

CAMPUS SAFETY & WELLNESS

*Campus Safety Provisional
Commission of the Association of
Florida Colleges*

November 9, 2015

Premier Edition, First Volume

Why Now? By Lola Christian, Employment Manager, Lara Zwilling, Coordinator, Counseling Center, Aaron Daye, Multimedia Specialist & Ryan Woods, Lieutenant (Lt.), Santa Fe College.

The Fruition of the Association of Florida College's Commission Concerning Campus Public Safety & Wellness

Open access within institutions of higher education is founded upon strong ethical standards of community, inclusiveness and equity. Open access in the collegiate setting extends to expanding opportunities and removing hindrances at all levels, including availability, affordability, admissions, enrollment, employment, learning spaces, facilities, course offerings, learning opportunities, student support services and learning environments to generate open-mindedness with respect to all brands of diversity. This policy of open door access allows education for all those who can benefit (Shannon & Smith, 2006), however also creates a complex environment vulnerable to

staff, visitors and the community as a whole, as well as other college stakeholders locally and globally. Institution type, location and college composition individually and communally work to create and impact the unique college environment, which influences all safety and security concerns. The recent increase in tragedies within the college setting have provided more attention to the mounting need for safety, security, crisis intervention and emergency preparedness on college campuses nationwide. Unfortunately, the prevalence of violence, harassment, hate crimes, threats, thefts, drinking, drug possession and usage, sexual assault and harassment, and other

The AFC's Provisional Campus Safety Commission was envisioned as a collaborative community in which all 28 state-assisted colleges in Florida could discuss and learn from each other's diverse safety and security needs and situations.

the hindrances of crime, crises, natural disasters and other hazards (Dukes & Harris, 2007).

Educational institutions within the Florida College System all share a common commitment to open access not only for students, but for faculty,

infractions have become far too familiar among college campuses. These incidents illustrate challenges to the open access philosophy and compound the need for collaborative efforts to combat these vulnerabilities faced by all

Welcome from commission founder, Lt. Ryan Woods, Santa Fe College Police Department

• • •

It is my distinct pleasure to introduce and welcome you to the Campus Safety Commission! This commission is committed to our great 28 state-assisted colleges and now we will be able to recognize and promote the safety, security and well-being of our collective institutions.

There is no better time than the present to start such a commission! It is our objective to touch on all aspects of public safety to improve services, educate our communities and mentor those tasked with providing various safety components. This newsletter and our commission's Web page will be your source for news, industry updates, announcements and best practice information for all Association of Florida Colleges institutions!

Did You Know?

• • •

Of all the 28 state-assisted colleges in the Florida College System, only four have a campus police department staffed by sworn law enforcement officers who are trained, certified and have the power of arrest. These institutions include Tallahassee Community College, Florida Southwestern State College, Pensacola State College and Santa Fe College. Of these four institutions, all have some brand of counseling services that provide training to students, faculty and staff, as well as critical mental health assessment, counseling and outreach to students by licensed professionals. Having both a Police Department and Counseling Center on campus are critical to public safety of our campuses.

community college environments (Dukes & Harris, 2007).

AFC's Provisional Campus Safety and Wellness Commission was created to provide a collaborative community in which all 28 state-assisted colleges in Florida could discuss and learn from each other's diverse safety and security needs and situations. This commission will focus on various areas related to safety, security and overall wellness of our campus communities. Topics of consideration involve a broad range of subject matter such as crisis intervention, mental health awareness and counseling, crisis and emergency management and preparedness, threat assessment and management, campus policing and security, risk management, behavioral intervention, suicide prevention, loss and crime prevention, applicable laws,

regulations, and compliance concerns, as well as the best practices related to all aspects of campus security and safety.

This commission will be of interest to campus compliance officials, conduct officers, mental health and academic counselors, faculty members, human resources professionals, risk managers, Title IX coordinators, facilities workers, college attorneys, campus police and security officers, well as front-line student support staff. By working collaboratively, this commission will interconnect all aspects of campus public safety and wellness throughout the great 28 colleges in Florida to improve and enhance the safety and security measures conducted at these institutions of higher learning. Through this commission's work, all 28 institutions will work toward

maintaining safer college campuses by promoting the best practices of safety, security and wellness to positively impact the collective well-being of our colleges and securing our core commitment of open access to all intellectual pursuits.



The Power of Behavioral Intervention By Lara Zwilling, Counseling Center Coordinator, Santa Fe College ***Mental Health Interventions are a Critical Component to Crisis Management***

Santa Fe College is consistently committed to excellence. This includes providing a safe and comfortable environment for students, faculty and staff to learn and prosper. The responsibility for creating this environment doesn't just lie with campus safety/police, conduct offices and Title IX coordinators. The campus culture must reflect this drive for an appropriate, suitable, welcoming and safe atmosphere. Across the nation, campuses are creating behavioral intervention/threat assessment teams as another way to ensure this goal.

Behavioral intervention teams are designed with the goal of preventing escalating, potentially violent, behavior from students, faculty and staff. The team receives reports of disruptive, concerning or threatening

behavior (from students, staff, faculty and visitors), then conducts an investigation by gathering additional information, performing a threat assessment, and deciding the next course of action regarding potential support, intervention, warning/notification and response. Behavioral intervention teams manage cases for long periods of time utilizing software (oftentimes Symplify or Maxient) and continue with appropriate follow-up of cases.

Members of the Santa Fe College BIT are trained via two national threat assessment organizations including NaBITA (National Association of Behavioral Intervention Teams) and ATAP (Association of Threat Assessment Professionals). Another critical part of the behavioral intervention team's

function is to educate the campus regarding various behaviors exhibited by students, faculty and staff that are "red flags" and raise concern to others as well as on ways to report. Specifically, Santa Fe College has a "Say Something" campaign that discusses the importance of reporting – and how parties can even report anonymously. Another part of this professional development is to explain to the campus community the positive aspect of intervening in a student's life who may be on the path to violence, and how most times, these interactions are positive and beneficial for the student (i.e. help with medication, referral to counseling, helping with housing, etc.)

Oftentimes, when we are able to assist students (even if indirectly) with their unmet needs, we prevent disruption, conflict and, potentially, violence. At Santa Fe College, our behavioral intervention team meets

weekly, and oftentimes even more frequently, to review cases and make decisions regarding what is most appropriate for the safety and wellness of our college community as well as the student in question.

We encourage colleges to incorporate a similar team, and to engage actively with the professional organizations in this field mentioned above.

A Brief Law Review: Protection of Vulnerable Persons Act—In 2012, Florida's Vulnerable Persons Act made college and university campuses mandatory reporting agencies when concerning known or suspected child abuse, neglect or abandonment. This law mandates a \$1,000,000 penalty for each proven failure to report instances of abuse, neglect, or abandonment to the Florida Department of Children and Families Abuse Hotline (1-800-962-2873). Interactions with children occur daily on most Florida College System campuses through child care centers, high school dual enrollment, campus tours, and other college activities, events, and special programs which may cater to children, or those under the age of 18. Abuse encompasses acts that result in physical, mental or sexual harm and/or injury that causes significant impairment to a child's physical, mental or emotional health. Abandonment refers to any situation in which the legal custodian of a child makes no provision of child support, while also failing to maintain a substantial and positive relationship with the child despite the ability. Neglect occurs when a child is deprived of necessary food, clothing, shelter or medical treatment, which causes impairment to a child's physical, mental or emotional health. If you suspect you are witnessing evidence of child abuse, neglect or abandonment, contact the Florida Department of Children and Families immediately (Reporting Abuse of Children and Vulnerable Adults, 2013).

PLAY YOUR PART! By Lola Christian, Employment Manager, Santa Fe College
The Shared Responsibility of Campus Safety & Security



Institutions of higher education are often revered as protected educational sanctuaries full of opportunities, openness, friendships and lifelong learning activities. These institutions are built on collegial values of enlightenment, innovation and well-being, and have inherently been understood as safe havens, but just how safe are these well-regarded colleges? No community's safety and security protocols can attain maximum effectiveness unless everyone within the community contributes to making it work. Campus safety and security are both personal, as well as shared responsibilities (Langford, 2012).

Educational institutions intrinsically and legally have a moral responsibility ensure the welfare, health and safety of every individual on campus (McGuire, 2015). Unfortunately, college campuses, including those within the great 28 state-assisted colleges of Florida, are susceptible to the tragedies that impact society as a whole, including natural disasters such as hurricanes, which are far too familiar within many of our regions. In today's world, campus crime can encompass a wide array of infractions related to mental illness, stalking, fighting, hazing, disorderly conduct, theft and personal property loss, dating violence, rape, sexual harassment and assaults, threats, terrorism, weaponry and guns, drinking, drug possession and usage, hate crimes, self-harm incidents and suicides (Dukes & Harris, 2007; Langford, 2012). This is by no means an expansive list of crimes on campus, as there is no possible way to be ready for any incident that may occur as each circumstance has its own unique set of variables (Myer,

James & Moulton, 2011). As educational sanctuaries, however, it is our duty to do our best to generate sound, safe and secure learning and working environments both physically and virtually (McGuire, 2015). Building and maintaining safe campuses is a daunting task that involves the shared responsibility of students, faculty, staff, community partners and local law enforcement agencies, as well as the general public. As a Florida college stakeholder, are you playing your part? What are you doing to actively maintain the safety and security of your campus?

Individually, we can all make a difference on our campuses by using common sense, being more alert of our surroundings and making reports of any suspicious activity. Being alert involves recognizing vulnerabilities and taking precautions. These few basic precautions can prove the best defense against crime:

- Travel in groups when going about campus. Make

use of safety escorts and always tell someone your destination, as well as the times you should be expected. Do not advertise whereabouts on social media sites.

- Ensure all areas are secured, locked if necessary with no valuables visible. This includes cars, homes, offices and desks.
- Keep personal items on you at all times, with a cellphone handy. Lock campus police and security numbers in the device. Also, do not carry large amounts of cash.
- Avoid bringing weaponry on campus.
- Avoid interactions with strangers, especially alone. If you think you are being followed, alert campus security or police.
- Stay in lighted areas and report any light outages or other hazardous conditions

immediately (Dukes & Harris, 2007).

The shared responsibility of campus safety and security is something we all must address in order to prevent negative incidents on campus. To be successful at any safety measure requires the involvement of staff, faculty and administrators, as well as our students (McGuire, 2015). Collectively, within our educational sanctuaries, we as key stakeholders are the biggest asset to crime prevention so we must educate others.

As colleges, we must ensure proper policies are in place to help us navigate unforeseen circumstances, as well as provide victims with every available resource on and off campus to ensure they receive the appropriate support. This requires campus agencies to have active partnerships with local victims' services offices, rape and general crisis centers, law enforcement agencies and other community outreach agencies to ensure the best

services are accessible. As staff, we work as knowledge ambassadors to inform our students of the campus safety and security measures; therefore, it is essential we know the applicable rules, policies and procedures related to such, as well as the appropriate places to refer students given the unexpected event (Myer, James and Moulton, 2011).

Most importantly, as Association of Florida Colleges' partner institutions, we must work collaboratively to refine the best practices related to safety, security, risk management, emergency preparedness and crime/loss prevention. A collaborative, team effort related to these concerns will proactively prepare us for the unforeseen. Herein lies the concept behind this commission! Building and maintaining campus safety is a team effort, we all must play our part in order to make it work. Come join our team!

Sources Referenced

- Dukes, C. M., & Harris, T. (2007). Safety in the Community College Environment. In *Creating and Maintaining Safe College Campuses: A Sourcebook for Evaluating & Enhancing Safety Programs* (pp. 135-149). Sterling, Virginia: Stylus Publishing LLC.
- Langford, L. (2012, May). *Preventing Violence and Promoting Safety in Higher Education Settings: Overview of a Comprehensive Approach*. Retrieved October 22, 2015, from <http://oregonsatf.org/wp-content/uploads/2012/05/preventing-violence-promoting-safety-highered.pdf>
- McGuire, P. (2015, August 30). *Safety and Security: Not Just for College Students*. Retrieved October 23, 2015, from http://www.huffingtonpost.com/patricia-mcguire/safety-and-security-not-j_b_8061608.html
- Myer, R. A., James, R. K., & Moulton, P. (2011). Duller Than Dirt...More Valuable Than Gold: Policies and Procedures. In *This is NOT a Fire Drill: Crisis Intervention and Prevention on College Campuses* (pp.81-82). Hoboken, New Jersey: John Wiley & Sons Inc.
- Reporting Abuse of Children and Vulnerable Adults*. (2013). Retrieved October 23, 2015 from <https://www.dcf.state.fl.us/programs/abuse/publications/mandatedreporters.pdf>
- Shannon, H. D., & Smith, R. C. (2006, Winter). A Case for the Community College's Open Access Mission. *New Directions for Community Colleges*, 136, 15-21. doi:10.1002/cc.255



Campus Safety Commission

Publication Edited by: Amanda Hernandez, Communications Coordinator Santa Fe College

Photo Credit: Aaron Daye, Multimedia Specialist, Santa Fe College