders on campus, are an extremely important resource immediately following a disaster. Colleges and universities should work to find innovative ways to connect students to their families, cultural and religious communities and fellow students in need. These types of non-traditional counseling should be embraced by higher education institutions.

 Students, faculty or staff who witness a tragedy may also need assistance for practical issues such as financial counseling, housing and academic assistance. Procedures should be in place for short-term loans, academic extensions or help with recovering basic items like personal identification and records following a fire or disaster at a personal residence or residence hall.

 By 8PM—one day after the Virginia Tech murders —the college held a candlelight vigil to help the campus community express grief and start healing.
PART II

INTRODUCTION

In Part II of the Final Report, the Task Force addresses a number of important campus safety policy and operational issues that play a significant role in providing a safer campus community; including technology on campus and its use to protect and alert the campus community in the event of an emergency; sharing information and records about students, faculty or staff under federal and state guidelines; law enforcement authority at colleges and universities; collecting and analyzing crime data on campus; and the emerging area of online learning and the potential for harassment and reduced student and campus safety.

While individual colleges and universities face challenges unique to their campuses, the topics addressed and recommendations offered in Part II have universal aspects and offer collective benefits for higher education institutions in Wisconsin.

The Task Force has capitalized on the experience and diversity of its membership, bringing together the perspectives of law enforcement, student health and academic services, parents, administrators and students, to address and offer recommendations on these complex issues. Numerous state and national experts have also aided the Task Force by offering findings and experiences from other campuses and states throughout the nation.

Many of the issues addressed in Part II have been regularly discussed on campuses for years or decades. The Task Force recognizes that a final conclusion on the role and scale of technology on campus or the interpretation of federal laws like the Family Education Records and Privacy Act (FERPA) will not be reached in this, or any, report. These issues will and should continue to be debated on campuses throughout the state and nation for years to come. However, the discussion and recommendations offered in Part II are intended to provide important insight and recommendations for campus officials and state leaders.

Protecting the campus community from a variety of threats is a demanding task, and one that campus officials throughout the state have performed with distinction. The Task Force hopes that the perspective and recommendations offered in the following articles will assist college and university students, faculty and staff to continue building campus communities where everyone can enjoy a safe learning environment.
Late in the afternoon on September 25, UW-Madison police received a report of a bomb threat at University Hospital. Just a few minutes later, a second caller reported an armed and suicidal man on the roof of the hospital parking structure.

In response, campus police secured the area and canvassed the neighborhood; emergency room traffic was diverted to other hospitals; academic buildings were closed and evening classes and sporting events were cancelled. To alert students and staff to the potential danger, emergency alerts were sent through e-mail, posted to the university website and a $100 ad was placed on the popular social networking site, Facebook.

Within minutes, local news carried breaking news advisories and 60,000 emails were distributed through the UW network. By the next day, over 42,000 hits were recorded on the Facebook ad and over 90,000 visitors viewed the news updates posted to the University’s website.

“No form of communication works all the time or for every situation,” said UW-Madison Police Chief Sue Riseling, “It is important to use a variety of means to get the message out. In dynamic and changing situations, communication always lags behind events. There isn’t the time to tell a story – it is emergency messaging – direct, concise. Therefore, your communication systems cannot be cumbersome or require extensive approvals before the message is sent.”

Tragedies like Virginia Tech have made campus officials, students and the public acutely aware that campuses are as vulnerable to acts of violence as anyplace else in modern society. As described elsewhere in this report, changes in student characteristics, limited resources to assist troubled students and the stress-inducing circumstances that are an inherent part of higher education may actually amplify campus vulnerabilities.

That said, how can campus officials increase the safety and security of the campus community? We’ve described a number of strategies in this report, including coordinated

“The first thing I did this morning was check the college website and read that everything was okay. I was able to go to work with peace of mind that [my daughter’s] day was going to be hopefully pretty normal.”

~ Parent of UW freshman
planning with local officials; regular training and simulations; improved information sharing between the campus, mental health and law enforcement communities; education to increase the identification of troubled individuals and effective treatment alternatives to help them heal. In a perfect world, these ‘upstream’ tactics would eliminate the need for additional security measures. But the current reality requires that more be done to protect our students and respond effectively in life-threatening situations.

Technology is increasingly being applied to every phase of security and disaster recovery. In prevention efforts, technology is being used to deter criminal activity and record suspicious behavior before a criminal act is committed. In the intervention phase, technology is helping multi-disciplinary teams securely share information, coordinate cases and ensure follow-up. When immediate notification and rapid action is required, technology is enabling large scale, customized alerts in a variety of formats and modes. And response and recovery efforts are benefiting from interoperable communications between the myriad of agencies involved, integrated networks and web-based data recovery.

The right technology in the right location at the right time can indeed reduce crime and save lives. Compared with non-technological alternatives, automated systems have the potential to reduce costs while offering greater reliability and precision, increased efficiency, better communication and coordination of effort that is so critical during a crisis. Additional descriptions and links to more information on individual technologies for campus security can be found in the appendix of this report.

From the Field...

Balancing access control with convenience and acceptance by users is a major security challenge for higher education facilities managers. Depending on the level of security required, systems can vary from high security locks to smart card readers to biometric-based screening.

The University of California at Santa Barbara replaced a card reader system with iris scanning—a type of biometric technology—to control access to its sensitive semiconductor research facility. The system scans the rings, furrows and freckles in the colored tissue surrounding the pupil of the eye. Before granting access to the facility, the image is authenticated against 200 unique points of differentiation to a previously captured image.

A NOTE OF CAUTION

Technology for the sake of technology is a poor strategy and reliance on it to protect and defend a campus is unrealistic. Some of the caveats of technology include:

- Any technology aimed at campus safety should be used in conjunction with, not instead of, prevention and early intervention strategies such as conflict resolution, identifying, supporting, reasonably accommodating, treating and/or referring troubled individuals and proactive outreach programs. It will not eliminate the hard work necessary in assessing risk, coordinating with other agencies and building a campus culture that embraces safe behavior and individual responsibility.

- Large campuses of 10,000 or more students with hundreds or thousands of doors and windows cannot be run as a high security prison. The campus is often a gathering center for visiting scholars, symposia, artistic performances, internet access, sporting events, museums, libraries, health clinics and job fairs. Campuses cannot realistically be “locked down”.

- Clear policies, standard operating procedures and continuous training for system administrators is critical for avoiding false alarms that create credibility problems for the university and render the technology irrelevant. Regular users must be trained in the importance of the technology to campus safety – a student propping open a door will defeat even the most sophisticated key card system.

- Systems should be installed only after consideration of adaptability and acceptance by those who must use it. Technology can be invasive and, in some cases, simply inconvenient to use. According to the Pew Internet & American Life Project, over 90 percent of college students use the internet, 84 percent own a cell phone and 75 percent of them send text messages on a regular basis. But even with extensive access to communication technology, students are reluctant to get on board when campuses try to use it for security purposes.

For example, Pennsylvania State University implemented a text messaging system in 2005, and today, even after Virginia Tech, fewer than 20 percent of the school’s 80,000 students have subscribed. Students are reluctant to share their cell phone number with the university for fear of “educational spamming” and increased text messaging costs.
Finally, reliance on technology can create a false sense of security. For instance, electronic key locks, emergency call boxes, metal detectors and video surveillance may reduce normal criminal activity, but will do little to prevent an angry, isolated and determined person from breaking a window and committing a violent crime. Efforts to identify and assist troubled individuals before the safety of others is threatened may be a better investment when resources are limited.

**TECHNOLOGY & RISK ASSESSMENT**

When seeking a technological solution to a specific campus safety problem, university and college officials will be confronted with a wide variety of options offered by a multitude of businesses ‘specializing’ in campus security. The decision to spend millions of dollars on security technology should not be a knee jerk reaction. Rather, a comprehensive assessment is needed to clarify business requirements and itemize performance criteria.

Before making any significant new investment in technology, a thorough analysis should be performed and action plans developed to integrate the proposed technology with campus policy, business practices and non-technological security measures. The assessment team should include not only information technology and security officials, but also those who will be asked to incorporate the technology into their lives: faculty, staff and students.

**Basic Elements of the Risk Assessment Process**

As concerns for violence on America’s campuses have increased, campus security risk assessments must now consider previously unthinkable scenarios involving armed gunmen, pandemics and terrorist attacks. Fortunately, regardless of the types of risk being considered, good assessments generally include the same elements.

**Step 1:** Identify threats that could harm individuals or adversely affect critical operations and assets. Threats include such things as intruders, criminals, disgruntled employees, terrorists and natural disasters.

**Step 2:** Estimate the likelihood that such threats will materialize based on historical information and judgment of knowledgeable individuals.

**Step 3:** Identify and rank the value, sensitivity, and criticality of the damage or other consequences that will likely result from each threat.

**Step 4:** For the most critical and sensitive situations, estimate the potential losses or damage that could occur if a threat materializes, including recovery costs.

**Step 5:** Identify cost-effective actions to mitigate or reduce the risk. These actions might include implementing new policies and procedures as well as technical or physical controls.

**Step 6:** Document the assessment results, develop an action plan and hold people accountable for implementation of their portion of the plan.

This list was adapted from best practices in Information Security Risk Assessments compiled by the United States General Accounting Office in 1999.

For more information, see [http://www.gao.gov/special.pubs/ai00033.pdf](http://www.gao.gov/special.pubs/ai00033.pdf)
A well-executed assessment will provide officials with the information needed to understand gaps in security that can threaten student safety, campus operations and the institution’s reputation, and make informed judgments about the extent of actions needed to keep the campus safe. It will also clarify what purpose new technology will serve and specific performance criteria required.

An investment in campus safety technology in new building construction will reap both a security and financial benefit. Retrofitting older buildings with new technology like access controls, video surveillance or alarm systems is often much more expensive than incorporating those technologies in the original design. To ensure that security is considered during the planning and design phases of building construction, the Task Force recommends that security or law enforcement staff are consulted and have the opportunity to review technological and security aspects of building designs. And though incorporating security technology in original designs incurs a cost, it will pale in comparison to the consequence of a poorly designed building or the cost of retrofitting later.

An up-to-date inventory of your current technological assets and their capabilities can also save time and money. In some cases, a prior investment in technology made for some other non-security purpose may serve your needs without incurring substantial new expense. For instance, systems that are currently used to advise computer network users of system outages can also be leveraged for advising these same users about security risks. Video surveillance cameras used to monitor traffic in a parking structure can also be used to monitor activity at nearby buildings and open spaces. Incorporating existing systems into your security strategy may not generate flashy headlines, but it will accomplish your goals cost effectively.

Technology is a complex area and assessing individual technologies and their suitability to individual campuses is outside the scope of this report. We do however, want to provide some information about emergency notifications and share some best practice criteria to help select a system that will meet your needs.

When designing new buildings, planners should include elements that will allow future technology upgrades, and avoid expensive retrofitting.
One of the most profound lessons learned following Virginia Tech was that campuses need to think carefully about when and how to communicate in emergency situations. Campus administrators were criticized for failing to issue a descriptive alert to the campus community immediately after the initial two murders were reported. When a message was sent out, officials relied on email as the primary communication method. Students and faculty who were in class, in-transit or who just hadn’t opened their email didn’t receive the message. Those who did open the email were provided vague information and no personal safety instructions:

Subject: Shooting on campus.
A shooting incident occurred at West Amber Johnston earlier this morning.
Police are on the scene and are investigating.
The university community is urged to be cautious and are asked to contact Virginia Tech Police if you observe anything suspicious or with information on the case.
Contact Virginia Tech Police at 231-6411
Stay attuned to the www.vt.edu. We will post as soon as we have more information.

While email is an effective tool for non-emergency communications, it is now clear that it should not be the only mechanism for delivering urgent information requiring specific and immediate action by the recipient. As described in the UW-Madison example introducing this section, a combination of methods should be employed.

In 2005, following the devastation of the South Asia tsunami and Hurricane Katrina, the University of Central Florida (UCF) began a study of emergency communication systems on Florida university and college campuses. That study, while not yet completed, is already generating actionable recommendations and findings that can help guide our work here in Wisconsin.

In September, the principle investigator of the UCF study, Dr. Lei Wei, spent time with the Wisconsin Task Force to describe the research methodology, process and initial findings. As described by Dr. Wei, a key finding (and one that most campus administrators will not find surprising) is that each campus is unique and, as such, there is no one-size-fits-all emergency notification system that will meet everyone’s needs. Researchers found that the better notification systems were “continuously available;”

“It is important to know the limitations of technology, and build emergency procedures taking these limitations into consideration.”

Dr. Lei Wei
Principal Investigator, EmergComm Project
University of Central Florida
redundant in communication capabilities (probably requiring the use of multiple technologies); met capacity requirements of the transmitting system (local telephone company); time sensitive and built to handle the worst-case scenario.” The UCF study also emphasizes the need to offer a variety of methods, “The system must take into account members of, and visitors to, the university community who have disabilities, are visually or hearing impaired or for whom English is a second language.”

**BEST PRACTICES FOR EMERGENCY NOTIFICATION**

A key objective of the Florida study was to identify best practices and key criteria for assessing an emergency notification system. According to the UCF study team, the best alert systems:

- Cover both indoor and outdoor environments of all types (construction variations, terrain and natural barriers like a forest)
- Quickly activate and easily deactivate
- Are easy to set up, operate, maintain and manage
- Have both voice and text messaging capabilities
- Cannot be hacked or otherwise compromised
- Have a battery backup or manual operation option
- Are cost-effective in terms of initial installation, operation and lifetime cost
- Function interoperably with other systems
- Comply with regulations and standards including Mass Notification and Industry Codes; NFPA72 (National Fire Alarm Codes); UFC (Unified Facilities Criteria); and the Jeanne Clery Act
- Accommodate special communication needs of disabled users and recipients

For more information about the study, including a detailed analysis of a wide variety of notification methods, go to [http://ec.creol.ucf.edu/](http://ec.creol.ucf.edu/)

Campuses should adopt a variety of methods for alerting students, staff and neighboring residents to the threat of violence or other danger. Administrators should consider the unique characteristics of the campus population, existing communication infrastructure, and plan for redundancy in case any single component fails or is disabled.
INFORMATION SHARING ON CAMPUS

“We repeatedly heard reports of ‘information silos’ within educational institutions and among educational staff, mental health providers, and public safety officials that impede appropriate information sharing.”

Report on the Virginia Tech Incident to the President of the United States

Information sharing is one of the most complex issues facing decision-makers on campus who must work within legal, practical and ethical parameters to balance privacy and safety. Privacy is an important personal right, and students on campus need personal independence in order to grow academically, socially and emotionally. Yet, university officials, faculty, staff and fellow students have a responsibility to protect the safety and security of their campus by sharing information about members of the campus community who exhibit dangerous or threatening behavior.

Often, the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA), Health Insurance Portability and Accountability Act (HIPAA) and American with Disabilities Act (ADA) are considered restrictive laws that limit the ability of college or university officials to share critical information. To help answer the questions surrounding some of the most frequently cited legal barriers to information sharing on campus, the Task Force convened a public summit entitled, “The Truth About Working Together: FERPA, HIPAA and ADA in a Post-Virginia Tech World.” Keynote speaker Dr. Gary Pavela, a nationally recognized campus legal scholar, offered his perspective on the important legal factors that college and university officials must consider.

Dr. Pavela encouraged the Task Force members and other college officials in attendance to review their campus policies regarding FERPA, HIPAA and ADA with campus safety in mind. While the laws were designed to protect the privacy rights of students and health care consumers, neither law should ever be interpreted as a barrier to action in emergency situations. In fact, Dr. Pavela noted that “there has been, in some cases, a gross misinterpretation or over-interpretation of federal privacy laws.”

Campus administrators were encouraged to form a team of advisors to evaluate federal laws, applicable state statutes and their own institution’s policies on student privacy and records custody. While respecting the privacy of students and faculty on campus, it is critical that campus officials understand what exceptions are allowed under federal and state laws governing information sharing and privacy protection. It is clear that although a student’s privacy is an important personal right, their own well-being and the safety of others is paramount when an imminent threat is identified. Dr. Pavela described how the
“threat of litigation in our society drives us to an extreme, and it makes us sometimes so risk adverse that we don’t do the right thing.”

Rather than primarily working from a risk-averse perspective, institutions should craft policies that will place a greater emphasis on creating a safe campus environment. “We have to, first off, have a core sense of what we believe in, what we’re trying to accomplish as educators, define what we want to do, and then approach the lawyers,” advised Dr. Pavela.

Federal legislation is often cited as the primary barrier to information sharing on campus. Yet, it is likely that after institutions review and update information sharing policies, the largest barrier limiting the exchange of information will be the procedures and mechanisms in place to transmit information from the campus community to the appropriate university authorities.

Earlier, in the discussion of best practice criteria, the Task Force recommended the creation of a single point of contact to receive reports of threatening behavior and a multi-disciplinary team to review and respond accordingly (please see page 28 for more information on multi-disciplinary teams). Centralizing reporting and coordinating communication on campus will provide a system for the campus community to report an individual’s threatening behavior and feel confident that their concerns are being addressed. The multi-disciplinary team should be familiar with the distinctions between threat assessment and profiling. As Dr. Pavela noted, “profiling has not been proven to be reliable; threat assessment has.”

While education, medical and counseling records are confidential except under life threatening circumstances, Dr. Pavela encouraged institutions to “focus on the conduct.” The student code of conduct should clearly define what behavior is unacceptable, and students should be held accountable if their conduct is a violation. Students and
I think the Governor’s remarks were remarkably on target in terms of not turning these issues exclusively over to lawyers...

Those of us working in higher education have to hold on to what our core values are, think about what we’re in this business for, and then approach legal counsel from the perspective of this is our professional judgment of what we need to do to educate our students.”

Dr. Gary Pavela
August 2007
In a poignant moment during his presentation, Dr. Pavela remarked, “I think that part of the problem with FERPA is we have 10,000 different entities offering their interpretation of it, and I would hope that you don’t become 10,001.” The Task Force has not attempted to re-interpret federal and state law, but rather to point out helpful resources available for understanding the law and for giving colleges and universities options for reducing information silos and increasing communication on campus. In the face of a violent incident at Virginia Tech where warning signs were present but there was no way to share them among key personnel, college and university officials must work to build systems and encourage a culture of information sharing that could potentially save the lives of countless students, faculty and staff.

**Frequently Asked Questions on FERPA from the Department of Education**

**Can a school disclose law enforcement unit records to parents and the public?**

Under FERPA, schools may disclose information from “law enforcement unit records” to anyone – including parents or federal, State, or local law enforcement authorities – without the consent of the eligible student. Many colleges and universities have their own campus security units. Records created and maintained by these units for law enforcement purposes are exempt from the privacy restrictions of FERPA and can be shared with anyone.

**Can school officials share their observations of students with parents?**

Nothing in FERPA prohibits a school official from sharing with parents information that is based on that official’s personal knowledge or observation and that is not based on information contained in an education record. Therefore, FERPA would not prohibit a teacher or other school official from letting a parent know of their concern about their son or daughter that is based on their personal knowledge or observation.

As a member of the Governor’s Task Force on Campus Safety, I have personally learned a great deal about campus safety and about the important safety issues that campuses across the state face. As Chancellor of UW-Green Bay, I have been able to take much of that information back to my campus to make it a safer place.

Many of the Task Force deliberations brought us back to the complex question of what information could and could not be shared on campus – and the also important consideration of what information should and should not be shared. The Task Force convened a public summit to discuss and learn about this significant topic which, through Task Force discussions and presentations from state and national experts, led me to take direct action on my campus.

When I returned from the summit, I brought together a group of advisors to review our policies. We found that our information sharing policies were out-of-date and, speaking for myself, I had some serious misconceptions about current law and judicial interpretation of the law.

Our review of UW-Green Bay information sharing procedures found that though our current practices were sound, they had actually evolved from what our decades-old policies outlined. And as anyone in the legal profession understands, you do not want practices deviating from stated policies.

Our next step will be to see that our updated information sharing polices and procedures are widely understood and practiced on our campus. I hope that many others will find similar nuggets of relevant information in the Task Force’s Final Report that they might use to improve the safety of their campuses.

Bruce Shepard
Chancellor
University of Wisconsin-Green Bay
Wisconsin colleges, regardless of whether they are a public or private institution, university or technical college, should have the maximum ability to provide for the safety of their students. Yet, several potential barriers affect how campus security departments conduct their work and the security they can provide for the campus community.

The University of Wisconsin System, the Wisconsin Technical College System and Wisconsin’s private colleges and universities have different policing and security authority under state law. UW System institutions are granted police authority which they may opt to exercise. The technical and independent colleges and universities are not granted police authority and may employ private or civilian security on their campuses. This may result in potential barriers to protecting the campus community from harm.

Campus security departments have limited access to resources for training, equipment and operations and are unable to access criminal computer databases for warrant or arrest records. Campus security also lack police authority to arrest a suspect of crimes like theft, trespassing and other violations. Security staff face competing demands in times of need and face other barriers that may restrict the range of actions that campuses can take in response to a safety or security situation.

While Wisconsin technical colleges have security departments that employ private or civilian security officers with limited authority, colleges and universities that do not have police authority on their campuses rely on county and municipal law enforcement services to assist in maintaining campus security. Similarly, safety and security departments at private institutions are classified and regulated as private detective or private security agencies.

While this situation may be adequate for security at large public events and for investiga-
tion of crimes, it may be inadequate for a rapid response to an active shooter or addressing seemingly insignificant criminal activity that could eventually escalate to a more serious threat to the campus community. Though most colleges have a strong working relationship with local police departments, the ability of local agencies to respond to college needs may be limited by other competing demands. Some private colleges, like the Marquette University’s Security Department, work closely with law enforcement agencies and adhere voluntarily to the Law Enforcement Standards Board (LESB) training standards, yet do so with restricted access to external resources and limited operational authority.

The Task Force recommends that colleges and universities have all options available that they feel necessary for securing their campus. Granting colleges the option to exercise police authority within its jurisdiction would allow each campus to share and access important police data, acquire resources for training, equipment and operations and have a more immediate response and continual police presence on campus. Therefore, the Task Force recommends a change to Wisconsin law to allow each college the option of having sworn police authority if the individual college so chooses.

Gaining the authority to create a law enforcement agency has significant legal and policy implications that are not easily resolved. Each university or college must weigh the need for a commissioned and armed police force with the costs to establish and maintain a force, considering available local law enforcement resources, as well as the potential liability for police personnel actions. Some universities and colleges may determine that a department of sworn officers is not the best option for their campus, and the Task Force encourages each campus to evaluate their needs and which options they wish to pursue.

Whether or not a campus has a sworn police force, a working relationship with local law enforcement is an important aspect of protecting campus and community safety. Building solid relationships can help resolve jurisdictional questions, can help coordinate response efforts and foster a culture where both the

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**Sworn or Not—There’s a Difference**

“The most obvious differences between private security and sworn police officers are that sworn officers take an oath to uphold the state’s and nation’s laws, have the duty and authority to make arrests and also have the tools and training to immediately stop a threat, using force if necessary.

A more subtle difference is that, because of their statutory authority, police are somewhat more insulated from political influences. Private security forces may be focused on satisfying superiors or employers, whereas police strive to independently balance their dual responsibilities of providing community safety and protecting the constitutional rights of the citizens whom they serve.”

Chief Jerry Matysik
Eau Claire Police Department
campus and surrounding communities are joined in an effort to improve safety for students and visitors.

There are a variety of ways that campuses can establish or build on partnerships with local law enforcement, and the Task Force recommends that campus police or security explore all possible avenues. Memoranda of Understanding between campuses and local law enforcement engage both parties to help determine how to accomplish similar goals of protecting the campus and community. Establishing satellite offices on campus or contracting with local police to have officers on campus will provide an increased presence and quicken response times.

It is essential that every campus adequately protect the safety of its students, faculty and staff and promote a culture of campus safety. Police authority on campus is one of the tools that a college or university can use to promote and increase safety on campus. Building strong relationships with local law enforcement and exploring avenues for additional local law enforcement participation with campus activities can also help to improve the safety and security of the campus and surrounding community. Institutions should evaluate their individual needs and resources and determine how to best address police authority and the safety of their campus.

__From the Field...__

Renovations made in 2004 to the Blackhawk Technical College campus included office space and parking for the Rock County Sheriff’s Department. By providing resources for local law enforcement purposes on campus grounds, deputies are able to spend more time patrolling the campus area and reduce call response times.

Deputies complete shift changes at the campus facility and occasionally use it to conduct interviews. The arrangement has resulted in a consistent and visible law enforcement presence on campus without the complexities of developing a separate campus security force.

For more information about the partnership, contact Kaylen Betzig at Blackhawk Technical College at kbetzig@blackhawk.edu.

__Weapons on Campus__

Dangerous weapons pose a threat to campus safety and in the hands of anyone other than trained officers are detrimental to a safe learning environment.

Although technical colleges can ban dangerous weapons from their campuses through policies and regulations, there currently is no penalty under state law for bringing a dangerous weapon on a technical college campus. Each UW, private or technical college campus, regardless of size, geography or student population, needs to be a safe learning environment free of dangerous weapons.

Task Force members Dianne Lazear, Pam Hodermann, Larry Rickard and Elizabeth Paape contributed to this section.
Therefore, the Task Force recommends a change to the Wisconsin Administrative Code that would include Wisconsin Technical Colleges in the provision banning dangerous weapons from college and university campuses. Additionally, all colleges and universities in Wisconsin should enact and publish strict policies banning dangerous weapons, authentic or simulated, and hold offenders accountable for their reckless conduct through additional institutional sanctions.

From the Field...

Serving on the Governor’s Task Force for Campus Safety has been a great learning experience for me, personally, and has brought a renewed commitment to the entire River Falls Police Department to work with our university partners to improve communication, coordination and safety.

Currently, UW-River Falls has one sworn police officer who serves as the Public Safety Director for the university’s department of unsworn and unarmed security staff. An arrangement between the university and my department outlines the police department’s role for responding to specific incidents on campus, particularly for arresting suspects or for an armed response.

While this cooperative agreement has provided appropriate safety for the campus community, we all understand that after Virginia Tech, we must work to improve communication and coordination between universities and local law enforcement.

Recently, we have assigned a liaison officer to the University Public Safety Department. This officer serves as a member of the university’s new behavioral intervention team and meets weekly with the safety director, or more frequently as required, to review reports, exchange information and enhance communication. We have also granted the university safety director access to our department’s Daily Activity Log, which allows both departments to recognize cases of mutual interest involving students.

Recent events have taught us that tragedy can strike anywhere, even on college campuses. In River Falls, we recognize that regular communication and coordination between the university and local law enforcement is critical step to protect the safety of the campus and surrounding communities.

Roger D. Leque
Chief
River Falls Police Department
A critical element of campus safety strategies is the assessment of risk (see Assessing and Planning on page 9). In the process of this risk assessment, university officials should seek to gain a thorough awareness of the nature and extent of crime on their campuses. While serious incidents of crime and violence are rare across colleges and universities, there is both a moral and legal obligation to guarantee safe environments for faculty, staff, students, and visitors to campus.

Discussions of legal issues relating to campus safety have typically focused on the Health Insurance Portability and Accountability Act (HIPAA) and the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA). Both laws protect individual rights to privacy and a clear understanding of each is important to an effective campus safety strategy. Campus officials must also take into consideration the Jeanne Clery Disclosure of Campus Security Policy and Campus Crime Statistics Act of 1965. Often referred to as “the Clery Act”, the law places obligations on universities and colleges to issue timely warnings when crimes have occurred and to publicly disclose the incidence of certain criminal and non-criminal acts that occur on and around the campus each year.

Universities and colleges that participate in student financial aid programs submit their annual reports to the U.S. Department of Education and make the data available to students, parents and employees through online methods or printed reports. The reports include 3 years of campus crime statistics as well as victims’ rights information, the authority of campus police or security forces and where students should go to report crimes. In addition to this annual report, colleges are also required to have a “timely warning”
mechanism in case of an ongoing threat to employees and students and must maintain a publicly accessible crime log. Universities that do not comply with the provisions of the Clery Act can be fined up to $27,500.

The requirement of data collection has perhaps the greatest potential as a tool for campus safety, but a report that follows only the letter of the law is of little use to campus safety personnel or to a parent of a prospective student.

Take, for example, the crime category of robbery. If it is found that robberies have increased not only in one year but over a five year period, this should be a clear sign that something is needed to address the increase, whether that is additional police presence or a more coordinated response with other law enforcement agencies. Yet, a more powerful way to assess and respond to the crime problem is by digging deeper into the nature of the incidents. It is one thing to know that you may have more robberies this year than last year.

"The Clery Act does not require reporting information about the context under which a crime occurred; it only requires an institution to tally the number of offenses. With better information about the context and contributing factors, we improve our ability to stop crime and reduce risk factors.

On the UW-Milwaukee campus, every reported rape in the last 30 years has involved alcohol use. This information wouldn’t be found in a typical Clery report, but it helps us understand better how to prevent those unfortunate crimes.”

Chief Pamela Hodermann
UW-Milwaukee Police Department

Temple University’s “Campus Safety & You” report provides students with a single source for campus crime data (to meet the requirements of the Clery Act) and practical information about safe behavior, how to report a crime and where to find assistance.

The reader-friendly report makes sense of the numbers in the context of what students should do to increase their personal safety.

For more information, visit http://css.ocis.temple.edu/about_us/CampusSafety.pdf

"From the Field..."
or two years ago; it is more powerful to know about the nature of the incidents, such as who was involved and when they occurred, to mention a few key variables. By analyzing crime incidents, campuses are able to be more precise in their law enforcement and prevention strategies.

Temple University, for example, in their “Campus Safety Services 2007 Annual Security Report” provides not only aggregate counts for the crime categories mandated under the Clery Act, but in addition, converts those numbers into rates, allowing for the campus to compare its data to peer campuses. The language of the Clery Act suggests that incident data beyond general crime categories can be useful to university officials. This recommendation is echoed by the establishment of the Wisconsin Incident Based Reporting System (WIBRS) which provides more detailed, accurate and meaningful data than that produced by many traditional summary reports.

By “drilling down” into the data, campus officials can utilize a powerful tool to assist them in policy development and the deployment of staff and resources to enhance campus safety. Moreover, timely crime reporting can be used in making quick alterations in crime responses, so that university police and other parties can apportion their limited resources in the most effective and efficient manner.

Through a comprehensive and coordinated approach, crime data analysis can be a very valuable tool for campus officials. Information generated not only assists in the allocation of scarce resources, but in addition, can improve the response of campuses to their individual crime problems. Moreover, by sharing data and approaches to enforcement and prevention, universities and colleges can improve their responses to crime and increase the safety of all who use and visit our institutions of higher learning. Promoting a safe campus is the obligation of many persons and parties. Without reliable crime data buttressing enforcement and treatment strategies on campuses, this important goal may never be realized.

Task Force member Stan Stojkovic contributed to this section.

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**From the Field…**

The Wisconsin Incident Based Reporting System (WIBRS) is the next generation of crime and arrest reporting and has been adopted by 25 law enforcement agencies in the state to collect and analyze more robust crime statistics.

WIBRS provides more detailed, accurate and meaningful data than that produced by the traditional summary Uniform Crime Reporting (UCR) Program. WIBRS data improves a law enforcement agency’s ability to precisely identify when and where crime takes place, its form and the characteristics of the crime’s victims and perpetrators.

Armed with such information, law enforcement can better make a case to acquire the resources needed to effectively fight crime.

For more information, visit: [www.oja.wi.gov/sac](http://www.oja.wi.gov/sac)
The campus community is no longer contained in picturesque courtyards, student unions or science laboratories. In addition to a physical presence, college campuses exist in the virtual world. Assignments, lectures, grades and other academic resources are now typically found online. Students post an incredible amount of personal information online and regularly communicate with fellow students using websites and chat software. Yet, while colleges and universities have considered the academic impact and dangers of online activity, like plagiarism and faulty news sources, few institutions have resources for addressing potentially threatening safety situations faced by students online. From harassment to cyber-bullying to resources for remote students facing psychological and emotional stress, colleges and universities need to address this emerging issue of campus safety.

According to the Center for Safe and Responsible Internet Use, students online can be victimized by others or engage in a range of behaviors from risky, to inappropriate, to harmful or illegal. Threats or other inappropriate behaviors conducted in the online environment can have a greater impact than in-person conduct because the “harm is ongoing 24/7, material can be widely disseminated and is difficult or impossible to remove, and perpetrators may be anonymous or may involve others”.

Threatening situations online can escalate to a physical encounter on-campus, raising the need to address threats or attacks made online before they become a physical confrontation. Academic codes of conduct should include the virtual environment in their jurisdiction and consider threatening interactions online as prohibited conduct.

As in the in-person environment, colleges and universities can make virtual environments safer by educating the campus community of potential risks of online activity, including consequences for inappropriate conduct that violates student codes. Colleges and universities should establish defined processes for reporting threats or harassing statements made online and respond swiftly, while making sure that this reporting system – and all other resources addressing virtual campus issues – integrates with the institution’s in-person systems for reporting inappropriate conduct and receiving assistance. Faculty and staff should be trained to identify inappropriate online conduct and be knowledgeable of procedures for responding to distressed or disruptive students.

Resources should also be made available for students participating remotely, including counseling services or resources for students who do not often visit campus but may be facing emotional stress or strain. Online students should also be considered when assessing the capacity of health services and other campus resources to meet the needs of students.

While the virtual campus environment is an emerging safety issue, it is no less important than other security situations faced by college and university campuses. An assessment sur-
veying internet usage and the online threats faced by students and staff should be conducted. Colleges and universities should examine codes of conduct, reporting and judicial procedures and counseling services, to name a few, to ensure that the virtual campus environment is considered. And as additional online courses are added, institutions should consider remote student populations that have an irregular presence on campus in disaster response and recovery plans.

In the dynamic environment of a college or university campus, the virtual environment provides yet another variable to consider. However, as colleges and universities continue to add online resources and students continue to communicate online and participate remotely, the virtual campus environment must be a serious consideration of overall campus safety.

Task Force member Dianne Lazear contributed to this section.

From the Field...

At UW-Stout, the Campus Violence Prevention Project (CVPP) helps members of the campus community understand, get help, and report problems of sexual assault, domestic violence and stalking. Staff report that technology and communication online have perpetuated some of these crimes.

For example, a freshman student was sexually assaulted at an off-campus party that she was invited to through Facebook by a person she had never met. Other students have also reported being harassed online, through text messages and e-mail, after break-ups and arguments with significant others. Harassment online can often be difficult to resolve because it is hard to prove who is sending the messages. Ultimately, students being harassed online become too afraid to check their school-related e-mails or messages.

Though technology can be used to perpetuate violence, it can also be used to educate and assist potential victims. UW-Stout’s CVPP has a thorough website that offers checklists and resources about stalking. It also offers a video that can be viewed by anyone, at anytime, to help students who have been sexually assaulted and don’t know what to do next.

For more information, about the UW-Stout program visit www.uwstout.edu/cvpp.

To view the video, go to: http://www.uwstout.edu/lts/multimedia/streams/lts/Vio256HQ.wvx
In April 2007, we sadly learned that tragedy can strike anywhere, and that our institutions of higher learning are not immune from this misfortune. While it is impossible to precisely predict if or when events the magnitude of Virginia Tech will occur again, the Task Force has found that campuses throughout Wisconsin, from rural technical colleges to large urban institutions, are working hard to protect their students, faculty and staff from harm.

The Task Force has shared numerous commendable practices and has crafted recommendations in this report in hopes of building safer campus communities and learning environments. But creating a safe campus is not a task with a definitive end; there will always be more work to do and future challenges to meet.

Occasionally, the open environment of higher education attracts non-university related visitors that harass students. Where repeat offenders pose a security risk or otherwise disrupt the learning environment, local law enforcement and elected officials should be supportive of campus efforts to remove these threats and disruptions.

A consortium of representatives from the UW, private and technical college systems to continually share best practices and find solutions to mutual campus safety concerns would be a helpful resource for colleges and universities throughout the state. This consortium would be able to address safety concerns common among higher education institutions and respond to emerging campus safety issues.

As Governor Doyle has remarked to the Task Force, “when we think that our work is done, and that we have completely protected our campuses, it is likely our most vulnerable moment.” The Task Force sincerely hopes that the information, practices and recommendations in this report inspire campus officials to redouble their efforts to secure our colleges and universities and ensure that higher education in Wisconsin is a safe and rewarding experience.
Throughout this report, we have provided information about practices at other universities and links to government and association websites as resources for improving campus safety. The information in this appendix provides a comprehensive listing of these links for the reader’s convenience.

**PREVENTION RESOURCES**

Campus-wide all-hazard assessment tool: [www.IACLEA.org](http://www.IACLEA.org).

Intruder with weapon drill at Southwest Area Technical College: Rita Luna at (608) 822-3262 ext. 2701


CPTED at Marquette: Lt. Paul Mascari at the Marquette University Department of Public Safety: paul.mascari@marquette.edu

MIT faculty outreach campaign: [http://web.mit.edu/medical](http://web.mit.edu/medical)

MSOE early referral system: [https://www.msoe.edu/ears/](https://www.msoe.edu/ears/)

Cornell’s mental health service strategy and plan: [www.gannett.cornell.edu/CAPS](http://www.gannett.cornell.edu/CAPS)


Cooperation between universities for student health services: Denise Vujnovich at (608) 785-9155 or email vujnovichd@westerntc.edu

Mandatory insurance and available plans: [www.tshc.fsu.edu/insurane.htm](http://www.tshc.fsu.edu/insurane.htm)

St Norbert’s freshman health history review: Contact at Barb.Bloomer@snc.edu

Active Minds: [www.activemindsoncampus.org](http://www.activemindsoncampus.org)

Campus CERT’s free train-the-trainers program: [www.c-cert.msu.edu](http://www.c-cert.msu.edu)

**INTERVENTION**

UW-Oshkosh Student At Risk Response Team: [http://www.uwosh.edu/couns_center/programs.php](http://www.uwosh.edu/couns_center/programs.php)

MATC conflict resolution training: [http://matcmadison.edu/matk/studentresources/rights/conflict.shtm](http://matcmadison.edu/matk/studentresources/rights/conflict.shtm)


**RESPONSE RESOURCES**

Parkside’s crisis communication plan: [www.uwp.edu/departments/governance/admin/policy/policy55.cfm](http://www.uwp.edu/departments/governance/admin/policy/policy55.cfm)
The Task Force welcomed Dr. Lei Wei to the discussion of technology for alert capabilities.

Dr. Wei shared his expertise on technology assessment processes and best practices criteria for campus emergency notification systems. The results of Dr. Lei Wei’s study on communication technology are included in his report to the Florida Task Force on Campus Safety. See http://ec.creol.ucf.edu_FinalReport_EmergComm.pdf

WI Technical College System response to Hurricane Katrina: conor.smyth@wtcsystem.edu

WI independent colleges’ response to Hurricane Katrina: www.waicuweb.org/upload/colleges_katrina.pdf

UWM Crisis Communication: http://www.uwm.edu/Dept/EHSRM/EMERGENCY/EOP.pdf

Online screening for depression through Cook County: http://www.ucc.vt.edu

Cornell’s comprehensive Recovery Plan: www.cornell.edu/emergency/planning/unit


WI interoperability, SIEC: www.SIEC.wi.gov.

UW-Green Bay’s system-wide computer message pop-up: www.uwgb.edu


**POST-EVENT RESOURCES**

University of Texas- Austin’s human service focused recovery plan: www.utexas.edu/emergency/emergency_plan.pdf (PDF pages 38-39)

WI Continuity of Operations planning guidelines: http://emergencymanagement.wi.gov/

Tulane’s emergency email and website http://campustechnology.com/articles/40565

Ohio’s data back-up: Kathy Bindewald at (614) 247-6980

WI Continuity of Operations planning guidelines: http://emergencymanagement.wi.gov/

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Physical biometrics measure some bodily feature or group of features through fingerprints, facial recognition, hand geometry, iris or retinal scanning, and vascular patterns. Behavioral biometrics—measure the way an individual performs a particular activity such as voice recognition, hand writing or keystroke patterns.

**Technology Glossary**

**Automatic lock-down**—electronically and remotely locks doors to a room or building. [http://www.educationsecurityportal.com/educationsecurity_systems.asp](http://www.educationsecurityportal.com/educationsecurity_systems.asp)

**Smart cards**—contact or contact-less smart cards requires either insertion into a reader, or only close proximity to a reader. [http://asumag.com/security/access_control/university_smart_move/](http://asumag.com/security/access_control/university_smart_move/)

**Biometrics**—recognizes a person based upon physical images or behavioral characteristics [http://www.biometricscatalog.org/Introduction/default.aspx](http://www.biometricscatalog.org/Introduction/default.aspx)

**Surveillance cameras**—television transmission system in which live or prerecorded signals are sent to a receiver [http://www.facilitiesnet.com/bom/article.asp?id=2643&keywords=cctv,%20access%20control,%20security](http://www.facilitiesnet.com/bom/article.asp?id=2643&keywords=cctv,%20access%20control,%20security)

**Door sensors: anti-prop, lock check**—alert either law enforcement or a building staff member in case a door has been propped open or accidentally left unlocked.

**“Smart” surveillance**—program behaviors to be recorded, can be programmed to watch for specific actions (erratic movement, a slow-moving vehicle, an abandoned object)

**RFID**—technology similar in theory to bar code identification, but do not require line of sight reading. The tiny chips can be used almost anywhere, and can be used for access control or to track the location of property, pets, and even people. See [http://www.technology.gov/Events/2005/RFID/RFID.htm](http://www.technology.gov/Events/2005/RFID/RFID.htm)

**Shot Locater**—‘listens’ for a gunshot, and alerts police to exact location using acoustic triangulation to locate gunfire across wide areas. [http://www.shotspotter.com/](http://www.shotspotter.com/)

**Hotlines**—allows concerned people to report troubling behavior and routes calls or messages to the Review Team

**Web tip-line**—collects information on potentially threatening people in multiple languages to accommodate and encourage reporting by different segments of the campus population

**Background Checks**—software programs that would allow schools to access information about past acts of applicants or current students.

**Case management software**—allows members of the team to record notes in a shared data resource.

**Call boxes**—phones placed throughout campus, especially in the flow of night traffic, that connect a caller to a security dispatcher [http://www.uas.alaska.edu/future_students/about/security_awareness.html](http://www.uas.alaska.edu/future_students/about/security_awareness.html)
Phones in classrooms - a very low-tech option that can allow instructional staff to request emergency security or medical attention.

Panic buttons - signal an urgent need for attention in security headquarters in the case of severe emergency. [http://www.ncjrs.gov/school/ch5.html](http://www.ncjrs.gov/school/ch5.html)

GPS cell phones - phones serve as a personal alarm device connecting them to a police force.

Email/web pop-ups - simple, internet based systems expanding on existing products, but require a log-in to receive an alert.

Sirens - can warn and inform the campus community of what to do in an emergency or disaster.

Alert Radios - emergency radios can be placed in campus buildings and can receive alerts in the event of weather, man-initiated, or infrastructure emergencies.

FM Frequency - can provide ongoing instructions to people waiting in safe locations.

FM Station - simple and versatile, an FM radio station can consistently provide information and instructions during an emergency.

Reverse 911 - Emergency responders can send an emergency call to a large number of phone numbers on campus or registered to a site.

Text Messaging - Unlike voice communications, text messages still get through with a weak and inconsistent signal.

Interoperable Responder Communication - Wisconsin is moving towards ensuring that responders from different departments or jurisdictions can communicate via radio. [www.siec.wisconsin.gov](http://www.siec.wisconsin.gov)

Emergency Websites - one-way delivery of information from the university on the progress of coping with the emergency.

**TECHNOLOGY RESOURCES**


Network Information Security and Technology recommendations: [http://www.nist.org](http://www.nist.org)


Smart Cards at Arizona State University [http://www.smartcentric.com/newsarizonabiometric.html](http://www.smartcentric.com/newsarizonabiometric.html)
**INFORMATION SHARING RESOURCES**

Gary Pavela is a Fellow of the National Association of College and University Attorneys, a board member for the Kenan Institute for Ethics at Duke University, and editor of the *Law and Policy Report*. See a webcast of his address to the Task Force [www.oja.wisconsin.gov/campus_safety](http://www.oja.wisconsin.gov/campus_safety).


HIPAA Collaborative of Wisconsin: [http://www.hipaacow.org/home/home.aspx](http://www.hipaacow.org/home/home.aspx)

Wisconsin Office of Privacy Protection Resources: [http://privacy.wi.gov/laws/wisconsin.jsp](http://privacy.wi.gov/laws/wisconsin.jsp)

**DATA COLLECTION RESOURCES**


WI Incident Based Reporting System [http://www.oja.wi.gov/sac](http://www.oja.wi.gov/sac)


**OTHER RESOURCES**

International Association of Counseling Services guidelines: [http://www.iacsinc.org](http://www.iacsinc.org)


The Association for Student Judiciary Affairs: [http://www.asjaonline.org/](http://www.asjaonline.org/)


**Cyber-Safety Resources**

Center for Safe and Responsible Internet Use [http://csriu.org](http://csriu.org)

UW-Stout’s Campus Violence Prevention Project. [www.uwstout.edu/cvpp](http://www.uwstout.edu/cvpp)

Stalking Statistics: [http://www.uwstout.edu/cvpp/stalking.html#stats](http://www.uwstout.edu/cvpp/stalking.html#stats)

Cyber-safety tips: [www.libertysecurity.org/article729.html](http://www.libertysecurity.org/article729.html)
Faculty Memorandum

This memorandum served as a question and answer guide for faculty immediately following the Virginia Tech shootings. Author Gary Pavela is a recognized expert on how colleges can assist troubled students. He publishes the Synfax Weekly Report, a weekly newsletter on campus law and policy. The article below has been reprinted with permission from the author.

Memorandum to the faculty: Teaching troubled students after the Virginia Tech shootings
By Dr. Gary Pavela

College administrators should expect multiple inquiries from faculty members about how to respond to troubled students in the classroom. It's particularly important to provide emergency contact information; reliable data about the statistical risks of violence on campus; the tenuous connection between violence and mental illness; the limits of "profiling" possible shooters; and suggestions for talking with students about conduct that seems threatening or disruptive.

What follows is a suggested "Memorandum to the Faculty," designed to be refined and augmented for use on your campus. The cited information—presented in a question and answer format—includes abbreviated excerpts from our recent issues.

1. What should I do if I have concerns about a student?
You will find pertinent data and general advice in this memorandum. What's most important to remember is that trained colleagues are standing by to help. The campus police will respond to any act or threat of violence. Administrators responsible for student conduct are authorized to impose an immediate suspension (pending a hearing) if a student engages in threatening or disruptive behavior. And mental health professionals can initiate a mandatory evaluation process or even invoke procedures to dismiss students who pose a "direct threat" to self or others.

Students must be treated fairly and responsibly—just as administrators and faculty members would expect if they were the subject of comparable inquiry—but the campus is not powerless or reluctant to act decisively when threats arise. Our overall process in this regard is managed by the campus Incident Response Team [or other appropriate title]. You may reach the team by contacting [name and telephone number]. In emergencies call the campus police first [emergency number].

2. How frequent are homicides and other violent crimes on campus?
According to data from the U.S. Department of Education, the Census Bureau, and the FBI, "the murder rate on college campuses was 0.28 per 100,000 people, compared with 5.5 per 100,000 nationally" (U.S. News and World Report April 30, p. 49). The magnitude of the Virginia Tech shootings (32 people killed) is highlighted by the fact that the total number of murders on
American college campuses (approximately 4,200 institutions enrolling 16 million students) "fluctuated between 9 and 24" [a year] between 1997 and 2004" (Virginia Youth Violence Project, School of Education, University of Virginia, 2007).

In terms of other types of violent crime (robbery, aggravated assault, and simple assault against students), a 2005 U.S. Department of Justice study by Katrina Baum and Patsy Klaus (Statisticians for the Bureau of Justice Statistics) reported that:

For the period 1995 to 2002, college students ages 18 to 24 experienced violence at average annual rates lower than those for nonstudents in the same age group (61 per 1,000 students versus 75 per 1,000 nonstudents). Except for rape/sexual assault, average annual rates were lower for students than for nonstudents for each type of violent crime measured... Rates of rape/sexual assault for the two groups did not differ statistically...

Between 1995 and 2002 rates of both overall and serious violence declined for college students and nonstudents. The violent crime rate for college students declined 54% (41 versus 88 per 1,000) and for nonstudents declined 45% (102 versus 56 per 1,000)... 

Among the "characteristics of violent victimizations of college students" Baum and Klaus reported that "93% of crimes occurred off campus, of which 72% occurred at night" ("Violent Victimization of College Students, 1995-2002")

3. How dangerous is college teaching?
A 2001 Bureau of Justice Statistics [BJS] report (the latest in the series available) on "Violence in the Workplace" (data for 1993 through 1999 from the National Crime Victimization Survey) shows that employees of colleges and universities have a violent crime victimization rate of 1.6 per 1,000, compared to 16.2 for physicians; 20 for retail sales workers; 54.2 for junior high teachers; 68.2 for mental health professionals; and 260.8 for police officers. The BJS report states that "[a]mong the occupational groups examined... college teachers were victimized the least."

4. School shootings are often suicides. How widespread is suicide among college students?
Multiple studies have found that college students commit suicide at half the rate of their non-student peers. One of the most cited surveys "found an overall student suicide rate of 7.5 per 100,000, compared to the national average of 15 per 100,000 in a sample matched for age, race and gender" (Silverman, et al., 1997, "The Big Ten Student Suicide Study: a 10-year study of suicides on Midwestern university campuses," Suicide and Life Threatening Behavior 27[3]:285-303).

Generally, the national suicide rate for teenagers and young adults has been declining—after an extraordinary increase since the 1950s. More baseline studies pertaining to college students are needed, but experts believe the suicide rate in that group has been declining as well.

5. Are more students coming to college with mental disorders?
Probably yes. Caution is required because increases in counseling center visits and use of psychotropic medications may mean contemporary students are more willing to seek help for mental illness. In any event, college health center directors have been calling particular attention to larger numbers of students reporting the characteristics of clinical depression. A 2004 American College Health Association study found that forty-five percent of the students surveyed "felt so depressed" that it was "difficult to function." Nearly 1 in 10 students reported that such feelings occurred "9 or more times" in the past school year. Likewise, about 10% of college students report...
they "seriously considered suicide" and about 1.4% reported they had attempted suicide (Morton Silverman, Clinical Associate Professor of Psychiatry at the University of Chicago; 2006 presentation at the University of Vermont Conference on Legal Issues in Higher Education).

6. Shouldn't we routinely remove depressed students, especially if they report suicidal ideation?
No, unless a threat or act of violence is involved. A 2006 article by Paul S. Appelbaum, Professor and Director of the Division of Psychiatry, Law, and Ethics at the Columbia University College of Physicians and Surgeons (and a past President of the American Psychiatric Association) highlights some the practical issues involved:

No matter how uncommon completed suicides are among college students, surveys suggest that suicidal ideation and attempts are remarkably prevalent. Two large scale studies generated nearly identical findings. Roughly 10 percent of college student respondents indicated that they had thought about suicide in the past year, and 1.5 percent admitted to having made a suicide attempt. Combining data from the available studies suggests that the odds that a student with suicidal ideation will actually commit suicide are 1,000 to 1. Thus policies that impose restrictions on students who manifest suicidal ideation will sweep in 999 students who would not commit suicide for every student who will end his or her life—with no guarantee that the intervention will actually reduce the risk of suicide in this vulnerable group. And even if such restrictions were limited to students who actually attempt suicide, the odds are around 200 to 1 against the school's having acted to prevent a suicidal outcome" (emphasis supplied). (Psychiatric Services: "Depressed? Get Out!" July 2006, Vol. 57, No. 7, 914-916).

Aside from unjustified removal of thousands of individuals—including some of our best and most creative students—routine dismissals for reported depression or suicidal ideation would also discourage students from seeking professional help. Good policy, good practice, and adherence to state and federal laws protecting people with disabilities require professional individualized assessment and a fair procedure before students or employees can be removed on the ground that they have a mental disability that poses a "direct threat" to themselves or others.

7. Is there an association between mental illness and violence?
Research shows some association between severe mental illness and violence, especially when mental illness is accompanied by substance abuse. The 1994 American Psychiatric Association "Fact Sheet on Violence and Mental Illness" contains the following observation: “People often fear what they do not understand, and for many of us, mental illnesses fall into that category. This fear . . . [often] stems from the common misconception that the term 'mental illness' is a diagnosis, and that all mental illnesses thus have similar symptoms, making all people who suffer with them equally suspect and dangerous... Recent research has shown that the vast majority of people who are violent do not suffer from mental illnesses. However, there is a certain small subgroup of people with severe and persistent mental illnesses who are at risk of becoming violent...” (Emphasis supplied).

The U.S. Department of Health and Human Services document "Understanding Mental Illness: Fact Sheet" (April 20, 2007) contains the observation that "compared with the risk associated with the combination of male gender, young age, and lower socioeconomic status, the risk of violence presented by mental disorder is modest." Such a "modest" correlation won't be sufficient to draw
conclusions about the future behavior of any particular student. Again, individualized assessment will be imperative, focusing on a specific diagnosis, demonstrable behavior, compliance in taking prescribed medications, patterns of substance abuse, and any recent traumatic events or stresses, among other factors.

8. How can I identify potentially violent students?
This is not a task to be undertaken alone. Expertise is available on campus to help. See the contact information below and in our first answer. It's important to resist the temptation to try to "profile" potentially violent students based on media reports of past shootings. The 2003 National Research Council [NRC] report Deadly Lessons: Understanding Lethal School Violence (a project undertaken by the councils of the National Academy of Sciences, the National Academy of Engineering, and the Institute of Medicine) contains the following guidance: “One widely discussed preventive idea is to develop methods to identify likely offenders in instances of lethal school violence or school rampages... The difficulty is that... [the offenders are not that unusual; they look like their classmates at school. This has been an important finding of all those who have sought to investigate these shootings.” Most important are the findings of the United States Secret Service, which concluded: “There is no accurate or useful profile of "the school shooter" (Emphasis supplied)...

- Attacker ages ranged from 11–21
- They came from a variety of racial and ethnic backgrounds. In nearly one-quarter of the cases, the attackers were not white
- They came from a range of family situations, from intact families with numerous ties to the community to foster homes with histories of neglect
- The academic performance ranged from excellent to failing
- They had a range of friendship patterns from socially isolated to popular
- Their behavioral histories varied, from having no observed behavioral problems to multiple behaviors warranting reprimand and/or discipline

Few attackers showed any marked change in academic performance, friendship status, interest in school, or disciplinary problems prior to their attack...

A more promising approach is "threat assessment," based on analysis of observable behavior compiled from multiple sources and reviewed by a trained threat assessment team. The report "Threat Assessment in Schools: A Guide to Managing Threatening Situations and to Creating Safe School Climates" (developed by the U.S. Secret Service and Department of Education in 2002) contains the following overview: “Students and adults who know the student who is the subject of the threat assessment inquiry should be asked about communications or other behaviors that may indicate the student of concern's ideas or intent. The focus of these interviews should be factual:

- What was said? To whom?
- What was written? To whom?
- What was done?
- When and where did this occur?
- Who else observed this behavior?
- Did the student say why he or she acted as they did?

Bystanders, observers, and other people who were there when the student engaged in threatening behaviors or made threatening statements should be queried about whether any of these behaviors or statements concerned or worried them. These individuals should be asked about changes in the student's attitudes and behaviors. Likewise, they should be asked if they have become increasingly concerned about the student's behavior or state of mind.
However, individuals interviewed generally should not be asked to characterize the student or interpret meanings of communications that the student may have made. Statements such as "I think he's really dangerous" or "he said it with a smile, so I knew that he must be joking" may not be accurate characterizations of the student's intent, and therefore are unlikely to be useful to the threat assessment team... (p. 52).

Proper threat assessment is a team effort requiring expertise from experienced professionals, including law enforcement officers. Threat assessment on our campus is done by [name of the team or committee], headed by [identify name and telephone number]. Faculty members should contact the threat assessment team whenever believe a student may pose a risk of violence to self or others. If in doubt seek a threat assessment. In an emergency contact the campus police immediately [emergency telephone number].

9. Should I talk with a student about my concerns?
Exercise judgment on a case by case basis, preferably after consultation with colleagues, perhaps including the threat assessment team.

An effort at conversation is generally advisable. Students are often oblivious to the impressions they make. Careful listening and courteous dialogue—perhaps with participation by a department chair or student conduct administrator—will often resolve the problem. At a minimum, the discussion may prove valuable in any subsequent threat assessment process.

Please do not give assurances of confidentiality. A student who appears to pose a threat to self or others needs to be referred for help and supervision. College teachers should not abrogate their traditional role as guides and mentors, but they must not assume the responsibilities of therapists or police officers.

One danger in the aftermath of the Virginia Tech shootings would be a climate of fear and distance between teachers and students, especially students who seem odd, eccentric, or detached. Research on violence prevention suggests schools and colleges need more cross-generational contact, not less.

The NRC report stated that:
In the course of our interviews with adolescents, we are reminded once again of how "adolescent society," as James S. Coleman famously dubbed it 40 years ago, continues to be insulated from the adults who surround it... The insularity of adolescent society serves to magnify slights and reinforce social hierarchies; correspondingly, it is only through exchange with trusted adults that teens can reach the longer-term view that can come with maturity... [W]e could not put it better than the words of a beloved long-time teacher [at one of the schools studied]: "The only real way of preventing [school violence] is to get into their heads and their hearts..."

Getting into the "heads and hearts" of students goes beyond individual conversations. It entails fostering a community of engagement, defined not by codes of silence or barriers of indifference, but by an active sense of mutual responsibility. This critical endeavor depends upon the faculty. Now more than ever they must demonstrate skills in reaching outward, not retreating inward.