

Ohio Board of Regents  
Task Force on Campus Security  
Combined Recommendations of the Prevention, Response,  
Communications and Resources Work Groups  
**August 20, 2007**

## Introduction

The Task Force on Campus Security, convened by Chancellor Eric Fingerhut at the direction of Governor Strickland following the tragic events that occurred on the campus of Virginia Tech on April 16th, has met twice previously. During the first meeting, the Task Force discussed the general parameters of its work and formed four working groups. The work groups and work group chairs are:

Prevention - Jon Allison, Chair  
Response - Steve Dettelbach, Chair  
Communications - Teri Geiger, Chair  
Resources - Mark Griffin, Chair

During the second meeting, the Task Force reviewed the report of the working groups with respect to actions that could be taken immediately to improve campus safety. The Task Force also sponsored a Summit on Campus Safety on August 1<sup>st</sup> at The Ohio State University.

Today's meeting – the last planned meeting of the Task Force, will hear and review a report of the working groups with respect to longer term measures that should be taken to continuously improve and maintain campus safety.

Chancellor Fingerhut will summarize the work of the Task Force in a report to Governor Strickland to be delivered on August 30<sup>th</sup>.

## **Actions Necessary to Continuously Improve and Maintain Campus Safety**

### **1. PREVENTION AND MENTAL HEALTH-RELATED RECOMMENDATIONS**

Mental health education and resources are key components to detect at-risk individuals who may pose a risk to other members of the campus community and to prevent violent incidents on college campuses. Task force members suggest the following mental-health related recommendations:

- a. Mental health services on state supported campuses, including branch campuses, should be required directly or through agreements with providers.
- b. County-level boards of mental health and college and universities should develop and institutionalize regular working relationships.
- c. Higher education institutions should encourage colleges and universities to connect campus community members who have relationship violence issues (including stalking) with campus mental health and counseling services.
- d. The Board of Regents should develop a method for tracking students with a history of relationship violence issues and/or other violent tendencies who withdraw from one institution and enroll in another institution. The Board of Regents should examine the feasibility of having students who transfer from one institution to another authorize the transmittal of all of their records to the receiving institution.
- e. The Board of Regents should identify, and college and university officials should implement, best practices with respect to involuntary withdrawals due to mental health issues and processes for allowing withdrawn students to re-enter school.

## **2. RECOMMENDATIONS RELATED TO LEGAL AND LEGISLATIVE MATTERS**

The Attorney General's office has provided practical guidelines about legal issues surrounding campus security. One key area of concern addressed by the Attorney General is the ability of campus officials to be free from liability if acting in good faith to protect students, faculty and others from the threat of harm. In addition, the task force is recommending the following:

- a. The state legislature should consider including on the Ohio Peace Officer Training Commission a representative from the Ohio Campus Law Enforcement Association. In addition, the Ohio Peace Officer Training Academy should be asked to develop specific training for higher education settings.
- b. The State of Ohio should take steps to expand the use of Homeland Security grant funds for campus safety. The state should work with the federal Department of Homeland Security to clarify the use of grant funds for campus security purposes. The State of Ohio should work with the Department of Homeland Security and Congress to increase the amount of annual federal appropriation for annual grants, to accommodate additional (college/university) security requirements.
- c. The Board of Regents should work with private institutions to determine whether existing law provides sufficient protection to personnel acting in good faith to report

potential risks to campus safety (the Attorney General reports that state law is clearly sufficient as relates to public employees).

### **3. RECOMMENDATIONS RELATED TO STATEWIDE COORDINATION**

As a result of previous Task Force recommendations, the Board of Regents has increased its role in coordinating campus safety. The Task Force further recommends the following:

- a. The Board of Regents should take steps to permanently institutionalize the effort to monitor and upgrade campus safety throughout the state. These efforts may include annual summits, monitoring safety plans and participation in available training and technical assistance, encouraging participation in on-line recording of safety plans and campus building plans, initiating public service campaigns, convening advisory groups and reconvening the Task Force as required.
- b. The Board of Regents, with assistance from other appropriate government agencies, should determine what actions can be taken to reduce the initial and continuing costs (capital and non-capital/operating costs) of providing adequate campus security, e.g.,:
  - i. Consolidated purchasing or contracting
  - ii. Technical and/or planning assistance experts
  - iii. Central development of exercises
  - iv. Independent assessment (pros and cons, etc.) of security-related technologies, products and services to determine best values, possibly housed/developed by the Board of Regents
  - v. Panning templates that assist colleges/universities in avoiding unnecessary costs, while providing adequate safety, security and resilience
  - vi. Information sharing, e.g., through a web site, annual conference, etc.
- c. State agencies should study and seek to maximize the interoperability of communications channels/radio frequencies between campus safety and law enforcement with local police/fire/emergency management personnel.
- d. The Board of Regents should develop a communications strike force from campus communications experts who are willing to assist campuses in handling media coverage in the early stages of an incident and recovery period.
- e. The Board of Regents should review the recommendations of similar task forces in other states for additional measures that might be taken.

#### **4. RECOMMENDATIONS RELATED TO CAMPUS SAFETY PLANNING**

Summer, 2007 action plans called for all college and university campuses in Ohio to review existing campus safety awareness, emergency response and communications plans to reflect existing best practices. In addition to the elements that were recommended for immediate action, the task force is recommending the following additional longer-term items:

- a. The plan should include provisions for regular communication, cooperation and coordination with state, local and federal agencies.
- b. Security and safety plans should be updated annually.
- c. Security personnel and key administrators should participate in training sessions recommended by the Board of Regents and the Department of Public Safety.
- d. Students should be involved in the review of emergency plans to utilize their knowledge of the campus to identify possible shortcomings of the plan.
- f. A version of the emergency response plan should be available to the campus and outside community. Building plans should be available on-line to first responders and emergency personnel.