

Campus Safety and Security

Implementation of SB 6328 – Related to Campus Safety

Presentation by Tom Henderson Director of Capital Programs - June 5, 2008

Introduce the Presentation:

Introductions

Thank Mike Campbell for arranging the meeting

Presentation in two parts - I will introduce the topic and provide three documents that were created to help colleges look at their current status in relationship to the requirements in SB 6328 and to identify a format for consistent reporting based on the Self-Assessment.

We will have a panel discussion looking at approaches taken by several colleges

- Eddie Aubrey, Director of Campus Public Safety and Risk Management at Tacoma Community College – provide insight on a large campus and focus on issues related to enhancing communication and building relationships with local police, fire and other first responders
- Doug Swift, Emergency Operations Lieutenant at South Puget Sound Community College will discuss some of the activities currently going on at the college and will also focus on Clery Act reporting.
- Marty Mattis, Facilities Manager with Bates Technical College will provide an insight into managing an intercity safety and security plan and address some of the difficulties managing a college with three primary sites of operation. In addition, he will talk about the importance of involving the facilities manager when making decisions on building access, mass communication options, and other issues that often involve plant.
- Finally, Keith Foster, Vice President of Finance and Administration at Grays Harbor Community College will provide an insight into safety planning at a

small college with several distant education centers. Fewer college employees face the same expectations for campus safety as the larger institution.

Finally, I am hopeful that we can have a dialog and question and answer period following this presentation.

Background:

Senate Bill 6328 amends existing legislation on Campus Safety and Security. It was requested by the governor and grew out of the events at Virginia Tech. My involvement began with assisting the operating budget to establish an \$8.5 million supplemental request to enhance planning, training, mass communication and support other communication/equipment needs, and mapping. Mapping ultimately moved to the Capital Budget under HB 2507.

I need to again thank Mike Campbell and many of you for participating together with Facility Officers (OFC) and safety and security staff from the various colleges to establish the detail and draft the narrative for the initial request.

During session I worked hard to express our needs before house and senate committees and in separate meetings with legislators. Pierce District Chancellor Michele Johnson and Mike Campbell also participated in several meetings and gave testimony before House and Senate Committees.

Unfortunately it ended up an unfunded mandate and we will need to do more with less – new requirements while not that extensive will lead to more assessment and amendments to existing plans, create the need for formal self-assessments and reporting, and drive the evaluation of future needs (budget requests) on an ongoing basis – all within the available funds.

There are several key issues that I believe are critical to the implementation of enhancements to the campus safety plan:

- We need to recognize that the management of campus safety is a team effort. Lots of people are involved in the incident management process.

- We need to maintain an open environment where people feel comfortable and welcome when coming onto the campus. We must build respect in the community for the college as a center of learning (leave weapons home)
- Each college needs to build an expectation of Safety and Security – having published safety plans, resources, and mass communication capacity available helps instill confidence (not complacency)
- Build an environment of mutual respect and appreciation for diversity. And be aware of what is going on around the campus and address issues quickly (Students were critical in identifying problems at Seattle Central – They got press but had immediate support of their local police in two incidents with very troubled people. (You can only get this support if people recognize that you have high expectations of mutual respect and no tolerance for threats – police stated in the last incident, there was a “grave threat of mass violence against the campus.”)
- Build Knowledge of faculty, staff, and students through training, table top exercises, drills, events, joint activities with local responders, seminars, talks, etc.
- Enhance Preparedness, practice skills so people are comfortable with their roles. Extend training to help understand the National Incident Management System and Incident Command System. Our campuses are not static – there is turnover, coverage changes as schedules change, people’s roles and responsibilities change over time, and you need to ensure that there is broad coverage across the institution.

We made the point with the legislature over and over again that the state’s community and technical colleges reach over 500,000 people on our campuses each year. We operate over long hours and unlike our 4-year Universities

- We do not have commissioned police forces
- We do not have student health centers
- We do not have student mental health clinics

We rely heavily on our first responders to assist us in managing issues of safety and security on our campuses. The relationships we build with our local police and fire departments mean a great deal to the effectiveness of our campus safety plans.

SB 6328 requires colleges to work with first responders to build Memorandum of Understanding and to establish Mutual Aid Agreements. In our case this should probably extend to Regional and Community Mental Health organizations or Mental Health Service Providers in our communities.

Reporting to the State Board:

There are two yellow handouts – the bill, and a checklist of line item requirements contained in SB 6328. Reading the bill is essential. The checklist only summarizes the sections and does not provide sufficient information to understand the full intent of the bill. Existing requirements are unchanged and new requirements are tracked changes with strike outs or underlined text.

The spreadsheet is intended as a quick questionnaire to review where we are starting before entering into the self assessment and reporting requirements at the end of the bill.

The blue handout establishes the structure for statewide reporting and the white handout reflect what communication capability we have across the state.

These documents were sent to business officers yesterday – the checklist is due back to me on July 18 and the report is due to the state board office following the self assessment on or before October 30th.

The Blue handout will be the format used to address our board and provide information to the public on a statewide basis. Local reporting can take other forms depending on the issues being addressed but the State Board is looking for a uniform format.

I intend to create a report similar to the Virginia Community College – Focus on Emergency Preparation and Management issued in January 2008. There is a packet for each college that contains a copy of this document – there is a web address for the document as well. A similar report published for the state’s community and technical colleges will provide a great vehicle for demonstrating what we have done and will set up a basis for future investment within both the operating and capital budgets.

We are facing a rapidly changing environment:

The social environment is changing, many people are getting difficult to deal with – they are squeezed by the economy. They already have tough choices between paying for high priced fuel to get to work and the need to put food on the table. Colleges continue to look at increasing fees, raising tuition just to stay even, and book companies are not helping with higher and higher prices on text books. When people are financially squeezed they often have difficulty coping.

Recently, I read an article on higher education enrollments expressing concerns with our ability to meet growing mental health needs of students - are seeing more students enter our institutions with significant psychotic histories – the article further stated Clinical depression has doubled in the last 15 years, suicides have tripled in the last 15 years, and sexual assaults have quadrupled. It is often our students that will be able to identify problems and seek help for these students. SB 6328 requires that we clearly show who to go to and provide phone numbers to make communication easier

Mental health issues are another area where SB 6328 seeks to address mental health and counseling services available to students, faculty and staff. We know there is a rise in the number of students coming to the campus with issues. Failure to follow through with medication is a problem. Often students away from home for the first time stop taking medication because they believe they are feeling better and do not recognize changes in their behavior.

Another issue that is becoming an issue is the high level of post traumatic stress disorder experienced by returning Vets – trouble with relationships, legal and financial difficulties, work problems, and the effects of war have taken a big toll following multiple and extended deployments.

Colleges need to have threat assessment teams that have special training in dealing with mental health and behavioral issues. Use of outside mental health professionals to assist with the assessment may be beneficial in this process

Building Safety Plan and Implementing Changes to the plan:

We are not immune to natural or manmade disasters occurring on our campuses. We need to take reasonable steps to protect against loss and have a planned response to deal with incidents. The All-Risk approach is critical as we need to evaluate what the risks are and the likely events that could occur on our campuses. Take advantage of expertise, bring in consultants, and test the plan.

Make sure the reporting requirements in the Cleary Act are followed. We need to find ways to manage emergency warning within 30 minutes (9-10 minutes may be a better goal) and be proactive rather than reactive as legislation will soon overtake our planning and budgeting process.

Bullying, Harassment, and Alcohol and Drug abuse may be a bigger problem on you campus. Setting policies procedures and programs preventing and responding to violence and controlled substances, creating weapons policies, and providing information on harassment and sexual harassment may be significant activities in updating safety plans to meet requirements in SB 6328. Establishing hotlines and other reporting methodologies may also be beneficial in ensuring easier communication for individuals.

Extra training is essential in understanding limitation and myths surrounding FERPA (Federal Educational Rights & Privacy Act). This is required to keep up with changing interpretation and to avoid confusion. Colleges need to establish ways to identify and respond to problems and establish policies governing student privacy also required in SB 6328.

Another critical point is to make an all risk assessment of your campus and not focus on any one issue at the exclusion of potentially more important problems for your institution. Several articles have appeared recently that list the number one problem faced by higher as student suicide not campus violence. A balanced approach that focuses on response, clear communication, and how the college deals with the media provides a basis for responding to events that you have planned for and for other events you may not have contemplated.

Projecting Needs in the Future:

Finally there is the budget. Assess what you need to improve campus safety. Have a priority list that shows requests in funding order. Don't rely on the state board office to make choices for you. Each campus faces different circumstances, the population surrounding the campus is different, buildings and access issues are different dependent on age, condition, and investments already made to improve safety.

I would like to turn to our panel and have a discussion on the specific impacts to colleges and some of the issues they face in managing the safety and security programs at their campuses.