

RESPONDING TO TRAGEDY:
AN INTERNAL FOCUS & EVALUATION

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As a result of the tragedy that took place at Virginia Tech our nation's higher education system has been transformed. The media frenzy and public outcry about prevention, response and foreseeability of these events will place the manner campuses view security under a microscope. Over the past week retired professionals and consultants have been on television and radio 24-hours a day scrutinizing and chastising what they call higher education's "it can't happen here," philosophy and every one has called for fundamental changes in the way we operate. In addition, Congress has summonsed Steven Healy, Chief of Police for Princeton, to Washington to testify the past Monday and Tuesday, only one week after the shootings.

Parent response to this tragedy has also been extensive, with colleges and universities around the country being flooded with questions and concerns about how and what their institutions do to prevent and react to these types of incidents. Watchdog groups such as SOC (Security on Campus), the Clery non-profit organization, have openly attacked the administration of Virginia Tech, stating that the lack of attention and focus given to campus security and investment in security technology is, "actionable." While much of the immediate uproar will subside over time as it does eventually after every natural or man-made tragedy, the uproar needs to be replaced with prudent, thoughtful reflection and planning.

Internationally, American higher education is seen as significantly less able than their European counterparts to effectively detect and respond to security threats. Experts from around the world identified our lack of camera technology on campuses as a major failure in the ability to provide a safe campus, or effectively respond to incidents. Fox News interviewees also identified a lack of, or improper use of access control. For instance, using access control on administrative buildings and not allowing universal access for the campus community to all buildings regardless of the need should at least be considered.

As September 11th changed the face of national security, April 16, 2007, will change security expectations in higher education. The investment in physical security and security technology over the next decade will be unprecedented, with billions of dollars being invested into our campuses. We will see legislation for unification of security standards both nationally and state-wide, with a focus on access control, response time and arming of campus police/public safety personnel; similar to recommendations made almost three years ago after the international review of the Belarus school massacre.

One of the greatest failures being uncovered by this tragedy is the failure of higher education's 'early alert' system, which is crippled by restrictive legislation and confidentiality requirements. In the case of Cho Seung-Hui the Virginia Tech administration, after several incidents relating to stalking, arson, lewd acts, murderous ideology and judicial warnings, **they** were unable to coordinate the information needed to remove him from their institution.

In light of the Virginia Tech tragedy, Bucknell University must continue its own self-examination of our current ability to respond in the event of a major emergency, and try to create the appropriate infrastructure to deal with such an event preferably before it happens or when it might happen.

Our main areas of focus should be early alert policies and measures, communications equipment and procedures, external agency collaborations, and our campus wide security policies.

EARLY ALERT POLICIES

Regardless of the review teams' findings in the Virginia Tech incident, we will see a paradigm shift in higher education with regards to information sharing, support services and early alerts. This change will occur rapidly, perhaps by next semester; and be supported by both national legislation and professional organizations, clearing the way for clear, unrestricted information exchange regarding problem or at-risk individuals. Bucknell should examine, or reexamine its current policies in this regard, and make recommendations for implementation, modification or creation where necessary. Some key areas are as follows:

- Complete review of FERPA/HIPPA by General Counsel and/or external legal professionals to determine exact restrictions the University must adhere to and where we can extend information and communication between university departments without violating oaths or the law.
- Begin to look at bi-weekly (at least monthly) meetings between:
 - Psychological Services (consider name change for stigma)
 - Dean of Students
 - Dean of Engineering
 - Dean of Arts & Sciences
 - Student Health Services
 - Public Safety
 - Local Judicial System (active case management)
 - External continuing care provider (for students on break/summer)
- Determine who will be the repository and have main oversight for 'persons of interest' and develop a comprehensive early intervention and warning plan strategy.
- Coordinate the development of a mandatory leave plan; taking into account all factors for all participants, not just 'medical'. Perhaps this would best be under Psychological Services due to the current inability to violate confidentiality.

COMMUNICATIONS EQUIPMENT AND POLICIES

Public Safety Communications Equipment

In the fall we began examination of our current on-campus communications system. Two companies were brought in inspect what we had, provide recommendations and submit a pricelist for purchasing a new system if needed. Both companies advised us that our current communications systems were at or past life expectancy and that a failure would leave us with limited or no communications. Communications is the backbone of everything we do and how we will respond to an incident and it will be a primary failure point that we cannot afford. We

need to evaluate the current communications proposals that have been submitted and decide what direction we need to proceed.

Cell phone numbers

The optional listing of ACTIVE cell phone numbers for students is no longer an option. This must be a University mandate and a requirement of registration, that is as important as collecting social security numbers, and should be enforced for next semester. Without real, active numbers we cannot hope to effectively reach students with current communication forms, therefore any emergency notification program is incumbent upon having these contact numbers. This cell phone number collection process is expected to begin next week before the tragedy for VT begins to fade and before students leave for the summer.

Campus-Wide Alert System

Currently we have a multi-user alert system in place. A review of what we have would provide the basis for a campus alert system; however, if any one of the areas in the multi-user system were affected by a critical incident then that part of the plan would immediately fail. For example, if Public Safety is responding to secure a location or is actively dealing with an incident our mobile vehicle PA system becomes unusable. If The ELC becomes the target, or is involved in a critical incident they will lose the ability to implement lockdown or notifications because they will be focused on preservation and evacuation. What happens if these events take place after business hours or over a weekend or holiday? Just these two possibilities alone require us to reexamine what we have in place.

One possibility is E2Campus. IACLEA (International Association of Law Enforcement Associates) is currently working with E2Campus to negotiate a member price for their technology. Their product would integrate an off-campus solution, which would be removed from the incident, that once notified would begin notification through several outlets; text messaging to cell phones, email, voicemail (cell & landline), parental notification, campus-wide PA system (which I will be providing next week). In addition, about two months ago we began investigating a competing “push to cell phone” messaging system introduced to us by Bucknell alum. We expect to make a decision on the proper system over the summer and have the technology in place by the fall semester.

Regardless of what the solution is, the system ownership should be combined into one outlet (department) and responsibility given to one person(s), available 24/7. This will ensure what we chose to have in place will be ready and usable if it needs to be employed.

SECURITY TECHNOLOGY

There are two forms of security technology that are readily available for integration into our current structure: access control and security cameras. Both are effective and should be investigated further.

Electronic Access Control

Electronic access control is currently being researched for use at Bucknell in conjunction with the ‘onecard’ system. Electronic access control gives the ability to remotely monitor and

manage building access through the use of human interface devices which are individually assigned access level privileges. There are three basic levels of access control integration that could be considered:

- Option 1 – Residential & Critical - Install access control on all exterior residence hall doors and all mission-critical infrastructures. This integration would allow us to control ingress and egress on main doors and the ability to monitor egress on all perimeter doors from a single location. It would also provide us the ability to ‘lockdown’ residence halls by pushing one button, allowing instantaneously secure locations instead of the several hours it would take with our current method. Mission-critical areas are defined as the computer and telephone mainframes, chemical and nuclear storage areas, and emergency operation and communication areas and should be the first places considered for installation to ensure that the University can maintain effective functionality and control during a critical incident.
- Option 2 – Residential, Critical, & Academic - Option 2 would include Option 1 and add the exterior doors of all academic buildings. This would allow us to ‘lockdown’ the majority of the campus with one button, as well to create a safer after-hours environment by requiring all who use the facilities to have an access device and the correct privileges to enter and then only as approved by the system.
- Option 3 – All Campus Buildings - Option 3 would add access control to the exterior doors of all buildings on campus (and off campus if required) as well as to all critical infrastructures.
- Internal Door Option – Residence Halls/ Labs - The most extensive option available, one that might not be applicable to Bucknell without significantly changing our residence hall culture, would be that of providing access control to internal doors. This option replaces current brass key hardware with wirelessly programmable and controlled device access. It works the same as external doors but is adapted to be a stand alone unit that runs from batteries and usually incorporates a keypad for alternative access options.

Security Cameras

While it is not currently believed the deployment of cameras across our residential campus is warranted, it should stay on our agenda to regularly review. Strategically placed cameras at main entrance doors can be used for identification for remote access as well as for security monitoring to ensure doors are not being propped open or chained, as happened at Virginia Tech.

Additionally, security cameras could be deployed with access control on all mission-critical and storage areas to have a visual record of who is coming and going. This is extremely valuable information after a crime has been committed, or to properly monitor who is accessing chemical and nuclear storage areas.

Residence Hall Security

As pointed out at the NACCU conference I recently attended, we are only one of 5% of campuses not using electronic access control. We currently do not lock residence halls until 11pm, and then open them by 6am effectively not providing security during the day. We cannot effectively 'lockdown' the residence halls in a timely manner. The procedures currently in place are to have public safety or custodians secure the doors if there is a problem. Public Safety will be responding to the critical incident and we will have a difficult time getting custodians, if they can be reached, to accept the task if a similar situation to Virginia Tech is occurring, nor should they be asked. Our current best estimate to secure buildings on campus for a critical incident is two-hours, that with all available officers locking doors and not responding to the incident. We have been investigating the technology of a "one-card" system over the last few months with the intent of installing security access in 2008. Now may be the time to advance that timetable to as soon as practicable.

EXTERNAL AGENCY RELATIONSHIPS AND RESPONSE TIMES

We currently have verbal agreements with Lewisburg and East Buffalo Police departments as well as PSP (Pennsylvania State Police) and the Union County Sheriff's Department to respond to campus for critical and non-critical incidents. The two areas we need to focus on with regard to their response are the amount of officers and their response time.

On any given day shift, both departments have no more than two officers on duty who could respond to campus, if both Chiefs are working. In addition, Pennsylvania State Police usually staffs one trooper during any given shift, and Union County Sheriffs Department generally has one deputy that would be free to respond. This would provide us five (5) officers, who could respond to campus, if not currently on a call. PSP indicated that if they have a trooper in the area he would be sent.

The response times for each department vary with Lewisburg and East Buffalo Police and Union County Sheriff's Department being able to respond in several minutes, under good conditions. PSP being around fifteen minutes if close and up to 45 minutes, if in a remote area.

It should also be noted that this response would be with officers as is, no entry gear, rifles or special equipment. Deployment of the SWAT team, based in Williamsport, would have an estimated callout time, with travel of over one hour.

Unified Security Services

We currently maintain two separate security personnel, one who locks and unlocks campus, maintained through Public Safety and the other who is responsible for the KLARC center, maintained by Athletics. These two areas need to be combined under the control of Public Safety. The control of the security personnel at KLARC is a natural extension of what Public Safety already provides to campus and we will be able to extend to that area formalized security practices, such as a uniformed presence, hourly security rounds, id challenges, and increased usage of existing security technology. We would also be able to augment current staff during

peak times with onsite personnel as well as create an employment track for security officer to enter Public Safety and officers.

Arming Public Safety

Other than depending solely upon external agencies to respond to campus, one option is to arm our public safety department. There are many variables to this issue which can be outlined in a complete arming proposal should one be required. However, several short points for reflection are:

- Officers who know the campus and work everyday will be primary responders to all calls, not local or state agencies who do not know the campus.
- The Chief of Public Safety could remain the primary incident commander because they have the same response capabilities. Currently, incident command would be relinquished to the first responding agency with firearms. It should be noted that almost three dozen Bucknell staff were certified in Incident Command Training last fall – the first time that training was ever conducted at Bucknell.
- Public Safety would be able to immediately respond to the scene of any armed incident to determine its validity or need for investigation and response. Currently officers would not respond to an armed incident call, but rather would wait from a distance until armed officers arrived.
- Bucknell officers could have immediate entry to any situation and/or actively participate with external law enforcement in an armed response.

The events that occurred at Virginia Tech on April 16, 2007, will serve as a catalyst for change on many campuses. We at Bucknell should not respond with knee-jerk reactions but should continue our evolutionary and pro-active assessment of campus security and emergency planning, that has always been taken very seriously at this institution. Public Safety looks forward to the challenges and cooperation that will take place across the university and with the local and regional law enforcement agencies to keep Bucknell the safe, unique learning environment it has always been.