Final Examination  Readings  
Freshman Composition  
Summer II 2012

Please write your name on the packet of readings you have downloaded from The Writing Program website. Bring this packet to the final exam. You may underline, highlight, and annotate the readings. However, you may not bring thesis statements, outlines, prewriting, or drafts in any form to the exam. As you read, be aware that you will be writing a persuasive essay for your final.

You may bring a dictionary, in print form, not electronic form, to the final.

NOTE: Some of you may choose to use MLA citation format; others may choose APA. After you download the readings, download either the MLA Works Cited page or the APA Reference page.

No class time will be allotted for discussion of the readings, but you may, if you wish, discuss them outside of class with your classmates. You may not discuss them with your instructor.

If you haven’t done so already, turn in 2-3 blank blue books to your instructor. You will write your final essay in these blue books. Your instructor will return them to you on the day of the final.

Remember to write on only one side of each page. Write "Final Draft" on the cover of the blue book(s) you want your instructor to read and evaluate.

Turn in the reading packet to your instructor after you have finished the final examination, along with all blue books, even those that are blank.

Your final exam will be in the same room as your semester class has been held.

Be sure to confirm the day and time of your final.
Officials issue study on campus violence

'Campus Attacks' shows rise in incidents on U.S. university campuses during past two decades

BY MARK RIFFEE, STAFF WRITER on April 20, 2010

On the third anniversary of the 2007 Virginia Tech massacre last Friday, federal law enforcement officers issued a study of violent attacks carried out on U.S. college campuses during the past century.

The study, "Campus Attacks: Targeted Violence Affecting Institutions of Higher Education" reveals nearly three-fifths of the 272 publicly-recorded incidents took place from 1990-2008, 79 during the 1990s and 83 after the year 2000. It is possible larger student bodies, increased media coverage and stricter crime reporting regulations may have contributed to these growing numbers, the report stated.

In June 2007, former Cabinet Secretaries Michael Leavitt and Margaret Spellings and former Attorney General Alberto Gonzales recommended the FBI, Secret Service and Department of Education to undertake an investigation of campus violence trends. The study was commissioned in response to the April 6 incident at Virginia Tech, when student Seung-Hui Cho killed 32 members of the school community before committing suicide.

“We initiated a collaborative effort to understand the nature of this violence and identify ways of preventing future attacks that would affect our nation's colleges and universities," according to the report.

Although the report simply offers general tips to prevent violence, it examines data that may help colleges identify trends in violence to better assess threats. For instance, 94 percent of perpetrators were male; 33.9 percent of incidents in which motive was determined involved an intimate relationship; and 29 percent of the attacks were accompanied by pre-incident stalking or harassing, verbal or written threats or physically aggressive acts.
Through various resources intended to promote student safety in case of emergency, the University hopes to be prepared to deal with any potential attacks.

The University Office of Emergency Preparedness was established officially in 2007, though emergency planning has been a priority at the university for decades, said Kirby Felts, assistant director of the Office of Emergency Preparedness.

Felts said the office’s current priority is to create and maintain partnerships “with the surrounding community and work beyond the boundaries of the University to evaluate external threats.”

The office’s job is made difficult, however, when considering that only 121 perpetrators were students at the respective institutions where the attacks occurred, according to the federal report. Rather, “many of the attackers either were loosely connected to the college or entirely unaffiliated.

"This is a huge obstacle and an ongoing challenge," Felts said. "We can’t put up 20-foot walls all around grounds. In our open community, everyone’s eyes and ears can play a crucial role."

The Office of Emergency Preparedness works very closely with the University and Charlottesville police departments, and Hoos Ready, a student-run emergency preparedness organization, to ensure the safety of the University community.

Hoos Ready was founded by current Student Council President, Colin Hood, in the months after the tragedy in Blacksburg. The goal of the organization at the outset was to work very closely with university faculty and staff members to deliver safety measures to the student body.

"We want to remind students to take extra precautions in their safety because the University is an open community," Hood said.

Felts echoed this message and encouraged students to report to authorities anything that seems out of place.

“That information can be pieced together to help eliminate external threats," Felts said.
As soon as university officials learned that two students had been shot at Delaware State University on Sept. 21, they acted quickly to limit access to the campus and notify students to stay in their rooms.

"The biggest thing we learned from Virginia Tech was when something happens, don't wait," said Carlos Holmes, director of news services at the university, in Dover, Del. Colleges and universities around the country have taken a second look at their safety policies since Seung-Hui Cho, a student at Virginia Polytechnic Institute, gunned down 32 people and then killed himself on April 16 on the campus in Blacksburg, VA. Delaware State is not the only university to have its new security procedures tested this school year. Just last week at St. John's University in Queens, officials used a text-messaging system to inform students and faculty members of a gunman on campus. The gunman, identified as a 22-year-old freshman, was quickly arrested. There were no injuries, but the university locked down the campus for three hours as officers searched for a possible second gunman.

University officials said that there were at least 10,000 students on campus at the time of the incident, but that thanks to the text-messaging system, security officers were able to direct them to safe locations in an orderly fashion.

On the first day of classes at the University of Colorado in Boulder in August, a text-message alert was sent from university officials: "Stabbing at UMC/suspect in custody/terrace closed."

Michael Knorps, an 18-year-old freshman there, was chatting with friends on the University Memorial Center terrace when, officials said, a former cafeteria employee grabbed him and cut his throat before stabbing himself several times. Mr. Knorps was treated at a local hospital and released the same day. The suspect is a man with a history of mental illness and violent behavior, the authorities said.

On that first day of school, only 1,300 people were signed up for the new text-messaging alert system at the university, which has over 28,000 students enrolled. Within five days, nearly 8,000 had signed up.
"Everyone recognizes the tragedy at Virginia Tech was a wake-up call for colleges and universities across the country," said W. Roger Webb, president of the University of Central Oklahoma in Edmond. "And sadly, expenditures on safety and security had been a lower priority. I think that has caused everyone to take a more serious look on what our first obligation is, and that is to protect our students."

Even before Virginia Tech officials released their internal report and a state panel convened by Gov. Tim Kaine announced its findings late last month, university officials were all looking at similar issues: how to improve mental health awareness and access to counseling and then how to communicate as quickly as possible with students, faculty and staff members. Mr. Cho, 23, had a long history of mental illness and had expressed violent thoughts in schoolwork. After he killed two students in a dormitory on April 16, the campus police waited two hours to send out an e-mail message; by then Mr. Cho had repositioned himself on campus to kill 30 more people.

"What Virginia Tech showed was very similar to what Columbine showed us, and that is you are vulnerable no matter where you are," said Alison Kiss, program director with Security on Campus, a nonprofit group in King of Prussia, Pa. "You have to take safety and security very seriously no matter where you are, and have proper plans in place." Over the summer, colleges and universities around the country revised campus violence policies, started additional mental health training, installed and activated new alert systems, and even ordered long-range rifles.

Officials at Colorado said they were motivated to make changes in security not only by the killings at Virginia Tech but also by incidents on their own campus last spring involving a knife-wielding student and a student whose talk of killing frightened others.

"Incidents of this nature have been occurring on college campuses for some time," said Chancellor G. P. Peterson. "But people became much more aware and cognizant in trying to determine what is the potential danger downstream."

The university spent $25,000 on the text-messaging alert system -- which also charges 6 cents for every message sent -- and anticipates spending $150,000 more for a siren warning system. It also received a bid of $2.7 million for an electronic remote lockdown system for every building on the campus, though there are no immediate plans to install one. University football games will now start with an emergency evacuation plan posted on the video screen above the field.

Hofstra University has created an administrative job, director of emergency management, to oversee its proposed $750,000 emergency communications system that will include e-mail and cell phone alerts as well as remote building lockdowns.
At the University of Toledo in Ohio, the campus police ordered 15 long-range rifles at a cost of $13,800. "Many municipalities have these capabilities currently," said Chief Jeff Newton of the campus police. "Universities are very much like cities and we have to keep up with what the community standard is and what expectations are."

In addition, the University of Toledo spent $71,000 on additional deadbolts for residence hall rooms and $24,000 on a text-message alert system that officials said would be operating by October. Improving mental health awareness, access and communication, while correctly following privacy laws, is also a priority on many campuses. Mr. Cho’s mental health problems were recognized by some on campus, but that information was not shared with his family or with mental health workers.

At the University of Central Oklahoma, Mr. Webb, the president, said that the university had formed a relationship with the State Health Department to provide training to resident advisers and others to help identify and report students who were troubled or under psychological stress.

"For so long we had this code of silence, to let it be and not speak up," Mr. Webb said. "We have a responsibility to provide a healthy learning environment for our students."
Operating In A New Era Of Campus Security

Mike Kennedy.
American School & University. Overland Park: Jul 2008. Vol. 80, Iss. 12; pg. 6

The deadly attack at the Virginia Tech campus in April 2007 is yet another horrific chapter in the ongoing story of campus security. The possibility of extreme violence is the new reality for students, staff and the rest of the education community.

The task for school and university administrators is to adapt to that new reality and try to find ways to prevent such events from recurring. The plans will be imperfect. However, in striving to correct flaws in their emergency preparedness plans, school officials may be able to prevent a violent episode or intervene before it leads to tragedy.

"While we can never eliminate the threats posed to our campuses by crime or disaster, natural or person-caused," Missouri Gov. Matt Blunt's Task Force on Campus Security says, "we can and must mitigate impact through effective all-hazard emergency preparedness."

**Reviewing plans**

The desire for answers and to learn lessons from these tragedies drives education administrators and security professionals to sift through the evidence and find ways they can plug any holes in their security plans and emergency preparedness.

Missouri was one of many states that reacted to what happened at Virginia Tech by re-examining the readiness of crisis plans on its own campuses. In addition, federal agencies and other organizations have stepped forward with recommendations for improving campus safety.

When an attack occurs that is as horrific as the one that befell Virginia Tech, the immediate response of many government and education officials is that something must be done - crisis plans reviewed, recovery efforts bolstered, more security personnel deployed, more access control and surveillance equipment installed and more prevention programs initiated.

The responses to crises will vary from school to school and depend on the conditions and characteristics of each campus. As the Missouri task force notes, a research institution housing a nuclear reactor has security needs vastly different from a small liberal arts school in a rural area.

In North Carolina, the Campus Safety Task Force focused its report on the four phases of crisis management: prevention, preparedness, response and recovery. The report recommends that campuses establish threat assessment teams to help faculty, staff and students recognize signs of mental illness and improve their awareness about the resources available to help people who are a danger to themselves or others.

"Identifying potentially violent students as early as possible is one of the best preventive measures a campus can take," the North Carolina report says.
One of the issues that arose after Virginia Tech was whether schools and universities risked violating student privacy if they shared information with other agencies about a student viewed as a potential threat. In response, the U.S. Department of Education is revising the guidelines related to the Federal Education Rights and Privacy Act to clarify to what extent schools are allowed to provide private student information to others.

Schools should strive to remove the stigma associated with mental illness so that troubled students can seek treatment.

"Colleges and universities must challenge the prevailing social norms of students that frown upon seeking help," the Missouri task force says.

In addition, campuses should make treatment more available. "Emotional crises often happen at inconvenient times, when students and other members of the campus community lack access to high-quality mental health services," the task force says.

**A common language**

To improve preparedness, schools and universities should make sure their emergency plans are compliant with the National Incident Management System (NIMS) created by the U.S. Department of Homeland Security. NIMS establishes standardized procedures for emergency responders.

"With responders using the same standardized procedures, they will all share a common focus, and will be able to place full emphasis on incident management when a Homeland security incident occurs," the department says. "In addition, national preparedness and readiness in responding to and recovering from an incident are enhanced since all of the nation's emergency teams and authorities are using a common language and set of procedures."

The Missouri task force notes that the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) offers training in NIMS and its Incident Command System (ICS), but "these resources often go untapped by senior executives who will be required to serve as incident commanders in a crisis."

The Missouri report recommends that each campus should designate someone to coordinate emergency operations and that person should make sure the school’s "senior staff is trained in and familiar with NIMS and ICS."

Part of complying with NIMS, the North Carolina task force says, is making sure that a campus has established aid agreements so that outside agencies can assist them when a crisis occurs.

"All campuses, particularly those without sworn police officers, [should] develop and enter into agreements with key partners, such as local law enforcement agencies and first responders," the North Carolina report says.

The Missouri task force found that only 28 percent of higher education institutions had coordinated the development of their emergency plans with local law enforcement.
Getting the word out

One of the key findings in the reviews of what happened at Virginia Tech was that universities need to make a more exhaustive effort to spread the word about campus emergencies. Many have criticized the Virginia Tech response because campus officials, believing the assailant had left the campus, did not send out a campus-wide alert until two hours after the initial killings took place.

The International Association of Campus Law Enforcement Officers (IACLEA) spells out what it believes a campus notification system should include in a "blueprint for safer campuses" that was released earlier this year.

"Institutions should have an array of means and methods to disseminate information to the campus community during emergencies," the blueprint says. "Mass notification systems must include multiple means of sharing information, including high-technology and low-technology."

To maximize the effectiveness of a system, campus administrators and public safety officials need to have the ability to send emergency messages whether they are on or off campus, the association says.

IACLEA adds that education institutions should make sure such systems meet these criteria:

MULTIPOINT COMMUNICATIONS:

The system should be capable of reaching its audience through multiple points of contact, such as voice messages, e-mail, and text messaging.

CAPACITY:

The system vendor should have sufficient, demonstrated capacity to deliver all messages quickly and reliably.

CLIENT CARE:

A contract with a third-party vendor should include training, customer service and technical support.

EXPERIENCE:

A vendor should have significant experience delivering calls at institutions of various sizes across the country.

ASSESSMENT:

The service should have reporting capabilities that allow the institution to monitor, manage and measure the system's effectiveness.
The association emphasizes that an alert sent out to the campus community should be timely, accurate and useful to the recipients.

**Communication systems**

When an emergency occurs on a campus, communication among various agencies is critical.

"Interoperable communication systems allow two or more responding agencies, even those using disparate communications systems, to exchange information directly," IACLEA states in its blueprint for safer campuses. "With interoperability, on-scene personnel can quickly access each other to coordinate needed rescue and emergency activities."

The North Carolina task force recommends that campuses partner with law enforcement to ensure interoperability. Illinois has created a Statewide Radio Communications for the 21st Century network (Starcom21) to provide first providers with a single interoperable communications system. The state has provided more than 300 Starcom21 radios to 70 higher education institutions, including Northern Illinois University, which used them when responding to the fatal shooting of five people on campus in February 2008.

Emergency plans should include provisions for counseling services after an incident, the North Carolina task force says. That is especially true for victims and their families. A survey by the North Carolina Department of Justice found that 81 percent of college campuses in the state had developed plans to provide counseling to students, staff and faculty after a crisis, but only 39 percent of campuses had a plan to communicate with victims and families after a crisis.

**Technological help**

Schools and universities are finding that technological advancements can help them carry out their emergency plans more effectively and keep campuses safer.

"Equipping campus facilities with electronic card access and key systems, and customized access privileges for students, faculty and staff is one infrastructure measure that greatly enhances the security of a campus," the New Mexico Governor's Task Force on Campus Safety says. "Integrating all security systems into a single network will make monitoring more effective, reduce theft and vandalism and help people feel safer on campus."

Other security equipment and strategies that schools and universities should consider, the task force says, include cameras, remote panic stations, lighting, landscaping and designation of safe areas. The most effective time to include such security is when schools are planning their facilities.

"In the post-9/11 world, the public has an expectation that colleges and universities will take reasonable steps to provide safety for campuses," the New Mexico report says. "In order to fulfill this expectation, it is critical that security components and standards are considered as buildings are designed."
Colleges Tighten Security to Guard Against Terrorism

By DANA MULHAUSER

Houston Chronicle  PageA28

Colleges are putting in place new security measures to combat potential terrorism, notably an increase in the number of police patrols on campus and a heightened readiness for evacuation.

The University of Pennsylvania has taken some of the toughest steps: adding police and security officers, closing a main thoroughfare to vehicular traffic, and speeding up efforts to have all students and faculty and staff members display identification cards.

Penn already requires people to have the ID cards to enter most campus buildings, including dormitories. Many employees will begin wearing the ID badges as soon as the necessary holders are delivered, but students will not be required to wear them quite yet. Maureen S. Rush, vice president for public safety, is not sure how the university will persuade students to wear the badges. "They are attractive and convenient," she offered.

The request has already led to a heated campus debate. Students are currently required to wear the badges in campus buildings from 10 p.m. to 7 a.m., although few actually do. Nor are most of them particularly enthusiastic about the new plan. "If the police don't enforce it, no one's going to wear it," said Daniel Trisdorfer, a sophomore.

Some Penn students, particularly women, say a badge requirement would make them feel safer on the notoriously dangerous West Philadelphia campus. "At night, sometimes I'm scared being out alone, and this would help single out people who aren't part of the community," said Pamela H. Russell, a freshman.

Penn has closed Locust Walk, the central campus artery, to all but emergency vehicles. Previously, it was open to construction and other university vehicles. "For obvious reasons, we don't want trucks parked there," Ms. Rush said. The university also has put an additional six to eight police and security officers on duty every night, an increase of about 20 percent, she said.
On campuses across the country, the most frequent security response has been the reviewing and rehearsing of evacuation scenarios. At Emory University, "we already had plans in place for small-scale, site-specific evacuations for things like bomb threats," said Craig T. Watson, Emory's police chief. But with the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention next door, Emory decided that it needed further precautions. "We're working at looking at an overall, large-scale evacuation procedure," he said.

Another widespread concern is athletics events, said Oliver J. Clark, president of the International Association of Campus Law Enforcement Administrators. On football game days, many institutions have been granted no-fly zones above their stadiums by the Federal Aviation Administration. Colleges also have increased the number of security personnel in and around stadiums and imposed rigorous checks on bags and purses brought to the games.

"I think universities are more prepared to handle the events that are going on now than your average communities are," said Mr. Clark, who is chief of police at the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign. The greatest security threats involve "large assemblies and younger folks," he said, "and we deal with them on a regular basis."

Mr. Clark himself has an extra concern: a regional airport run by the university, to which he has deployed extra security.

At the University of California at Los Angeles, police officers are trying to make their patrols more visible on the campus. "For students and staff, they want to see us," said Nancy Greenstein, director of police community services. "The perception is really important."

Police officers on many campuses are providing added protection to international students, trying to prevent any harassment and violence aimed at Muslim and Arab students. UCLA and other colleges are concentrating patrols near dormitories and cultural centers for international students. And UCLA has set up a Web site for the anonymous reporting of hate crimes.

Colleges located away from major urban centers have taken a milder approach to security measures. Valdosta State University, in southern Georgia, has increased police patrols and reviewed emergency measures, but campus police officials are taking a wait-and-see attitude.

"We're going to just watch the news and keep our eyes and ears open," said H. Scott Doner, director of public safety.
On April 16, 2007, Seung Hui Cho, a senior English major, gunned down 32 people, wounded 17 others and then killed himself at Virginia Tech University. Most of the victims were students in a dormitory and a classroom building. News accounts report Cho chained the doors at Norris Hall to prevent students from fleeing once the rampage began. Some students jumped from windows or crouched on the floor to avoid the hail of gunfire. It was the deadliest shooting incident by a single gunman in U.S. history.

Cho's mental history has been well-documented in separate studies by a review panel appointed by Virginia Gov. Timothy Kaine; the office of inspector general for Virginia's Mental Health, Mental Retardation and Substance Abuse Services; and by an internal report by Virginia Tech University. These studies indicate Cho had suffered from severe mental illness since adolescence. He was diagnosed with a disorder marked by failure to speak in social situations, and depression in 1999 while he was still in middle school.

Following a mass shooting in 1999 at Columbine High School in Littleton, Colo., Cho wrote a paper in an English class that mentioned thoughts of suicide and homicide, indicating that "he wanted to repeat Columbine," according to the Virginia Tech Review Panel report.

Less than two years before the shooting rampage, while enrolled at Virginia Tech, Cho was taken into emergency custody by a campus police officer after a roommate reported that Cho might be suicidal. Cho was involuntarily committed to St. Albans Behavioral Health Center Dec. 13, 2005, evaluated and discharged less than 24 hours later. Beginning in fall 2005, Cho's behavior at Virginia Tech exhibited an increasing pattern of antisocial and disruptive behavior, according to subsequent investigations. Yet no policy or procedure apparently was in place for Virginia Tech to take protective measures that might have prevented the massacre.
Cho’s school records, however, gave admissions official at Virginia Tech no hint that Cho was a high risk for violent behavior. The governor’s review panel’s report questions whether students should be required to submit records of emotional or mental disturbances when applying to college. The report states, "This much is clear: Information critical to public safety should not stay behind as a person moves from school to school. Students may start fresh in college, but their history may well remain relevant. Maybe there really should be some form of 'permanent record.'"

Less than one year later, in February 2008, Steven Kazmierczak walked into a large lecture hall at Northern Illinois University in DeKalb and opened fire on a class, killing five and wounding 18 before taking his own life. Kazmierczak was a former student at NIU. As a consequence of those campus shootings, state policymakers, university administrators and mental health experts are grappling with strategies to address mental health needs on college campuses without violating student privacy protections.

Addressing Mental Health on College Campuses

The campus shootings have sparked numerous government studies examining how postsecondary institutions can improve the identification of students with serious mental illnesses and provide them with appropriate treatment. University officials also face confusion about when it is appropriate and legal to release educational and health information that is generally covered by privacy laws.

Despite widespread media attention following violent attacks on college campuses, evidence exists that colleges are actually less prone to violent crimes than society in general. According to a report prepared by the School Violence Resource Center, the overall U.S. murder rate is 43 times higher than the murder rate on college campuses. The rates of forcible rapes, robberies and aggravated assaults are also significantly lower on college campuses.

Nevertheless, when violent incidents occur, the public is quick to point out the need for improved safety measures on college campuses. Numerous studies conducted in the aftermath of the Virginia Tech massacre recognize the need to identify potentially dangerous students and to provide them with appropriate medical treatment.

A task force appointed by Florida Gov. Charlie Crist in April 2007 recommended that each college and university in Florida develop a campus-specific, multi-media awareness training program for faculty, staff, students and parents. "The program should include recognition of early warning signs of emotional crisis and methods of notification of appropriate campus authorities," the report stated.

The problem is that identifying potentially dangerous students is not clear-cut. In 2002, the U.S. Secret Service completed the Safe School Initiative, which analyzed 37 school shootings between 1974 and 2000. The report concludes "there is no accurate or useful profile of the school shooter."

The report warns that the use of profiles carries the risk of over-identification-in which a student might fit any given profile but not actually pose a risk of violence. It also concludes the use of profiles will fail to identify some students who in fact pose a risk of violence.

Illinois Rep. Bob Prichard acknowledges the problem universities face trying to ensure student safety. "You're never going to prevent, in an open society, individuals from doing harm who want to do harm," he said.

The Midwestern Higher Education Compact points out in its report, The Ripple Effect of Virginia Tech, that "the objective of any institution is to create an environment that is as safe as possible, given the realities of the external environment and the inability to control the actions of all people at all times."
Florida Panel Recommends Mental Health Reforms

Within months of the Virginia Tech shootings, numerous states issued reports identifying policy recommendations for preventing and responding to campus violence. Florida's Gubernatorial Task Force for University Campus Safety issued a report in July 2008 that focused on four broad topics of campus violence: prevention, intervention, response and aftermath. The panel's report contained 63 recommendations, including several related to improving mental health services. They include:

- The State University System and the Division of Community Colleges should determine ways to increase the funding dedicated to campus mental health and wellness needs;
- Statewide strategies for improving mental health services should target K–12, college and university initiatives in preventing underage drinking, substance abuse, suicide, bullying, domestic and dating violence, and other violent or destructive behaviors. Programs addressing these behaviors should be implemented on individual campuses;
- Individual campuses should develop an 'Introduction to Mental Health' course as part of its undergraduate curriculum and educate all members of the campus community;
- Each individual institution should encourage and foster the development of organized peer mental health support groups on campus;
- Each university and college should establish/expand its formal working relationship with local mental health systems in order to ensure adequate support for and communication about campus mental health issues;
- Each university or college administration, faculty senate and student governing body should promulgate formal statements defining their role in campus mental health; and
- The State University System should establish a legal working group to provide guidelines and best practices for sharing mental health information concerning at risk students.

Responding to the Gubernatorial Task Force, the Florida Board of Governors, which oversees the state's postsecondary education system, established a Mental Health Issues Subcommittee in 2007. That subcommittee surveyed mental health services at postsecondary institutions in Florida and verified that an increasing demand for services and inadequate professional staff exists on State University System campuses. Specifically, the survey found a very high student/counselor ratio that is below national standards and a significant increase in reports of students with “severe psychological problems.”

In 2008, the Board of Governors adopted the recommendations from the subcommittee's final report. It concluded that institutions and the State University System should seek additional funding for increased staffing levels as well as increased services and training across the mental health continuum of care. The board also said efforts should be made to identify additional external funding sources since a limit on student fees appears to hinder each institution’s ability to raise additional funding from within each institution’s budget.

Other Reforms Were Also Recommended by the Board of Governors:

- All universities now offer an academic course called The Freshman Experience for first-year students that, among other things, addresses survival strategies and provides referral information;
- The Board of Governors Student Affairs Committee has begun a study of excessive alcohol use on university campuses and services to identify best practices around the State University System; and
- With regard to communication and information-sharing about students with potentially at-risk behavior, the board adopted the following recommendation: “Each institution in the State University System should examine the structures, responsibilities, policies and procedures of the management or response team(s) established to review students and incidents that indicate at-risk behavior. A centralized reporting system with a single point of contact to collect and disseminate information, as appropriate, about at-risk students is recommended.”

Creating Threat Assessment Teams

One of the most common responses to campus violence at both the state and university levels has been the creation and use of threat assessment teams. These teams take a coordinated approach to identify, prevent and assess behavioral threats to public safety on college campuses. While details of these teams vary somewhat among institutions, numerous colleges nationwide have created multidisciplinary teams that are both investigational and interventional. In the wake of the Virginia Tech shootings, Virginia's legislature passed more than 30 bills dealing with a variety of issues raised by the shootings. One bill signed into law by Gov. Kaine requires state colleges in Virginia to develop crisis and emergency plans and campus threat assessment teams.

Following a study in Illinois by a task force appointed by former Gov. Rod Blagojevich, the Illinois legislature enacted the Campus Security Enhancement Act of 2008 (110 ILCS 12/). As an outcome of the legislation, in May 2009 the Joint Committee on Administrative Rules approved the “All Hazards Campus Emergency Plan and Campus Violence Prevention Plan,” which address a variety of possible campus emergencies, including mass shootings.
One of the rules mandates that each higher education institution in Illinois develop and implement a campus threat assessment team to "conduct threat assessments, address aberrant, dangerous or threatening behavior on campus and provide guidance and best practices for preventing violence and providing supportive services." The rule also calls for each team to create a written policy that includes access to mental health services for students, faculty and staff.

"The recent campus tragedies illustrate the need for well-devised emergency preparation plans on university campuses," Prichard, one of the bill's sponsors, said in a press release. "Faculty members and students deserve the maximum effort put forth by institutions of higher learning to ensure their safety, and this Act directly addresses that." A study by a task force appointed by North Carolina's attorney general in 2008 also called for that state's colleges to establish threat assessment teams. According to the report, these teams would:

- Help faculty, staff and students recognize the signs of mental illness that may suggest that an individual is a possible danger to self or others; and
- Improve awareness among faculty, staff and students about resources to help an individual who is a possible danger

One example of how a threat assessment team can be implemented is the team at the University of North Carolina at Wilmington. There, the Student Threat Assessment Team (nicknamed STAT) is comprised of a select group of university administrators charged with identifying, investigating, assessing and monitoring high risk behaviors exhibited by UNC Wilmington students. In addition, the group attempts to determine whether the student may pose a threat to the university community based on behaviors exhibited by the student.

In cases where the STAT agrees that the student may pose a threat to self or others, the team may make recommendations for action to remove the student from the university community (by means such as the campus conduct system). The team also identifies Student Affairs Departments that will provide students not deemed to be high risk with resources and services necessary to enable them to remain in good standing at UNC Wilmington. The STAT develops the means for reporting of high risk students by others in the UNC Wilmington community, and for tracking cases for follow-up assessment. Cases discussed by the STAT are confidential.

Making mental health services available

Another policy focus is to ensure that mental health services are available to students at postsecondary institutions. A report to the Massachusetts Department of Higher Education in June 2008 found that 83 percent of its colleges provide on-campus mental health services for students. Among those schools, however, only about half provided specialized services (e.g. substance abuse, suicide prevention and eating disorders). The report recommends that all colleges provide both generalized and specialized mental health services that are easily accessible to students.

The report also found that 81 percent of schools did not submit potentially violent writings, drawings or other forms of individual expression to a behavioral expert for review. The report recommends that campuses establish formal policies that provide faculty members with a means to submit materials reflecting violent fantasies to behavioral experts.

Likewise, the Missouri Campus Security Task Force, appointed by then-Gov. Matt Blunt, recommended that students "should have access to on-campus, licensed mental health services 24 hours per day, seven days per week." It also called for on-campus mental health providers to establish consultation and referral relationships with public and private facilities that accept civil commitments.

Privacy Concerns

Providing safeguards for college campuses while maintaining privacy protections for individuals is a delicate balancing act. The Americans with Disabilities Act gives students with mental illnesses the right to enroll in college unless they disrupt the academic environment. Federal laws, namely the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act and the Health Insurance Portability and Accountability Act (commonly known as HIPAA), generally prevent institutions from sharing educational and medical information without student consent.

However, numerous reports, including one prepared by a task force created by the National Association of Attorneys General, point out that "there is significant misunderstanding about the scope and application of these federal laws." A report by the University of California system also suggests that the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act’s requirements are vague and open to interpretation.
W. Roger Webb, president of the University of Central Oklahoma, appeared before the U.S. Senate Committee on Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs one week after the Virginia Tech incident. Testifying on behalf of the American Association of State Colleges and Universities, Webb said, "It may be that the lines are currently drawn in ways that prevent prudent and appropriate responses."

Webb told the committee that his university was dealing with a former student who was continuing to make threats to faculty members. Nevertheless, Webb said administrators were prevented by federal law from notifying other institutions of his potentially dangerous behavior.

In a survey conducted among college administrators in North Carolina, 53 percent of respondents did not believe mental health information could be shared because it is protected by law.

According to the National Association of College and University Attorneys, however, the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act permits the disclosure of information from student education records "to appropriate parties in connection with an emergency if knowledge of the information is necessary to protect the health or safety of the student or other individuals." HIPAA also contains an emergency exception, according to the Virginia Tech Review Panel report.

Virginia Responds to Virginia Tech killings

Virginia, more than any other state, has taken widespread legislative action following the tragedy on the Virginia Tech campus. Among legislation enacted by Virginia's General Assembly in 2008 are laws that

- Broaden the standard the state uses to commit individuals to mental health treatment against their will;
- Improve the monitoring of people under outpatient treatment orders;
- Extend the periods allowed for emergency custody and temporary detention orders; and
- Require representatives of local community service boards to participate in commitment hearings.

The National Alliance on Mental Illness labeled Virginia's laws as "overly restrictive" and warns of potential civil rights abuses by permitting court-ordered treatment without requiring proof of imminent danger.

Some advocates for people with mental illnesses are concerned that the Virginia Tech massacre and subsequent responses will further stigmatize those with mental illnesses unfairly. Ken Duckworth, medical director for the National Alliance on Mental Illness, said among people living with mental illnesses, "acts of violence are exceptional." His organization calls for colleges and universities to include screening, assessment and treatment of serious mental illness within health services available to students.

David Shern, president and CEO of Mental Health America, issued a statement following the Virginia Tech shootings calling for additional federal funding for mental health services. He stated, "One powerful step would be to invest in seamlessly linking people who are in acute psychiatric distress ... with proven intensive, coordinated community-based mental health treatment."

Congress is now considering legislation aimed at improving security on college campuses. The House on Feb. 3, 2009, passed the Campus Safety Act (House Resolution 748), which would create a National Center for Campus Public Safety, administered through the U.S. Justice Department. The center would train campus public safety agencies, encourage research to strengthen college safety and security and serve as a clearinghouse for the dissemination of relevant campus public safety information. As of late June 2009, the Senate Judiciary Committee had not acted on that bill.

While many postsecondary institutions have taken steps to safeguard students and address mental health needs on campus, balancing confidentiality with the need for greater information sharing and providing adequate funding for mental health programs are two serious challengers that policymakers will continue to face.

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Predicting and Preventing Campus Violence
April 7, 2008

Harvard University’s first president was an English cleric who reportedly attacked his assistant with a stick “big enough to kill a horse.” Ann Franke, the founder of Wise Results and a consultant on campus risk management issues nationally, related Friday during a conference on “Violence on Campus: Prediction. Prevention and Response.”

“There,” Franke said, “we have a foundation for campus violence.”

Experts on the prediction of violence, threat assessment, school shooters, suicides, mental health, and the legal landscape that serves as the backdrop (if not the foreground) for all this gathered at Columbia University Friday for the packed one-day event. With a focus on those issues and more, what follows are a few of the themes of the day.

There are significant problems inherent in predicting violence, both to the institution and its students. “Rare events by their nature, are not going to be very predictable,” said Edward Mulvey, a professor of psychiatry at the University of Pittsburgh School of Medicine.

Mulvey summarized both the actuarial (data- and formula-driven) and clinical (individualized) approaches to assessing threats, stressing his preference for a combination of the two. But, of concern, any actual formula used to identify students at higher risk of violence (to themselves or others) will yield false positives, or students who raise red flags but aren’t actual threats. “It’s a considerable problem.” Mulvey said, “both in terms of wasted institutional resources spent on targeted interventions and stigmatization of, or other negative impacts on, those students targeted. And then of course there are also false negatives -- students who are threats but aren’t tagged as such.

Actuarial tools, however, have the benefit of narrowing the target population for any intervention to students who statistically are at higher risk. And the popularity of such tools will probably rise in the coming years, Mulvey said -- adding that administrators should examine them critically.

“There are a lot of actuarial risk assessment tools out there,” he said. “As people become more concerned with violence, a lot more actuarial instruments may come out and I don’t want to say marketed to you, but presented to you…”

To complicate matters, “There is no useful profile” for a school shooter. “One of the things that people want from us is … ‘Just give me a profile.’” said William Modzeleski U.S. associate assistant deputy secretary of education for the Office of Safe and Drug Free Schools. “Should it be somebody who has a tattoo? Should it be somebody who wears a trench coat?”

In the federal government’s Safe Schools Initiative study, which examined 37 incidents from 1974-2000 at the K-12 level, the shooters’ only common trait, Modzeleski said, “was that they were boys.” (Though there’s a caveat even there, as Modzeleski said incidents involving girls occurred after they completed their research).

Among the general behavioral commonalities, shooters tended to have difficulty coping with significant losses or personal failures (mostly perceived failures) most had access to and had used weapons prior to the attack, and more than three-quarters had a history of suicide attempts or suicidal thoughts.

And across the 37 events, “None of them were impulsive.” Modzeleski said, “There was thinking done” with planning time ranging from a few hours to over a year (as in the case of Columbine).
And across the 37 events, “None of them were impulsive.” Modzeleski said, “There was thinking done” with planning time ranging from a few hours to over a year (as in the case of Columbine).

Modzeleski described the findings as likely having “some relevance” to colleges and universities, although it is unclear to what extent.

Contrary to prevailing wisdom at many colleges, privacy and disability laws are not barriers to action or intervention. (And, in fact, an independent report on the Virginia Tech massacre found that misinterpretations of privacy laws contribute to broad failures to share critical information about the eventual shooter in advance of the April 16 incident.)

“The law stands as no obstacle for doing what we know is right and for doing what is right for your student,” said Ann Hubbard, a professor of law at the University of Cincinnati.

Forty years ago, college administrators largely responded to concerns about students according to their own professional and moral standards – with the legal landscape not even a blip on their radar screen, ventured Richard J. Bonnie, a professor and director of the University of Virginia Institute of Law Psychiatry and Public Policy.

Whereas today, it’s just easier to say, “Our hands are tied. It’s in the privacy laws.”

Added Nancy Tribbenshee, general counsel for the Arizona University System: “We worship FERPA like a religion. I can’t explain it.” But several experts Friday emphasized there’s no reason to. Existing exemptions under the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA) and the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) grant college officials latitude in emergency situations although there are limitations to that latitude. Several speakers pointed, for example, to broad policies mandating automatic, immediate suspension or expulsion for suicidal students as potential violations of the ADA.

Still, speakers weren’t fans anyway of such automatic policies, which, without consideration of individual circumstances, remove students from their support systems and send the wrong message…discouraging students from seeking help from authority figures or, even, their friends, said Paul Appelbaum, a professor and director of the Division of Psychiatry, Law and Ethics at Columbia.

Citing lawsuits that colleges have settled with students who were forced out of college or from their dormitories (at George Washington University), “One would hope that other schools would get the message without being defendants themselves,” Appelbaum said.

“The safest approach to these issues is also the fairest approach” – individualized assessments of students, individualized evaluations of risk, and a respect for due process rights” he said.

Amid presentations on preventing high-profile shooting sprees on campus, speakers didn’t forget that suicide is far more prevalent, in fact the second-leading cause of death among college students. And that the majority (about 80 percent) of students who die by suicide have never gone to the counseling center.

Morton M. Silverman, a clinical associate professor of psychiatry at the University of Chicago and editor of the journal, Suicide and Life-Threatening Behavior, summarized the challenges in acting to reducing on-campus suicides in his (fairly long) short list. It included stigma, a lack of awareness and support among senior administrators, and a lack of urgency.

But, when intervention programs are put in place “Sustainability is always a problem” Silverman said. “If you start a program, that’s great. You’ve got to keep it going.”

Also during the course of the day, the dean of Columbia’s Graduate School of Journalism offered his thoughts to an audience decidedly unimpressed with the media’s coverage of the Virginia Tech shootings – particularly its general failure to follow up on complex and nuanced issues after an intense blitz of Blacksburg.

“There is the phenomenon of the press descending at various times and places,” Nicholas Lemann said. “It’s one of the things we’re just not good at. It is sustained attention to things.”

Point taken
Universities taking measures to avoid student suicides

By Melissa Ludwig and Jennifer R. Lloyd - Express-News
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As students at the University of Texas at Austin reel from Wednesday's public suicide by a gun-toting student at the library, campus administrators say preventing suicide and violence among students is an ongoing effort, and each tragedy holds a lesson.

Among college-age students, suicide is the second leading cause of death, according the National Mental Health Association, and many more students have considered it.

According to a 2009 study by David Drum, a professor of educational psychology at UT, about 18 percent of undergraduates reported that they had seriously considered attempting suicide. The study surveyed more than 26,000 undergraduate and graduate students at 70 institutions.

"Every campus has a number of different ways to work with students who are having difficulty," said Gage Paine, vice president of student affairs at UT San Antonio. "But the reality is that if someone is (isolating) themselves and is not really connected, suicide is very hard to prevent."

The incident at UT, during which sophomore math major Colton Tooley stormed across campus with an AK-47 yet hurt no one but himself, was rare. Little is known about Tooley, but news reports have quoted family as saying the young man showed no warning signs of suicide.

"I have never seen anything like that before," Paine said. "It is one thing to go into a deserted space and commit suicide. It is a very different behavior to run across campus shooting."

In the 2007 Virginia Tech massacre that left 33 dead, including the gunman, professors had alerted university officials of Seung-Hui Cho's disturbing, even menacing, behavior, but university staff did not act ahead of time out of fear of violating federal privacy laws by sharing too much information.

That was a mistake, said David Tuttle, dean of students at Trinity University, and many universities have sought to correct it by forming behavioral intervention teams to monitor students showing signs of distress.

At Trinity, a team of university staff that includes Tuttle, the chaplain, a police officer and the counseling director meet each week to talk about students.

"We just connect the dots," Tuttle said. "This student has been reported excessively absent, or we got a report in the residence halls that the student seems depressed. We are able to intervene and make sure we check on this student. It is really as simple as that."

In Houston, the University of St. Thomas created a similar Care Team of six to eight staff members a couple of years ago, said Rose Signorello, director of the university's counseling center. They encourage staff members who are concerned about a student to walk him or her over to the counseling center.

"This week, I had ... one of our priests on campus (come by with a student)," Signorello said. "It really helps to have them walk the student over to get them in the door."

With 50,000 students at UT Austin, it is easier for some to fall through the cracks.

Each year, three or four students commit suicide, said Chris Brownson, director of the counseling and mental health center at UT.

After the Virginia Tech shootings, UT set up the Behavior Concerns Advice Line, a 24-7 clearinghouse for concerns about anyone in the UT community.

"We talk about warning signs, withdrawing from people you are close to, feeling hopeless, making statements such as 'I want to kill myself' or 'life doesn't feel worth living anymore,'" Brownson said.

At UTSA, which also has a behavior intervention team, an international graduate student committed suicide in 2008, hanging himself in an office where he was found by a university employee.

College is a roller coaster of emotions for many students, UTSA's Paine said. Many don't adjust well to being away from home; others feel intense pressure to do well in school.

But Brownson said it is important to note that college students have a much lower suicide rate than their peers who are not in college. Each year, about seven out of every 100,000 college students commits suicide, compared with about 15 young people who are not in college, he said.

Suicide on campus is not a new problem, but it is one that has received more attention due to the highly public undoing of students such as Seung-Hui Cho — especially when they kill others as well as themselves.

"There is more media attention ... and there is a lot more attention paid to being more observant of those at risk," said Lanny Berman, executive director of the American Association of Suicidology. "More is being done than occurred 10 years ago. That said, I don't know if it would be reasonable to conclude anyone is on top of the problem; it is very complex."

Find this article at:
http://www.mysanantonio.com/health/Universities_taking_measures_to_avoid_student_suicides_104053049.html?showFullArticle=y
Are we prepared for a shooter on campus?

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UTSAPD is not waiting for a Special Weapons and Tactics (SWAT) team. The police force has created its own violence prevention training in order to better respond to emergency situations, such as the shooting at the University of Texas (UT) Austin earlier this semester. Colton Tooley, 19-year-old mathematics major, brought an AK-47 to UT Austin and fired multiple rounds around campus before running to UT's Perry- Castaneda Library on Sept. 28.

"I was surprised like everyone else," UTSA Police Chief Steve Barrera said. "It hits home when it's so close. I was also relieved that we're prepared. You always think we are ready to handle such a situation?"

Barrera has been police chief for five months his first step in finding an answer to that question was to stage a full-scale scenario involving an active shooter. UTSAPD worked with the San Antonio Police Department (SAPD) Aug. 6 to find out how well the two departments communicate with each other in emergencies.

"In the training exercise a SWAT team was also called in to help with the demonstration," Barrera said. "That communication was key in the exercise to ensure all components worked well. The department sent e-mails, text messages and called campus phones to spread the message that there was danger to as many people as possible." UTSA sophomore Jordan Alonzo is encouraged by the preparation.

"Because it is a smaller, more remote campus, I think [UTSAPD] would do a lot better [than UT Austin]," Alonzo said. "They are more on top of things than a lot of the police departments of the larger, more separated universities I've seen--like UT Austin."

Barrera said he felt comfortable that UTSAPD is prepared for a conflict like the one in Austin. "Our UTSAPD are pretty much anywhere at all times," Alonzo said.

A video called "Shots Fired" is available on the UTSAPD web-site and is used by the police department to train students and faculty on the way to respond to emergencies. UTSAPD will show the video to groups; individuals can view the video online.

"We're a smaller campus, something that drastic is less likely to happen," Alonzo said. Not every training scenario is as elaborate as the August scenario; officers quiz each other in tabletop training, in which different scenarios are presented and officers must think through the steps they would take in a real-life situation.

"In the past, when a situation happens like this, the local police department would call a SWAT team," Barrera said. "You would have to wait and potentially more people could be hurt."

"The chances are very minimal that it will ever happen, but if it does you need to have a plan," Barrera said. "You read more and more about these situations. The realization hits you that it could happen here--it could happen anywhere."
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