PENNSYLVANIA COLLEGE CAMPUS SECURITY ASSESSMENT REPORT

PENNSYLVANIA STATE POLICE

DOMESTIC SECURITY OFFICE
RISK AND VULNERABILITY ASSESSMENT TEAM

ASSESSMENT CONDUCTED APRIL – AUGUST, 2007

Domestic Security Office
Pennsylvania State Police

In the wake of unspeakable events such as those that unfolded at Virginia Tech, the Pennsylvania State Police stand firmly committed to working with college and university officials, first responders, all levels of law enforcement, and the community to prevent a tragedy from occurring. We are dedicated to the security of students and employees of Pennsylvania's institutions of higher learning.

Law enforcement at all levels of government remain steadfast and vigilant, standing ready to respond with all available resources to save lives and protect property. We stand at the forefront in the battle against terrorism and criminal acts against our citizenry. It is my sincere hope that this report will be used as a critical tool to maintain the safety of our children and families.

Colonel Jeffrey B. Miller
Commissioner

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

REPORT ON PENNSYLVANIA COLLEGE AND UNIVERSITY CAMPUS SECURITY

Following the tragic events at Virginia Tech, the Pennsylvania State Police (PSP) Risk and Vulnerability Assessment Team (RVAT) conducted general assessments of college and university campus security across the Commonwealth. In addition to officials from the sampling of schools assessed for this report, PSP RVAT members met with representatives of the Pennsylvania State System of Higher Education, and Chiefs of Police from 14 state universities to gather input for this report.

The purpose of the assessments was to identify common vulnerabilities throughout the higher education system as it relates to physical and procedural security and provide general recommendations to mitigate those vulnerabilities. The assessments did not address the issue of behavioral management; however, did focus on the following areas:

- Security/Police Force.

- Access Controls.

- Emergency Notification System(s).

- Lockdown Procedures.

- Closing/Evacuation of the Campus.

- Family/Media Staging Areas.

College and university campuses are unique and present a difficult challenge for security professionals. Each campus has unique security challenges based on location, design, student population, and available police and security capabilities. Most campuses are intended to have an open atmosphere. The size and complexity of most campuses are similar to that of a town or small city. In some cases, campuses are spread throughout an actual city, making it very difficult to centralize security procedures. Technology and comprehensive all-hazards plans supported by training and education are crucial for an effective response during any emergency situation.

The following key recommendations for enhancing the overall security of college and university campuses are provided for further consideration:

- Colleges and universities should attempt to standardize campus police and security forces with respect to equipment, training, and policies and procedures. Private college security forces should consider Act 235, Lethal Weapons Training Act, certification as a requirement for employment to allow security personnel to stop an armed individual on campus.

- Campus police and security forces, in consultation with the campus emergency management team, need to develop a comprehensive all-hazards plan that addresses potential emergency situations that may arise on campus using the four components of all-hazards planning – Prevention, Preparedness, Response, and Recovery. The plans should be reviewed and exercised with local first responders; local, state and federal agencies; and the PSP.

- All academic buildings and dormitories should be secured with keyless locking devices that can be controlled from a remote location to control access and prevent intrusion by unauthorized persons.

- A multi-layered communication system needs to be implemented to ensure emergency communication is transmitted effectively. Text messaging is an acceptable means of mass communication provided that it is supported with other means of mass communication, such as electronic mail, an audible alert system, and campus or public radio and television.

  o Development and transmission of emergency messages is critical for mass communication of information.

  o Primary and alternate staff members should be responsible for the messages during and after normal school hours.

  o The approval process for dissemination of information must be streamlined to facilitate the timely transmission of information.

- Classroom and common area doors should be equipped with locking devices to prevent an intruder from entering a room and to provide a safe location for students and employees to shelter-in-place.

- During the orientation process, campus police or security forces should provide instructions and guidance on security procedures to students, employees, and family members.

There may never be a perfect solution to campus security because of the complexity and environment that exists on college and university campuses. The intent of enhanced security is to prevent or deter an act from occurring. In the event prevention measures fail, college and university officials must be able and prepared to respond effectively to any emergency situation. While this report outlines **common** vulnerabilities observed on campuses and **general** recommendations that can be implemented to enhance the overall security posture, campus officials should seek individualized risk and threat assessments to address security concerns specific to their campuses.

INTRODUCTION

Following the tragic events at Virginia Tech on April 16, 2007, the level and quality of security on college and university campuses came under much scrutiny. The shootings forced campus security and law enforcement professionals to reevaluate potential threats, preventive measures to mitigate the threats, and response procedures required to stop any action occurring on campus.

The Virginia Tech incident is not the first act of serious violence on a campus in the United States. Since 1966, leading up to the events at Virginia Tech, 33 people have been killed and another 36 wounded in seven separate acts caused by students, employees, and family members on college campuses:

- August 1, 1966: Charles Whitman killed 16 and wounded 31 on the campus of the University of Texas at Austin and the surrounding community.

- November 1, 1991: Gam Lu killed 5 and wounded 2 on the campus of the University of Iowa. Lu then killed himself.

- August 15, 1996: Frederick Martin Davidson killed 3 on the campus of San Diego State University.

- August 28, 2000: James Easton Kelly killed 1 and then took his own life on the campus of the University of Arkansas.

- January 16, 2002: Peter Odighizuwa killed 3 and wounded 3 on the campus of the Appalachian School of Law.

- October 28, 2002: Robert Flores killed 3 and then killed himself on the campus of the University of Arizona Nursing College.

- September 2, 2006: Douglas W. Pennington killed his 2 sons and then himself on the campus of Shepherd University.

There are obvious similarities between the assailants at the University of Texas and Virginia Tech. Both Whitman and Seung Hui Cho, the Virginia Tech shooter, reportedly suffered from a mental or physical illness, and both killed individuals prior to their mass shootings. Whitman killed his mother and wife prior to his shooting rampage. Cho killed two people in a dorm room, then returned to his own dorm room where he rearmed and went to a classroom building on the other side of campus. There he killed 30 more people in four classrooms before killing himself. Both Whitman and Cho had legitimate access to the buildings, and both prepared messages prior to the shootings justifying their acts.

There has been a great deal of emphasis placed on behavioral indicators and

mitigation since the Virginia Tech shooting. Recognizing behavioral signs and addressing such behavior is a critical element in preventing an incident from occurring; however, security and law enforcement personnel must be capable of effectively responding to an incident when prevention measures fail.

THREAT POTENTIAL

- **Armed Intruder:** The primary threat on all campuses is the introduction of a weapon onto the campus by a student, employee, outsider, or terrorist(s).

- **Emplacement of an Improvised Explosive Device (IED):** The emplacement and detonation of an IED in areas where people congregate could cause significant injury or death. The practice of introducing a secondary device is also an issue for first responders and law enforcement.

- **Terrorist Act:** Based on the tactics used by terrorists worldwide, a terrorist attack on a campus in the United States is possible. A campus-related terrorist attack will cause fear and panic nationwide and create worldwide media attention, in addition to significant loss of life and property.

IMPACT FROM LOSS

The greatest impact would be the loss of life. Depending on the level of violence, the long-term psychological impact on our society could be significant, as experienced after the Virginia Tech shooting. The Virginia Tech shooting not only attracted worldwide attention, but had a significant impact on students returning to the campus, potential students considering attendance at Virginia Tech, and family members who fear for the safety of their loved ones.

CURRENT SECURITY PROFILE

I. SECURITY AND POLICE FORCES

Observations:

- Colleges and universities are autonomous and receive minimal oversight or guidance from the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania. As a result, there is no standardization of equipment, training, policies, and procedures. This lack of standardization has a direct impact on the effectiveness of campus police and security forces when supporting each other during large events or emergency situations.

- Security forces on most private colleges are not sworn police officers, are unarmed, and have no arrest authority. They must contact the appropriate police department to handle acts of violence and make arrests. As a result, most campus security officers can respond to acts of violence, but have limited use of force options and authority to stop an assailant.

- Campus police and security forces generally cannot communicate directly with outside responding agencies. Local communication systems are not interoperable with outside agency systems, including the PSP.

- Most campus police and security force communications are staffed by untrained police communications operators who normally are college students. Communications personnel are responsible for numerous tasks including the issuance of parking permits and other student-related tasks. In the absence of a dedicated police communications operator (dispatcher), sworn police officers are required to staff the communications

desk and cannot respond to ongoing incidents. In most cases, the communications area is not protected and the police communications operator is vulnerable to a violent act.

- Most campus police and security forces have a good working relationship with outside law enforcement agencies, particularly municipal police departments; however, there has been little contact or training with other agencies such as the local emergency medical services, fire department, local emergency management agency, and PSP.

- All-hazards planning is inconsistent across the higher education community. Although many plans address such issues as weather or hazardous material spills, most plans fail to address incidents such as an evacuation, active shooter, and acts of terrorism. Most plans fail to follow the four components of an all-hazards plan - Prevention, Preparedness, Response, and Recovery.

- Campus police and security forces are rarely included in the orientation sessions of incoming students, employees, and family members at the beginning of each semester. As a result, campus police and security personnel cannot provide guidance and instructions on campus security procedures.

Recommendations:

- Colleges and universities should attempt to standardize equipment and training and policies for campus police and security forces where possible to ensure uniformity across the Commonwealth. Standardization will result in better interoperability between campus police and security forces, and outside law enforcement agencies. In the absence of oversight, campus police and security forces should seek accreditation by the appropriate accrediting agency. Accredited campus police and security forces will be required to meet and maintain the standards required of an accredited public safety organization.

- Private college security forces should consider Act 235, Lethal Weapons Training Act, certification as a requirement for employment. Presently, private college security forces do not possess the use of force options or authority necessary to stop an armed individual, nor do they have the capability to defend themselves against an armed assailant.

- Universities and colleges should acquire police communications

equipment that is interoperable with county 911 centers, local emergency management agencies, and outside law enforcement agencies to improve emergency communications during large scale incidents.

- Campus police and security forces should employ trained and qualified civilian police communications operators to staff the communications desk. Qualified police communications operators will limit the need for sworn police officers to staff the communications desk while providing a level of communications expertise required during emergency situations. The campus police and security force communications room should be a secured room to protect personnel and information technology systems containing confidential information.

- Campus police and security forces in consultation with the campus emergency management team need to develop an all-inclusive, comprehensive all-hazards plan that addresses potential emergency situations that may arise on campus using the four components of all-hazards planning – Prevention, Preparedness, Response, and Recovery.

- Campus police and security forces should meet with outside first responders annually to review all-hazards plans and conduct exercises to stay current on potential incidents that will require a large-scale response. Campuses located in smaller municipalities with limited outside law enforcement should ensure that all appropriate local agencies, including the PSP, are included in the planning and training process.

- Campus police and security forces should be provided an opportunity to address students, employees, and family members concerning security issues and procedures at the beginning of each semester during orientation sessions. This would ensure that everyone is aware of the procedures that need to be followed in the event of potential emergency situations.

- Universities and colleges should review employment screening policies and procedures for all staff, including workers who regularly visit the school.

II.   ACCESS CONTROLS

Observations:

- Dormitories are generally secured with keyed or keyless locking devices. Police and security personnel acknowledge that there is a problem with students propping doors open

students propping doors open or "piggy-backing" into the dormitories when a student with authorized access opens the door.

- Academic buildings are not normally secured during hours of classroom instruction. As a result, students and unidentified or unauthorized outsiders can access the buildings unimpeded and unchecked. Human monitors are not normally posted at the entrances to control access and there is limited Closed Circuit Television (CCTV) to monitor the entrances.

Recommendations:

- All academic and residential buildings should be secured with keyless locking devices to prevent unauthorized individuals from entering the building.

- Building managers or monitors should be assigned to all academic buildings and be equipped with communications capabilities and keys. The manager or monitor would serve as the primary point of contact and be responsible for securing the

building and controlling ingress and egress in the event a lockdown order is issued by the campus police or security force.

- CCTV, monitored by the campus police or security force, should be installed at the entrances to buildings and other critical areas identified through a campus threat assessment. Although CCTV is only as effective as the individual monitoring activity in preventing a criminal act, CCTV provides a passive deterrent and is a valuable post-incident evidentiary tool.

- Strictly enforce parking zone regulations.

- Ensure that responding law enforcement, emergency medical services, and emergency management agencies have campus maps to quickly identify buildings. Ensure building location and identification is included in emergency preparedness planning and exercises.

- Train staff in the identification and handling of suspicious packages and letters.

III.   EMERGENCY NOTIFICATION SYSTEMS

Observations:

- Many campuses are implementing a multi-layered campus-wide communications system. The most popular solution to mass communication is the text messaging system. Although text messaging is an acceptable solution, it should be supported by other means of mass communication. Depending on the type of service and campus agreement, text messaging is voluntary and can be difficult to manage. Campus security, police, or

information technology professionals are required to add and delete names of students, family members, and employees each semester. Text messaging is not normally the responsibility of campus police or security. The preparation and transmission of a text message will take time, which minimizes its effectiveness as an instant means of communication. Most campuses do not have messages prepared in advance for potential incidents. Many schools have not identified primary and alternate personnel to prepare and transmit messages, particularly after normal business hours.

- Most campuses rely on the use of electronic mail, telephones, and campus radio/television stations as a means of emergency communication. All of these systems provide an acceptable means of communication; however, primary and alternate

personnel to prepare and transmit messages are infrequently identified.
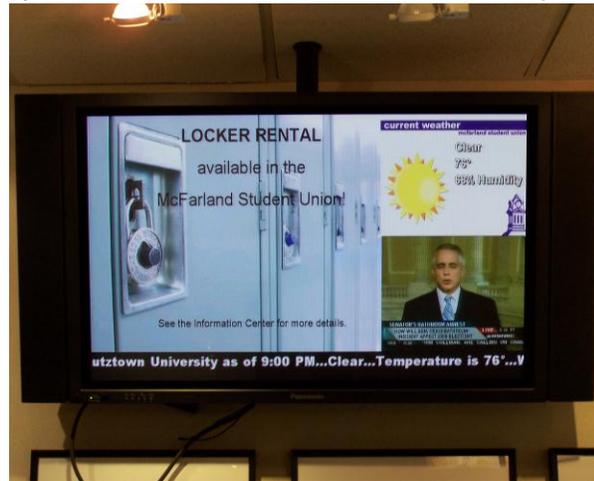
- Most campuses do not have an alarm/siren system that can alert students, employees, and the surrounding community of a pending or active emergency situation. Many do not have public address systems in academic buildings and dormitories to transmit messages campus-wide or to select buildings.

- In general, it is difficult to transmit instantaneous emergency messages due to the location, size, and complexity of campuses. Since active shooter incidents normally end quickly, electronic messages would most likely be received post-incident.

Recommendations:

- Campuses should be equipped with a multi-layered campus-wide communications system. Electronic messaging systems should be supported by audible communications systems that

can be activated quickly to transmit an alert tone or voice message campus-wide during active emergency situations. Audible systems will alert students and employees on campus and the surrounding community of a pending or active emergency situation. For this system to be effective, it is essential that:

- o The audible alert system be capable of providing detailed instructions for students, campus employees, and the community to follow or,

- o Students, campus employees, and the community be provided pre-event instruction on what actions to take. When an audible alert is activated, students, employees, and the surrounding community can refer to available electronic communications systems for additional information provided they have been instructed on security procedures or the audible alert system provides detailed instructions.

- Messages should be prepared in advance for potential incidents that have been identified during the all-hazards planning process. A primary individual and at least one alternate should be identified to prepare and transmit electronic and audible messages relative to emergency situations during and after normal business hours.

- Campus police and security forces should maintain responsibility for the transmission of emergency messages to allow messages to be transmitted quickly without a burdensome approval process. The senior on-site campus police or security force member should have direct access to the Assistant Dean/Vice President, or designated contact to obtain approval to disseminate the required messages.

- A training plan should be developed and presented to all students, employees, and family members during orientation periods to provide instructions and guidance on the procedures that are to be followed in the event an alert is activated. Methods for follow-up reinforcement of alert activation procedures should be developed and provided to all students.

IV. LOCKDOWN PROCEDURES

Observations:

- Lockdown at a college campus refers to the securing of the exterior doors to a building. Shelter-in-place refers to the securing of the interior classroom and common area doors.

- None of the campuses assessed for this report have a plan in place to secure a building quickly. In most cases, police or security personnel are responsible for locking the exterior doors to academic buildings. Most campuses have not identified a point of contact who is responsible for securing the exterior doors of each building.

- Many of the classrooms and common areas are used by multiple professors throughout the day. Most professors do not have keys to the classrooms and cannot secure the rooms in the event of a building-wide lockdown or shelter-in-place. Additionally, many classroom doors are not equipped with locking devices or the doors cannot be secured from within the classroom or common area.

- Most campuses do not have procedures in place and have not instructed students and employees on what actions to take in the event of an emergency situation that would require students and employees to shelter-in-place.

Recommendations:

- Classroom and common area doors should be equipped with locking devices that allow the doors to be secured from within.

- Students and employees should be instructed on the procedures that should be followed in the event a lockdown-type situation occurs.

- Students and employees should be informed of known safe areas such as dormitories, classrooms, and other designated areas where they can shelter-in-place in a secure area until the emergency situation has concluded.

- A building manager or monitor should be issued keys to their assigned building in order to secure the exterior doors in the event of a lockdown order issued by the campus police or security force.

V. EVACUATION AND CLOSING OF THE CAMPUS

Observations:

- In most cases, the decision to close the campus is made by the Chancellor or President in consultation with the campus police or security force. A complete closing is difficult due to some students not being able to return to their home of record; for example, international or long distance students. Off-site housing locations have not been identified for students who cannot return to their home of record. As a result, life sustainment services must continue to operate on campus.

- Most campuses have evacuation procedures for individual buildings but not the entire campus. Off-site locations and transportation needs have not been identified for a campus-wide evacuation. Memorandums of Understanding (MOU) have not been prepared for off-site locations. The challenge for many campuses is that there are no buildings in the surrounding community large enough to accommodate the student population in the event of a campus-wide evacuation.

- Most campuses do not require students to provide a "back-up" plan. The student "back-up" plan requires students to provide information on where they will go in the event of an emergency, such as their home of record or nearby residence.

Recommendations:

- Off-campus housing with life sustainment capability and transportation requirements should be identified for students who are not able to return to their home of record in the event of a campus closing. MOUs should be prepared with the appropriate entities.

- Campus administration should require all students to provide a "back-up" plan at the beginning of the school year. This plan will provide critical information about the location of students in the event of a campus-wide evacuation or closure.

VI.   FAMILY AND MEDIA AREAS

Observations:

- Most campuses have not considered or identified a location for family members and the media in the event of a campus emergency. In most cases, the decision on where to locate the media and family members will be made during or after the incident. In the case of the Virginia Tech shootings, the number of satellite trucks from local and national media outlets reached nearly 700.

Recommendations:

- If available, an off-campus location should be identified that can accommodate a large number of family members. If no off-campus locations are available, multiple on-campus locations that can accommodate family members should be pre-designated. The on-campus locations should be a reasonable distance from the location of the incident and should not be within close proximity of any media staging area. Because the exact location for the family area will be based on the nature and location of the incident, having several pre-designated areas to choose from will facilitate both the decision making process and the dissemination of information to family members.

- If available, an off-campus location should be identified to accommodate the large number of media representatives and vehicles that will respond to a campus emergency. If no off-campus locations are available, multiple on-campus locations that can accommodate a large number of media representatives and vehicles should be pre-designated. The on-campus locations should be a reasonable distance from the location of the incident and should not be in close proximity to the family member areas. Because the exact location for the media area will be based on the nature and location of the incident, having several pre-designated areas to choose from will facilitate both the decision making process and the dissemination of informational briefs to the media.

CONCLUSION

College campuses are similar to towns or small cities in design and activity. This environment presents challenges for the development of emergency response plans and procedures that can apply to all buildings and areas of a campus. Many decisions will have to be based on the location and type of incident occurring on the campus.

Communicating emergency messages and specific instructions for students, employees, and nearby residents regarding an emergency on campus is a critical element of campus emergency response plans. In order to provide effective communications, a multi-layered system should be implemented to ensure that all students, employees, and the surrounding community receive the information in a timely manner.

Campus police and security personnel must work with outside first responder and law enforcement agencies to develop an all-hazards plan. Once developed, training exercises on potential emergency situations that may occur on campus are essential to evaluate the plan's effectiveness and assessing resource needs and availability based on a variety of emergency situations.

This assessment report was prepared to provide college and university officials with general observations and recommendations to enhance the overall security posture of their campuses and improve responses to emergency situations affecting the campus and the surrounding communities.

PENNSYLVANIA STATE POLICE RISK AND VULNERABILITY ASSESSMENT TEAM INFORMATION

The research and on-site visits were conducted by the PSP RVAT, a four-member team created to conduct vulnerability assessments of critical infrastructure throughout the Commonwealth following the terror attacks on September 11, 2001.

The PSP RVAT has conducted assessments on a variety of critical infrastructure, including power generation plants, high volume sporting venues, malls, and transportation systems. The PSP RVAT has been critical in identifying, assessing, and approving distribution sites of medical supplies in the event of a regional or state-wide pandemic.

Immediately following the school tragedy in Beslan, Russia, in September of 2004, the PSP RVAT began to focus on the security of K-12 schools. The PSP RVAT has conducted over 40 on-site assessments and has been instrumental in bringing school security to the forefront within the education community. The PSP RVAT continues to work closely with the Pennsylvania Department of Education, Pennsylvania Emergency Management Agency, and Auditor General's Office in an

effort to standardize school security policies and procedures across the Commonwealth.

Security-related training that PSP RVAT members have completed include:

- Federal Law Enforcement Training Center:

    o Physical Security Training Program.

    o Weapons of Mass Destruction Training Program.

- American Society for Industrial Security (ASIS):

    o Facility Security Design.

    o Transportation Security.

- Public Agency Training Council:

    o School Bomb Threat.

    o Suicide Bomber Terrorism Threat.

- Explosion Effects and Structural Design for Blast - University of Missouri.

RVAT members are active in the American Society for Industrial Security.

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