

## **Report of the Gubernatorial Task Force for University Campus Safety**

### **Introduction**

On April 30, 2007, Governor Charlie Crist and U.S. Health and Human Services Secretary Mike Leavitt met to discuss safety and security on university and college campuses and the actions taken in Florida following the tragedy at Virginia Polytechnic Institute and State University ("Virginia Tech"). Secretary Leavitt, accompanied by representatives of the U.S. Secretary of Education and the U. S. Attorney General, is meeting with other America governors to determine measures taken to improve security and response to crisis situations on university campuses throughout the country. Secretary Leavitt is asking each governor to provide recommendations which will be consolidated into a final report to President George W. Bush.

In response to this request and to assist Florida's colleges and universities, Governor Crist signed Executive Order 07-77, establishing the Gubernatorial Task Force for University Campus Safety, and Executive Order 07-78, establishing the organizational structure of that Task Force (Appendix A). In recognition of the expected submission date of the Federal report, Governor Crist directed that the report and recommendations be completed by May 24, 2007.

### **Task Force Membership**

As originally established, the Task Force is composed of nine members:

- Bob Butterworth, Secretary of the Department of Children and Families, Chairman
- William H. Janes, Director of Florida's Office of Drug Control, Vice Chairman
- Mark Rosenberg, Chancellor of the State University System
- Gerald M. Bailey, Commissioner of the Florida Department of Law Enforcement
- Craig Fugate, Director of the Division of Emergency Management
- Chief David L. Perry, Florida State University Police Department
- Cynthia Rogers-Vallely, representing Attorney General Bill McCollum
- Marbely Hernandez, Student Body President, Florida International University
- Kevin Letourneau, President, Student Government Association, Florida Community College at Jacksonville

Personnel from the Department of Children and Families, the Office of Drug Control, the Florida Department of Law Enforcement, and the State University System provided staff support for the Task Force.

### **Task Force Charge**

In Executive Order 07-77, Governor Crist specified that the Task Force was formed to "help improve communication and collaboration between education,

mental health, law enforcement, and emergency management agencies.” To carry out this responsibility, he indicated that the Task Force would “be advisory in nature and created for the following purposes”:

- Identifying students who pose a risk; improving information sharing among mental health and health professionals, education, and law enforcement within the parameters of applicable Federal law;
- Identifying methods of notification during emergency situations on school campuses;
- Identifying strategies for improving cross-agency communication;
- Identifying necessary improvements for training of law enforcement officials and first responders to crisis situations.

### **Task Force Action Plan**

Chairman Butterworth approved the initial action plan to guide the fact-finding and reporting by the Task Force. The action plan included:

- a review of the recent survey conducted by the Florida Department of Law Enforcement on participation of colleges and universities in Florida’s seven Regional Domestic Security Task Forces;
- a survey of all Florida colleges and universities;
- public hearings throughout Florida with community, college, and university presentations on the issues identified in the Executive Order. The Task Force provided the opportunity for public comment during each meeting.

The Task Force identified the following additional topics on which to include recommendations in this final report:

#### **Prevention**

- On-campus efforts
  - Mental health and wellness activities
  - Campus security and law enforcement policies/procedures/practices
  - Enhancement of the physical security of the educational institution
  - Recognition of the role of faculty, staff, and students in prevention and early identification of students in crisis
- Off-campus issues
  - Mental health component of Federal and State gun laws
  - Virginia Governor’s Executive Order
  - Impact of HIPAA/FERPA
  - State statutes or local ordinances
  - Local mental health system

#### **Intervention**

- Early identification of mental health risks and response
- Communication and information sharing within and between campus agencies

- Legal issues

#### Response

- Initial campus response to mental health issues and crisis situations
- Law enforcement response to crisis
- Community emergency response capabilities
- Interoperable communications
- Training of first responders
- Emergency notification procedures
- Integration of National Incident Command System into university/college response
- Institutional emergency planning capabilities
- Practical exercises
- Linkages to the Regional Domestic Security Task Forces

#### Aftermath

- Post-incident capabilities, including mass casualty planning
- Dealing with victims and families
- Community response/community recovery
- After-action review and reporting.

#### **Task Force Meetings**

The Task Force held six public meetings:

- On May 3, 2007, at Florida State University Police Department, Tallahassee
- On May 9, 2007, at Stetson University College of Law, Gulfport
- On May 11, 2007, at University of North Florida Performing Arts Center, Jacksonville
- On May 16, 2007, at Broward Community College Institute of Public Safety, Davie
- On May 18, 2007, at Florida Agricultural and Mechanical University College of Law, Orlando
- On May 23, 2007, at the State House Office Building, Reed Hall, Tallahassee

The Task Force heard presentations and testimony from 83 individuals who were invited or requested the opportunity to speak. An additional 12 citizens offered comments during the Public Comments section of the meetings. Appendices B-G reflect the formal agenda, scheduled speakers, and minutes for each of the Task Force sessions.

Additionally, the Task Force utilized two surveys to gain additional information. The first, developed and administered by the Florida Department of Law Enforcement immediately after the murders at Virginia Tech, focused on the

participation of colleges and universities in Florida's seven Regional Domestic Security Task Forces. The results of that survey are included in Appendix H.

The second survey, developed by the Task Force in conjunction with the State University System, was distributed to all State University System institutions, all community colleges, and all members of the Association of Independent Colleges and Universities of Florida. Its preliminary results and the original survey instrument are reflected in Appendix I.

### **Task Force Observations**

In spite of the massive violence experienced at Virginia Tech, murders on college campuses are not a common event. U.S. Department of Education figures indicate that 17 murders occurred on campuses nationwide in 2001, and 23 murders occurred in 2002. Incidents of gun violence on campus are rare; one of the presenters placed the presence of firearms in 9% of violent crimes committed against college students. Repeatedly, presenters emphasized the importance of balanced recommendations by the Task Force and cautioned against overreaction at the State or national level.

It became clear during the Task Force hearings that mental illness is not a predictor of violence. Individuals with mental health disorders are more often the victims of violence than the perpetrators, and students abusing alcohol and other drugs are more likely to commit acts of violence than a student with a mental disorder. Initial reports about the tragedy at Virginia Tech have emphasized the importance of untreated mental illness increasing the likelihood of violence. The Task Force heard testimony that students with an untreated mental disorder are more likely to commit destructive acts than those receiving treatment.

It was apparent early in the presentations that a greater threat to American college students is suicide. Task Force members asked for additional information about campus suicides and emphasized the importance of providing increased resources for suicide prevention on campus and in our communities.

There is a significant stigma associated with mental illness which is very evident in the competitive world of higher education. Students must overcome this stigma in order to enter and remain in treatment. In dealing with the lessons of Virginia Tech and the overarching issue of safety on campus, our institutions must undertake a program of community education, ensuring that all members of the campus understand the fundamental issues about mental health, particularly the early warning signs of mental disorder. The benefits of this approach include reducing the fears associated with mental illness; empowering faculty, staff, and students to identify and act when early warning signs are observed; and creating an environment conducive to students entering treatment.

The discussion of allowing firearms on campus is fraught with emotion, particularly after the Virginia Tech tragedy. While some argue that Second

Amendment rights take precedence, case law has generally allowed narrowly drawn restrictions to locations where firearms may be carried. The critical issue is that students should feel safe on their campus without the need to arm themselves.

In making its recommendations, the Task Force recognized the dynamic nature of Florida's institutions of higher education, particularly those with multiple campuses. The Association of Independent Colleges and Universities of Florida, for instance, represents 28 institutions with a total of 180 campuses. Each campus is unique, and its differing needs in terms of safety and security must be met.

This Task Force recognized that program differences on Florida's campuses also generate a variety of issues and responses. Students in graduate programs, including professional schools, have stresses and needs different from those of undergraduates. Students with disabilities, who are hearing or sight impaired, or who come from different cultures have special needs, especially when the institution conducts awareness programs or when these students face crisis. Students who have separated from a college or university and seek readmission must also be considered as we seek a comprehensive approach to campus safety and security.

The Task Force heard discussions about the role the media play in sensationalizing these events. Testimony indicated that the longer the same story is played on television and appears in the other media, the more likely a "copy cat" incident will occur. Further, the media's intense, repeated reporting of an incident, coupled with the use of self-proclaimed experts, simply adds to the fear in a community following an event. While the public has a right to know what has occurred, the media's reporting must be more responsible.

The Task Force encountered many issues that impact the campus environment at all levels of education. Substance abuse, suicide, gang violence, domestic and dating violence, and bullying contribute to an environment which threatens the safety and well-being of Florida's students of all ages.

### **Task Force Recommendations**

#### **Charge 1: Identifying students who pose risk and improving information sharing**

Positive interaction between a student "who poses a risk" and faculty, staff, and other students can be the best method for early identification and intervention. Faculty, staff, and students will frequently observe behavior that is beyond the norm. For instance, essays and term papers submitted by an affected student may contain disturbing or threatening remarks and be early indicators of a problem. Too often, however, faculty, staff, and students will not know early warning signs, are unaware of procedures for referral of students in crisis, or do not want to become involved because they fear their action will result in punitive

action by the administration or retribution against them. Additionally, they may be unsure of their evaluation of the student and hesitate to become involved.

During the course of the Task Force review, a number of colleges and universities reflected on their means to both identify students who pose a risk and ensure the sharing of information between the most critical and necessary institutional entities. Such methods seemed to fall into two areas. First, as is the case of Florida State University, a designated team of trained individuals, in this case a University police officer and a doctoral level psychology student, will respond to a specific individual or incident, conduct an evaluation, and take appropriate action, including referral for treatment or taking the student into custody.

Second, a multidisciplinary crisis management team, including members from the university police or security department, student affairs, residential housing, counseling center, legal counsel, and others, review and evaluate specific individuals and incidents on a regular basis (e.g., meetings are held every week to discuss individuals, incidents, or issues that have arisen since the last meeting) and channel the institution's coordinated response. The important point in this approach is the immediate integration of information and services through the involvement of key players from a variety of university offices. The Case Management Team at Rollins College and the Crisis Response Team at the University of Florida offer "best practice" examples of such integration of information and services on campus.

It should be noted that a person can be "at risk" for many reasons. It becomes important for colleges and universities to be able to identify and respond to both at risk students and non-students in an all-hazard context.

**The Task Force recommends:**

- **That the United States Department of Education develop and promulgate a series of best practices for universities and colleges to use in preventing, intervening in, responding to, and recovering from crisis situations.**
- **That each college and university develop, promulgate, and market 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. Completion of this program should be required for all staff and faculty, including adjunct instructors.**
- **That each college and university develop a multidisciplinary crisis management team, integrating and ensuring communication between the university law enforcement or campus security agency, student affairs, residential housing,**

**counseling center, health center, legal counsel, and any other appropriate campus entities to review individuals and incidents which indicate “at risk” behavior. The team should facilitate the sharing of information, timely and effective intervention, and a coordinated response when required.**

**Charge 2: Identifying methods of emergency notification**

A number of colleges and universities appearing before the Task Force discussed their current methods of notification of the campus community about emergencies. These included e-mail, text messages, university websites, reverse 9-1-1 systems, and audio alerts systems, such as the use of a campus emergency siren.

The Task Force also heard from experts in emergency notification technology, including Dr. James Pearson, who has been involved in a study of emergency communications systems for Florida university and college campuses conducted by the University of Central Florida and funded by the U.S. Department of Homeland Security. A summary of the report of this group and recommendations for future action are included in Appendix J.

The UCF study provides important recommendations:

1. There are three key requirements for an alert system:
  - a. Alert as many people as possible in a normal condition. The goal is 90% of the community within five minutes.
  - b. Alert as many people as quickly as possible without power and phone system.
  - c. Constantly deliver alerts to specific groups of people in different locations.
2. There is no single design for an all-hazard alert system on a dynamic campus; each campus is unique.
3. Multiple capabilities are required for an all-hazard alert system to cope with the wide range of dynamic situations and behaviors on campus. Special attention must be given to disabled or visually or hearing impaired faculty, staff, students, or visitors.
4. No Florida college can currently effectively communicate in real time across a large section of their campus(es) in most emergency scenarios.
5. Significant new funding is needed to implement an all-hazard approach at all Florida schools.

The UCF Emergency Campus Communications (EmergComm) Program team has recommended Phase 2 of this research project, which would cost slightly more than \$1 million. If funded, this phase will ensure:

- the implementation of operational emergency response plans at all Florida’s public universities and community colleges;

- the continued build-out of emergency alert/communications capability at the 10 SUS institutions and 8 community colleges that participated in Phase 1; and
- expansion to the remaining SUS campus and community colleges that were not participants in Phase 1.

These discussions made several points about mass emergency notification systems clear to the members of the Task Force. First, our colleges and universities are being bombarded with vendors offering technological solutions to this issue, yet no clear minimum standards for acquisition or best practices for their use exist at the national or state level. Second, any effective system must be continuously available; have redundancy in communications capabilities, probably requiring the use of multiple technologies; meet the capacity requirements of any transmitting systems, such as the local telephone company; be time sensitive; and be built to handle the campus's worst-case scenario. Third, the system must take into account members of and visitors to the university community who have disabilities, are visually or hearing impaired, or for whom English is a second language. Fourth, messages sent out over the system must be clear, easily understandable, and specifically direct the actions of the recipient. Finally, local off-campus emergency responders, as well as those on campus, must be aware of the notification system.

Director Craig Fugate, Director of the Division of Emergency Management and a member of this Task Force, reminded the group of the basic tenets of an effective warning system:

- the event must be detected
- the decision to warn the public must be made
- the public must receive and understand the warning
- the public must have somewhere safe to go or some action to take
- the public must act

**The Task Force recommends:**

- **That Florida's Domestic Security State Working Group articulate standards for emergency notification systems and devices within 45 days of the submission of this report and provide that information to the State University System, the Division of Community Colleges, and the Association of Independent Colleges and Universities of Florida. The Working Group should also promulgate a "best practices" guide for the use, maintenance, and frequency of testing of such systems.**
- **That the State University System encourage the University of Central Florida to continue to seek funding for the Emergency Campus Communications (EmergComm) Program from appropriate funding sources.**



- **That, upon the addition of any emergency notification systems or devices, the individual institution undertake an extensive awareness campaign to educate the campus community about its use.**
- **That, upon the addition of any emergency notification systems or devices, the individual institution provide emergency notification procedures to all emergency responders in the campus and adjacent communities.**

### **Charge 3: Identifying strategies for improving cross-agency communication**

Difficulties in communication occur not only on college campuses, but also between campus organizations and their local partners. Response to a critical event or a disaster on campus requires that outside responding agencies have a working knowledge of the campus geography, buildings, emergency procedures, and citizens. Failure to involve local first-response agencies can lead to failures at the time their assistance is needed most-during a crisis.

To that end, local first-response agencies, including local law enforcement, fire-rescue, and emergency management personnel should be involved in the development of the critical incident and emergency management plan for each institution. Further, each of these agencies should have access to maps of each campus and plans for each building. Any changes in the plans, geography of the campus, or building infrastructure must be immediately reported to the emergency response agencies. Finally, local agencies should be involved in any drills, tabletop, or practical exercises used to test the institution's emergency plans.

A critical element is the ongoing communication between administrators within the university and their local counterparts. When additional resources are needed or outside agency involvement in an incident is expected, colleges and universities should have formal support agreements with municipal, county, or, in the case of health services and the counseling center, private sector providers.

An institutional emergency management director should be designated and assigned the responsibility for ongoing communication with outside agencies and the development, implementation, and maintenance of an effective emergency management plan. The campus emergency management director should participate in the Regional Domestic Security Task Force to facilitate communication across agencies.

#### **The Task Force recommends:**

- **That each college and university involve off-campus emergency response agencies in developing and exercising its emergency management and crisis response plans.**

- **That each college and university provide copies of its campus map, building plans, and other important emergency documents to local emergency response agencies. Such copies should be in the medium most acceptable to use by that outside agency.**
- **That, within legal guidelines governing health and mental health information, campus mental health centers develop a protocol for the exchange of information with local mental health providers regarding individuals who might pose a danger to themselves or others.**
- **That each university and college law enforcement/campus security organization develop a structured protocol for the sharing of information with their local community counterparts which would be relevant to safety and health within both the campus and local community environments.**

#### **Charge 4: Identifying improvements in training for first responders**

Under current Florida law, sworn law enforcement officers, including those on Florida's campuses, receive a minimum of 770 hours of basic recruit training before they are allowed to perform law enforcement duties. Subsequently, they are required to receive a minimum of 40 continuing education hours (referred to as Mandatory Retraining) every four years and to qualify at least annually with their firearms. Most departments have internal training requirements related to continuing education that exceed those of the State.

Current curriculum for Florida's Basic Law Enforcement Program does not include any information about policing on a college campus. With Florida's 11 State University System institutions, 28 community colleges, and many private colleges and universities, an understanding of appropriate police responses to issues and incidents on these campuses is vital for all Florida law enforcement officers. Additionally, specialized or advanced training programs under the authority of the Florida Criminal Justice Standards and Training Commission should be offered for Florida's university law enforcement officers. Advanced training courses may be utilized for Salary Incentive Program reimbursement for attending officers.

As a result of the school shooting at Columbine High School in 1999, most law enforcement agencies adopted an "active shooter" response, which emphasized the utilization of the first officers on the scene to engage the armed individual, rather than wait for Special Weapons and Tactics (SWAT) personnel. The incident at Columbine showed that the traditional technique of initial responding officers containing the suspect while waiting for more tactically trained officers, particularly when they were drawn from multiple areas, could result in the additional loss of life.

In addition to continuing to train all law enforcement personnel - especially those who might be responding to a violent confrontation on a campus - in these tactics, agencies should develop methods by which the emergency medical response to such scenes can be integrated with the police response. This integration and coordination will allow for more expeditious triage and on-scene treatment of victims. An application of this approach is being developed by the Region 5 (Central Florida) Regional Domestic Security Task Force, in conjunction with the Orange County Sheriff's Office, and can serve as a "best practice" for other law enforcement agencies to adopt.

The Florida Crisis Intervention Team (CIT) Coalition has fostered the implementation of Crisis Intervention Teams in many of Florida's communities. CIT is an effective police response program designed for first responders who handle crisis calls involving people with mental illness, including those with co-occurring substance abuse disorders. The program emphasizes a partnership between law enforcement, the mental health and substance abuse treatment systems, mental health advocacy groups, and consumers of mental health services and their families. Florida's program is modeled after the CIT training implemented in Memphis, Tennessee, in the late 1980s. The program focuses on giving first responding officers the skills and knowledge that will allow them to intervene in situations involving people in a mental health crisis, including those with co-occurring substance abuse disorders. This training enables law enforcement to respond to these situations in a safer, more effective manner and to divert individuals needing mental health services from the criminal justice system. The CIT approach is a "best practice" already in use in a number of campus agencies, including the University of Florida, University of Central Florida, Florida International University, Pensacola Junior College, University of West Florida, University of South Florida, Florida Gulf Coast University, Florida Atlantic University, and St. Petersburg College.

**The Task Force recommends:**

- **That the Florida Criminal Justice Standards and Training Commission identify Subject Matter Experts to develop learning goals and objectives on policing the campus community to be included in the minimum standards for all recruits attending the Basic Law Enforcement Program.**
- **That the Florida Criminal Justice Standards and Training Commission identify Subject Matter Experts to develop an Advanced or Specialized Training Program focusing specifically on those individuals employed as certified law enforcement officers on campus.**
- **That all agencies charged with responding to violent events on a university or college campus train and exercise their personnel in the Active Shooter response and that each**

**agency develop and train to a protocol which will allow the integration of the medical response with the law enforcement response.**

- **That all campus law enforcement and campus security agencies receive Crisis Intervention Team training and implement appropriate procedures for CIT-based responses.**
- **That local law enforcement agencies which provide daily or emergency support to a campus be encouraged to adopt the CIT model and jointly participate in such training.**

### **Additional Issues: Prevention**

#### **Campus Mental Health and Wellness Activities**

The Task Force heard varied testimony regarding the responsibilities of colleges and universities in providing mental health care. The costs for these services are significant, especially considering the number of counselors recommended, which is beyond the current financial capability of many of our institutions. However, the consensus suggested that colleges and universities must provide access to these services through their own counseling centers or agreements with community mental health providers. The existence of an adequately staffed and funded counseling center involved in its community is critical to the well-being of the campus and the positive environment so important to the higher education experience. Importantly, counseling staff must be actively involved in crisis intervention planning, intervention, and response. The staffing standard recommended by the International Association of Counseling Services for mental health professionals in a campus setting is no more than one counselor for each 1,500 students. During its deliberations, the Task Force identified few of Florida's colleges or universities which met this standard.

Prevention of mental illness and crisis situations should be the major focus of each university's efforts. A comprehensive campus mental health program, including efforts to prevent underage drinking, alcohol and other substance abuse, suicides, bullying, and domestic and dating violence, as well as providing for appropriate intervention, is necessary for a positive, healthy institutional climate. As with physical health, treatment services for mental illness should be available, confidential, and well known by all members of the campus.

Mutual aid agreements may be a partial solution in providing adequate mental health services, especially in times of crisis. For many years, law enforcement organizations have used the concept of mutual aid agreements to allow a response from neighboring police agencies during times of need or crisis. The formalization of such a relationship among campus mental health agencies and mental health providers would facilitate effective support during times when one institution's resources are overwhelmed.

It should also be noted that, from the information that the Task Force received, monitoring of "at risk" students is limited to those in immediate crisis. Long-term

follow-up and treatment are difficult for most institutions to maintain. Additionally, after release of the patient, coordination between off-campus Baker Act (Florida Mental Health Act) receiving facilities and campus authorities is at times poor. Reportedly, this was the case at Virginia Tech where there was inadequate follow-up after an emergency mental health evaluation.

Peer group support systems, including student-only group counseling activities, are an important component of a comprehensive campus mental health system. Students afraid of being stigmatized by their illness are frequently much more likely to interact with others suffering from similar difficulties. The Active Minds Program, active on 65 campuses in 25 states, including the University of South Florida, is one of the “best practices” worthy of review by other institutions.

**The Task Force recommends:**

- **That the Federal government identify new initiatives for funding college mental health efforts and expand existing programs, such as the Garrett Lee Smith Act for suicide prevention.**
- **That the Federal government increase its support for national initiatives in preventing underage drinking, substance abuse, suicide, bullying, domestic and dating violence, and other violent or destructive behaviors and that it include K-12 schools, colleges and universities in both its studies and its funding.**
- **That the statewide strategies for improving mental health services particularly target K-12, college, and university initiatives in preventing underage drinking, substance abuse, suicide, bullying, domestic and dating violence, and other violent or destructive behavior.**
- **That the State University System, the Division of Community Colleges, and the Association of Independent Colleges and Universities of Florida determine ways to increase the funding dedicated to campus mental health and wellness needs, including community education.**
- **That the State University System, the Division of Community Colleges, and the Association of Independent Colleges and Universities of Florida jointly develop effective, appropriate training material for senior campus executives and Board of Trustee members that expand the capacity of each institution’s top leadership to be proactive in its campus safety and security efforts.**

- That the State University System examine additional funding sources for mental health and safety activities, including modifying state fee caps to fund student counseling and health initiatives and assessing a security/technology fee.
- That the State University System, Division of Community Colleges, and the Association of Independent Colleges and Universities of Florida examine the feasibility of mutual aid agreements between campuses and with local community resources to provide or augment mental health services.
- That the individual colleges and universities develop and include an “Introduction to Mental Health” course as part of its undergraduate curriculum as part of its efforts to educate all members of the campus community.
- That each individual college and university implement programs to prevent underage drinking, substance abuse, suicide, bullying, domestic and dating violence, and other violent or destructive behavior.
- That the individual institutions encourage and foster the development of organized peer mental health support groups on campus.

#### Accreditation Standards

Presenters to the Task Force discussed several accreditation processes. The first, administered on most campuses by the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools, focuses on academic issues and related administrative support. Security and safety standards currently are not subject to review by this group.

In Florida, two types of accreditation can be utilized by law enforcement agencies on campus. Both the Commission for the Accreditation of Law Enforcement Agencies (CALEA), a national accrediting body, and the Commission for Florida Law Enforcement Accreditation (CFA) have adopted standards that represent current professional law enforcement practices. The latter process is more Florida-specific and less voluminous than the standards adopted by CALEA. Currently, the University of North Florida, University of South Florida, University of Florida, and Florida State University hold CFA accreditation.

Finally, the International Association of Campus Law Enforcement Administrators (IACLEA) is developing its own process of accreditation. The standards developed by IACLEA will focus on the best practices in campus law enforcement and security. IACLEA has five pilot agencies participating in their

initial accreditation process and has already received thirteen applications from institutions seeking accreditation.

**The Task Force recommends:**

- **That the Chancellor of the State University System, in conjunction with the university and college presidents, encourage the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools to develop and include safety and security standards in their accreditation process.**
- **That the remaining universities in the State University System and any other institutions whose officers have full law enforcement authority be strongly encouraged to seek accreditation through the Commission for Florida Law Enforcement Accreditation.**
- **That, upon development of its accreditation standards by the International Association of Campus Law Enforcement Accreditation, all Florida campus law enforcement agencies, including those represented by the State University System, the State Division of Community Colleges, and the Association of Independent Colleges and Universities of Florida, be encouraged to successfully complete that process.**

University Police

During each public session, the Task Force heard concerns about the recruitment, retention, and number of officers available on Florida's State University System campuses. Campus officials believe that the current average beginning salary of a University Police Officer (\$35,239, ranging from a low of \$30,109 at the University of West Florida to a high of \$40,082 at Florida International University) is not competitive with the current municipal/county police market. The exclusion of University Police Officers from proposed annual increases for other state law enforcement positions further inhibits their ability to retain seasoned personnel. The inability of our universities to maintain filled positions has led to a reduction in services and police response capabilities on some of Florida's campuses. A number of universities have also experienced a significant reduction in the community-oriented police practices for which university law enforcement is well known.

The Task Force heard a number of methods by which trained officers could be recruited into university law enforcement. At the University of North Florida, for instance, the University Police Department recruits heavily from the retired ranks of the Duval County Sheriff's Office, an agency which is not a member of the Florida Retirement System (FRS). This approach could easily be adopted as a "best practice" by other State University System agencies.

Additionally, the International Association of Chiefs of Police has generally recommended a ratio of two officers per 1,000 as a standard for municipal policing. The ratio of officers on Florida's campuses falls significantly below that standard. Currently, there is no specific standard for the number of police officers on Florida's campuses.

**The Task Force recommends:**

- **That the State University System conduct a salary survey of Florida State University System police positions to develop a pay package to be proposed to the 2008 Florida Legislature.**
- **That each university police department develop a recruitment strategy to target potential police officers, such as those retired from other law enforcement agencies or the military, which are more likely to be retained, to fill their vacancies.**
- **That the State University System, working with the Chiefs of Police at Florida's 11 universities and with the International Association of Campus Law Enforcement Administrators, develop a standard recommending the minimum level of officers for a campus and a standard of officers per 1,000 campus population. Both standards should be adaptable to the actual service population of the department and the geography of the campus.**
- **That the U.S. Department of Justice increase the funding for its Community Oriented Policing Services (COPS) Office. The Department should give particular emphasis to funding for personnel, technology, training, and innovative community-based programs for campus law enforcement agencies and local law enforcement agencies serving a university or college population**

Physical Security of the Educational Institution

Law enforcement has long stressed to business owners and private citizens that formal physical security assessments could identify weaknesses in facility security. Corrective actions resulting from these assessments would reduce the opportunity for crime. Crime prevention personnel on many campuses offer this service, and the Region 7 (Southeast) Regional Domestic Security Task Force has completed critical infrastructure assessments on three of the institutions within its jurisdiction.

A number of campuses have already implemented systems providing for immediate contact with the police during emergencies. Florida State University



and Florida International University, for instance, have a series of emergency telephones, each designated by a flashing blue light. Other campuses have installed emergency alarms in classrooms and other critical locations.

As the Task Force discussed efforts which could be taken to prevent the occurrence of a violent act, it became apparent that the physical environment of an institution of higher education also contributed to campus crime. Crime prevention experts have held that improved lighting; “target hardening” of buildings, parking lots, and other facilities; surveillance cameras; card-controlled access to buildings; and the design of sidewalks and roadways could help reduce crime. Many campuses use this approach of “Crime Prevention through Environment Design,” and it should be the standard in planning, architecture, and facility design.

**The Task Force recommends:**

- **That each college and university conduct a critical infrastructure assessment using trained security specialists.**
- **That each college and university incorporate traditional Crime Prevention through Environmental Design (CPTED) processes in the reconstruction and refurbishment of any campus buildings, as well as in design of all new buildings.**
- **That, where feasible, each college and university ensure appropriate physical security devices, including surveillance cameras and card-controlled access to facilities, are in place.**
- **That each college and university ensure that equipment to summon assistance in case of an emergency is operational and strategically located.**

The Role of Faculty, Staff, and Students

Too frequently, members of the campus and surrounding community fail to accept their responsibility for the welfare of others. This is especially true if the situation involves mental health and violence. Each campus must define and emphasize the appropriate roles for faculty, staff, and students.

The Task Force heard recurring testimony that faculty were focused on the academic and research nature of their jobs, to the exclusion of other responsibilities. At the same time, however, they have a critical role in developing students, enhancing the value of the college experience, and recognizing the early warning symptoms that have become evident in students having difficulties with the stresses of college life.

Many presenters emphasized the role students have in mental health prevention and treatment. They are in the classrooms, residence halls, and fraternities and sororities and are best able to observe students in distress. With proper education, they can provide a timely intervention, to include making a referral to proper resources. Engaging students in mental health prevention and intervention provides a unique challenge. Students must not feel threatened if they report a student “at risk.” Student information must also be conveyed to the campus crisis intervention team where decisions regarding a coordinated university response can be made.

The Task Force cannot emphasize too strongly that students often know when a situation on campus is dangerous. They may hesitate to act because they are unaware of procedures to report a dangerous situation or they are concerned about retribution to themselves or to the person causing the concern. Testimony reinforced the important role that students have in safety and security. They are making a major investment in their education; they are major stakeholders on our campuses. Their understanding of procedures to protect themselves and other is paramount to campus safety and security; as a “best practice” noted by the Task Force, the University of Florida distributes a wallet sized card containing emergency numbers, including a number for rumor control during emergencies, and websites to all incoming students. If the campus is positive and supportive, students will come forward to help themselves and other students. If it is not, students will withdraw and remain uninvolved.

The success of a campus early-warning system rests upon several factors. First, faculty, staff, and students must be educated about mental health issues, resources available, and the specifics of making a referral. The process must ensure that students are not over-referred because they are having a “bad day.” Success will rely upon an active and aggressive marketing approach aimed at all elements of campus society.

Second, those faculty, staff, and students who become involved in prevention, early identification, and intervention, must have confidence in the system. They must believe the system will offer necessary and professional assistance, that the information of all involved is appropriately confidential, and that the action taken by the university will not be punitive against the concerned student. At the same time, the faculty, staff, and students should receive appropriate feedback on the results of their referral.

**The Task Force recommends:**

- **That each university or college administration, faculty senate, and student government promulgate formal statements identifying their appropriate role in campus mental health.**
- **That the State University System and the Division of Community Colleges jointly develop clearly written desktop/internet reference**

**materials and scenario-based training materials concerning mental health early warning signs and campus intervention and response procedures which can then be tailored by individual institutions for use by their faculty.**

- **That the State University System, the Division of Community Colleges, and the Association of Independent Colleges and Universities of Florida each undertake a study of the level of student involvement in Florida colleges and universities and provide recommendations to develop supportive campus climates that will, result in strong student participation in daily activities and decisions affecting their campus life, particularly safety and security.**

#### Florida's Gun Laws

Shortly before the murders at Virginia Tech, Cho Seung-Hui purchased a firearm from a registered firearms dealer in Virginia, showing appropriate identification in the process. Information developed after the murders indicated that Cho had exhibited a pattern of disturbed behavior and had, in fact, been ordered by a county magistrate to undergo a mental evaluation in December 2005. On April 30, 2007, Virginia Governor Timothy M. Kaine issued an Executive Order to close an apparent loophole in Virginia law and include both inpatient and outpatient involuntary admissions to a facility as disqualifiers for the purchase of a firearm in Virginia. Consequently, as part of its work, the Task Force on University Campus Safety examined Florida's current firearms law for any needed enhancements.

In Florida, upon receiving the request for approval to transfer a firearm from a federally licensed firearms dealer, the Florida Department of Law Enforcement (FDLE) is responsible for checking appropriate Federal and state databases, including the National Crime Information Center, Florida Crime Information Center, and the FBI National Instant Check System, to determine the eligibility of the buyer. Reasons for non-approval include:

- Felony conviction
- Criminal felon registrant
- Active warrant
- Adjudication withheld on a felony (or misdemeanor domestic and dating violence charge), and three years have not elapsed since the completion date of any court provisions
- Illegal alien status
- Domestic or repeat violence injunction where the subject was notified of the hearing
- Unresolved felony arrest or unresolved pending felony prosecution
- Conviction of a misdemeanor crime of domestic and dating violence
- Adjudicated as mentally defective or committed to a mental institution by a court of law.

It is important to note that Florida law requires the existence of a judicial finding of “mentally defective” or an involuntary commitment order, including commitment for mental defectiveness, mental illness, or substance abuse, to preclude a purchaser from buying a firearm from a licensed dealer. The Mental Competence Database was established on February 1, 2006, to allow FDLE to assess the judicial finding criteria for non-approval. The Clerk of Court is responsible for submitting information acquired from judicial mental health orders to this database within 30 days from the adjudication or commitment. Under Florida law, the distinction between “inpatient” and “outpatient” is not an issue as long as there is a judicial determination.

Under Section 790.065, F.S., Federally licensed gun dealers must call FDLE for approval before transferring a firearm. Private individuals who do not possess a Federal firearms dealer license are not required to conduct a criminal or mental health records check before selling a firearm.

During its public sessions, the Task Force received presentations from both the Florida Department of Law Enforcement and the Florida Association of Court Clerks and Comptrollers. Additionally, a speaker during the public session at the University of North Florida called for allowing concealed weapon permit holders to carry a concealed handgun on Florida’s college campuses.

The Florida Association of Court Clerks and Comptrollers has indicated that the demographic information received from the courts is sometimes incomplete. Without a fingerprint-based identification system, positive identification of the specific individual during the FDLE records check is not possible. To that end, FACCC, in conjunction with FDLE, is establishing a working group to: 1) examine State law to ensure that it encompasses all Federal disqualifiers on mental health issues and that no gaps exist; and 2) ensure that the law enables the clerks to collect and maintain all necessary demographic information to allow FDLE to correctly identify those who are prohibited from purchasing firearms. In addition to FACCC and FDLE, this working group will include representatives of the Florida Prosecuting Attorneys Association, Florida Public Defenders Association, judiciary, National Rifle Association, and the Office of State Courts Administrator.

**The Task Force recommends:**

- **That the report and recommendations of the working group led by the Florida Association of Court Clerks and Comptrollers be submitted to the Governor and Legislature for consideration.**
- **That this working group include at least one representative from a mental health advocacy group.**

### Impact of HIPAA/FERPA

As part of its review of information sharing practices within the institutions of higher education in the State, the Task Force received testimony regarding two Federal laws: the Health Insurance Portability and Accountability Act of 1996 (HIPAA), which governs the use and disclosure of private health information, and the Family Education Rights and Privacy Act of 1974 (FERPA, also known as the Buckley Amendment), which protects the privacy of student educational records. The Task Force heard a variety of interpretations regarding the impact of these laws on the exchange of information when dealing with “at risk” students.

Currently, there are conflicting interpretations of these privacy laws. As a result, definitive interpretations of these laws should be provided by the appropriate Federal agencies in order to facilitate timely sharing of information during a potential crisis situation.

The Task Force noted, however, that those most closely involved in the fields of mental health law and higher education law held that the disclosure of a student’s records without his or her consent is not prohibited “in connection with a health or safety emergency...if knowledge of the information is necessary to protect the health or safety of the student or other individuals.” Additionally, it was suggested that HIPAA regulations may not apply to all student health records. For a detailed discussion of these issues, please see “Legal Issues for Campus Administrators, Faculty, and Staff,” by Dean Darby Dickerson, in College Student Mental Health, edited by Sherry A. Benton and Stephen L. Benton (Washington, DC: NASPA, 2006). Dean Dickerson appeared before the Task Force at its meeting at Stetson University College of Law.

### **The Task Force recommends:**

- **That the State University System establish a legal working group to provide guidelines and best practices for the sharing of mental health information concerning at risk students. Membership should include representatives from the Division of Community Colleges, the Association of Independent Colleges and Universities of Florida, the Center for Excellence in Higher Education Law and Policy at Stetson University College of Law, and the Department of Mental Health Law and Policy at the Florida Mental Health Institute.**

### Support of the Local Mental Health System

During the course of its work, the Task Force heard from representatives of a number of non-campus mental health groups, including the National Alliance for Mental Illness and the Florida Council for Community Mental Health. Each stressed a number of key issues, including the need for increased community support for Florida’s college students. The age of those in college coincides with the average age for onset for serious mental illnesses. Additionally, more students are entering college already having a diagnosis of a serious mental

illness and requiring a treatment plan. These mental health experts and advocates have suggested that untreated mental illness is Florida's #1 public health crisis.

The Task Force reviewed information that spoke to the lack of financial support for Florida's efforts at mental health. According to the data received, of all states, Florida ranks:

- 48<sup>th</sup> in per capita mental health spending
- 47<sup>th</sup> in Medicaid spending per child beneficiary
- 43<sup>rd</sup> in Medicaid spending per adult beneficiary

The Task Force has also noted difficulties in student access to outside mental health resources. For example, there is usually a delay in receiving services because demand for services remains high, and available mental health practitioners are not able to handle the workload. To further complicate the matter, it is difficult for students without insurance to receive needed mental health services in the community.

**The Task Force recommends:**

- **That the Department of Children and Families through its Substance Abuse and Mental Health Program develop a long-term strategy to reduce the gap in available treatment and a 2008-2009 Legislative Budget Request which continues to address the deficiencies in Florida's mental health system.**
- **That the Department of Children and Families, in conjunction with the Florida Substance Abuse and Mental Health Corporation and advocacy and provider organizations, expand its efforts at communicating statewide strategies to improve mental health services and substance abuse.**
- **That each university and college establish/expand its formal working relationship with local mental health systems and community-based organizations in order to ensure adequate support for and communication about campus mental health issues.**

**Additional Issues: Intervention**

The additional issues concerning intervention raised in the initial Task Force discussion have been addressed earlier in this report.

**Additional Issues: Response**

**Response to Crisis**

In spite of an institution's best efforts at prevention and intervention, a critical incident or disaster may strike. It is therefore absolutely essential that all members of the campus community understand their role and responsibilities

during a crisis. While this role rests primarily with the institution and emergency response agencies, it is imperative that faculty, staff, and students recognize the potential for an incident to occur and consider their own response to critical incidents on campus.

**The Task Force recommends:**

- **That colleges and universities include responsibilities for faculty and students in their emergency operations and response plans.**
- **That each institution develop an awareness campaign to encourage faculty, staff, and students to become familiar with the university's emergency operations critical incident plans and to develop a personal plan of action for response to crisis.**

Interoperable Communications

Since the communications difficulties experienced by emergency personnel on September 11, 2001, America's first responders have been sensitive to developing communications systems which allow communication between multiple responding agencies. In order to ensure the safety of Florida's campuses and first responders, it is critical that campus emergency personnel are able to communicate with responding personnel from off-campus agencies. One State university police official noted that the State Law Enforcement Radio System (SLERS) equipment carried by his personnel had limited capabilities within university buildings and could not communicate with off-campus agencies; consequently, his personnel carried other radios equipped with the channels of outside agencies.

**The Task Force recommends:**

- **That each college and university, both public and private, conduct a survey of its law enforcement/emergency radio system to ensure its functionality in the campus environment, the adequacy of its coverage throughout campus, and its operational compatibility with the radio systems and frequencies utilized by local responding agencies.**

Institutional Planning Capabilities and Practical Exercises

Most campus presenting to the Task Force indicated that they had emergency plans in place. Most of these plans, however, focused on natural or larger disasters rather than critical incidents such as crimes of violence. Comprehensive university and college plans should now emphasize all hazards, including incidents of violence and terrorism. As these critical incident plans are developed and rehearsed by colleges and universities, local first responders should be involved. Details about the sequencing of outside resources, areas of responsibility, and interoperable communication must be addressed. The Crisis Management Team document provided to the Task Force by Santa Fe

Community College reflects such a comprehensive approach and is considered a “best practice.”

In developing an institution’s emergency operations or crisis response plan, it is important to recognize that the planning for these events can necessarily become a full-time job. Campus administrators to whom the title “Emergency Management Director” is added to myriad other duties will find it difficult to give this critical position the attention it requires. All campuses must recognize the importance of these duties and assign an individual whose sole job should be the development, maintenance, communication and coordination, with both on-campus and off-campus entities, of these plans. The full-time campus emergency staff member will be responsible for synchronizing communications and plans as well as re-shaping campus attitudes toward emergencies and crisis response.

During its first meeting, the Task Force received a presentation on the State University System’s Emergency Management Task Force (EMTF). In a report submitted to Chancellor Mark Rosenberg on January 19, 2007, the EMTF recommended that the State University System and its Board of Governors should:

- Ensure adequate funding for disaster recovery
- Establish an Emergency Management Trust Fund
- Fund a 100% permanent position of Director of Emergency Management/Homeland Security at each of the 11 institutions and at the Board of Governors
- Establish appropriate resources for off-site information technology management/data centers for back up of mission critical data
- Establish a SUS working group to assure ongoing coordinated pandemic and emergency preparedness planning

The use of practical exercises to “test” an emergency response plan can be problematic for some campuses, especially where the primary student population is made up of commuters. Many of the Task Force presenters expressed concern about the inconvenience caused to faculty and students. Such exercises, however, are absolutely necessary to assure that plans will work when a crisis occurs. Conducting exercises or rehearsals in a campus setting requires creativity to minimize the disruption of campus life. Reduced-scale exercises in select parts of the campus can be used to exercise plans, gain valuable lessons learned, and ensure understanding of the plans and procedures. As is the case in the development of an emergency plan, it is equally critical that such plans be exercised with responsible campus agencies and outside emergency management and public safety entities.

**The Task Force recommends:**

- **That the Department of Homeland Security add a university and college critical incident scenario to its National Planning Scenario list and develop a Universal Task List**



and a Target Capabilities list for this scenario to guide future training.

- That the State University System and the Division of Community Colleges each identify a statewide emergency management position with full-time responsibility for ongoing communication and coordination with their respective member institutions. Additionally, this position should develop a clearinghouse for innovative programs and best practices relating to school violence and campus safety issues.
- That each Florida college and university review its emergency operations plan with its local Regional Domestic Security Task Force to ensure that it adequately and comprehensively addresses a response to critical incidents on campus, as well as larger disasters, and that appropriate outside emergency response resources are involved in the development of such plans.
- That each Florida college and university designate a full-time emergency management director with the responsibility of development, maintenance, coordination, and exercise of the institution's emergency plans. This management position should be expected to participate in meetings and exercises conducted by the Regional Domestic Security Task Force and should be responsible for maintaining communication with emergency response agencies outside the campus.
- That each college and university create an emergency management council whose responsibilities include a quarterly review of campus emergency plans and activities. This council should include administrators from the highest levels of the institution, as well as appropriate representatives of the faculty, staff, and student body. To be most effective, such a body should also include representation from the local emergency management agency.
- That each Florida college and university regularly exercise its emergency operations and critical incident plans through tabletop and practical exercises to test their operational completeness and their practical application.

- **That each Florida college and university regularly involve its Regional Domestic Security Task Force in the review of its emergency plans and in the conduct of its exercises.**

#### Linkages to the Regional Domestic Security Task Forces

Immediately after September 11, 2001, in an effort to better prepare for the potential of terrorist attacks, Florida implemented a system of Regional Domestic Security Task Forces (RDSTFs), guided by a Statewide Domestic Security Oversight Board and acting under the authority of the FDLE Commissioner as the State Domestic Security Advisor. Based upon geographic regions of both FDLE and the Division of Emergency Management, the RDSTFs are responsible for coordinating resources representing a number of disciplines which might be involved in preparing for or responding to a terrorist incident, including law enforcement, fire/rescue, emergency management, education (schools/colleges/universities), private sector businesses, and public information/media. These RDSTFs allow for significant interaction and information sharing between the various entities charged with handling major disasters and, through the use of ongoing field and tabletop exercises, regularly test their knowledge, abilities, equipment, interoperable communications, and technology before a crisis occurs. As a result of the successes of this approach over the last several years, the RDSTFs are now viewed as Florida's all-hazard preparation/response/recovery framework.

During presentations before the Task Force and as reflected in the FDLE survey, it became apparent that there is varying participation by the State's colleges and universities in the RDSTFs and that there is some confusion about their appropriate role (i.e., whether their focus as the Education Committee is on training issues or on coordination of operational issues relating to campuses). Major universities, with a formal law enforcement presence on their campus, were more likely to be involved in the activities of the RDSTFs than smaller community colleges and private institutions.

#### **The Task Force recommends:**

- **That the leadership of each State university, community college, and private college and university ensure that appropriate campus personnel are involved in meetings, communications, and exercises of the Regional Domestic Security Task Force.**
- **That that the Domestic Security Oversight Council examine renaming the current Regional Domestic Security Task Force Education Committee as the "K-20 Safety and Security Committee" and clearly articulate its role as focusing on safety and security issues, including policies, operations, and infrastructure, within the educational community. Each Regional Task Force should clearly designate the specific**

**roles of the K-12 and college and university members of this vital committee.**

Integration of National Incident Management System

Central to the success of these RDSTFs has been the statewide use of the National Incident Management System (NIMS) and its Incident Command System (ICS), a model of crisis response which allows for a standardization of duties, chain of command, and coordination of resources. The implementation of such a model reduces some of the confusion and disorganization which accompanies a crisis and makes the integration of resources from a variety of responding agencies easier, more professional, and more timely.

**The Task Force recommends:**

- **That the Domestic Security Oversight Council develop a statewide all-hazards strategy for educational institutional safety and security and require NIMS compliance on all Florida campuses. To accomplish this goal, the Council should work with the State University System, the Division of Community Colleges of the Department of Education, the Association of Independent Colleges and Universities, and each Regional Domestic Security Task Force.**

**Other Issues: Aftermath**

Post Incident Capabilities

In its early discussions, the Task Force saw the issue of a campus critical incident as a four fold process: prevention, intervention, response, and aftermath. In the latter category, colleges and universities need to be aware of and have access to post-incident support. As evidenced at Virginia Tech and at other incidents of mass injuries and fatalities, local emergency medical, hospital, behavioral health, and medical examiner resources can become quickly overwhelmed by the volume of care needed. The large scale nature of a crime scene spread over a campus or with multiple sites in a building can easily stretch the investigative and crime scene resources of a campus law enforcement agency.

As part of its emergency management process, Florida has already prepared for such eventualities. The Domestic Security Oversight Board, through its catastrophic health response planning efforts, has already provided an analysis of hospital and emergency response capabilities and has plans in place which can be readily implemented. The State has also developed a Disaster Behavior Health Plan which can serve as a model for the plans of individual institutions. Similarly, existing law enforcement relationships, mutual aid agreements, and the investigative and forensic resources of the Florida Department of Law Enforcement and a number of Federal agencies offer support to their campus counterparts.

**The Task Force recommends:**

- **That, as part of its emergency and critical incident planning process, each college and university develop its plans based on existing State models, including the behavioral health and medical components, and identify resources necessary and available following a critical incident or disaster.**

Dealing with Victims and Families

A campus tragedy has a major emotional impact, not only on the victims and their families, but also on the community itself. Emotional crises are typical in such events, and even those professionals closest to the tragedy and who we expect to provide consolation and assistance to direct and indirect victims are often emotionally incapacitated and not able to do the most effective job.

The State of Florida has resources available to both assist victims and participate in the recovery of the community following a major tragedy. As the Task Force heard, the Statewide Crisis Response Team, coordinated through the Office of the Attorney General, has over 1,000 trained crisis responders statewide available to assist during crises and also capable of advising communities on the long-term impact of such events.

**The Task Force recommends:**

- **That the law enforcement and counseling components of each institution familiarize themselves with the resources of the Statewide Crisis Response Team and include its activation as part of the institution's emergency management and critical incident plans.**
- **That each institution of higher education participate in the Florida Crisis Consortium.**

Future Actions

By the nature of its charge and the time constraints placed upon its deliberations, the Task Force has focused its efforts on Florida's colleges and universities. It must be noted, however, that the concerns addressed here are just as real, timely, and deserving of attention in Florida's K-12 system. A review group similar to this Task Force should be devoted to this younger school population in the immediate future.

**The Task Force recommends:**

- **That a separate Task Force for K-12 Campus Safety be established and directed to study and provide recommendations for the enhancement of safety at Florida's kindergarten, elementary, middle, and high schools.**