

Perspectives

Community College Leadership for the 21st Century

JANUARY 2016

www.ferris.edu/alliance

In times of crisis... communities [must] devote not only time, energy, and resources to the fallen victims in these incidents but also examine the factors that may have led to the tragedies...

- John Jarvis and J. Amber Scherer

Higher education administrators must take the lead in creating and maintaining a campus culture of care, and provide resources that support those efforts... Campus safety must be viewed as an institutional responsibility.

- Kim Richmond

Doctorate in Community College Leadership

Empowering graduates to advance community colleges towards excellence and community responsiveness through exemplary leadership.



ENROLLING NOW FOR THE NEXT COHORT

Keeping Your Head Above Trauma

Rita Cavin, PhD

Former Interim President
Umpqua Community College
Roseburg, Oregon

My September File began without forethought. As I led the recovery of Umpqua Community College, I came across tasks from before the massacre. These now seemed trivial. So, I kept adding to the file and one day scrawled "September" on the front. As the weeks passed, I never took anything out of the file. Putting the past on hold, I learned, is a common reaction to trauma.

I may have been a little smug on the crisp morning of Thursday, October 1. I had returned to UCC as an interim president, serving June through December, and was driving a few hours through magnificent forests to a meeting with other community college presidents. Classes had started on Monday and enrollments were good. We were ready for several accreditation visits and our annual strategic plan looked promising. I was looking forward to dinner with colleagues when my cellphones rang.

"We are in lockdown. There's been a shooter at Snyder."

Communication and Moving Forward. Our public information staff was traumatized and dysfunctional. On October 1, these employees were huddled in a room next to the killings. Until we hired an outside firm to reinforce this office, we relied on a series of volunteer PIOs.

Our insurer provided a PIO for the initial press conferences. Looking back at the stress of the day, the lack of food and water, the absence of even a simple comb, the dearth of information, and the enshrouding grief, it's a wonder I didn't just babble.

That first weekend no one wrote my statements for the press conferences or for the first night vigil. As I attended eight funerals, no one wrote my remarks. A week later, I wrote my own comments for the all-staff meeting, because, in fact, it was my responsibility to honor, comfort, inform, and calm. At the student assembly I answered our students' angry and fearful questions.

The early days saw a flood of misinformation and rumors: that the massacre was a hoax perpetrated by the CIA; no, the murders were ISIS retaliation for the heroism of UCC student, Alek Scarlatos, who had recently helped take down a terrorist in Paris.

Our website had crashed on the first day. Once it was restored, we were vulnerable to threats. My Cabinet wanted to close the campus due to one credible threat, but I chose to wait for the FBI analysis. When the FBI informed us that the threat was identical to one received by Sandy Hook and that it was from another continent, some staff wept with relief.

My email messages to all staff went out twice a day: When would classes begin, how would staff and students get their cars back, what was our new level of security, would part-timers be paid. Employees communicated back. On Sunday, October 4, a group of faculty drew up a four-page list of their needs, including a clear call for reduced workload.

I announced we would raise the flag from half-mast at the one-week mark. Students and staff stood quietly on the quad while the flag was raised and bagpipers played.

We increased the mailroom staff to handle and screen the swell of mail. Ugly threats were mixed in with the sympathy cards.

I announced we would raise the flag from half-mast at the one-week mark. Students and staff stood quietly on the quad while the flag was raised and bagpipers played. Most found the moment touching. But some faculty were angry because the ceremony disrupted class time. When I announced that the tributes in the amphitheater would be taken down over winter break, some students pled to delay the removal.

Anger and Fear. On the day of the killings, two emotions swept through the community: anger and fear. In a small town, everyone is connected. The son of a first responder was killed, a relative of one of our U.S. Senators was killed, and the son of a County Commissioner fled campus when he heard shots. A doctor receiving the wounded searched each arriving ambulance for his daughter. The daughter of a local pastor came home covered in another student's blood.

Faculty were afraid whenever a student took too long opening a backpack or if they saw someone running across campus. Marital difficulties and dependency issues grew severe. Malingerers did their thing. Chronic complainers had new fodder. On the other hand, heroic, untiring, and compassionate new leaders were forged.

Anger found its voice: Tear the building down, fire the administrators, arm the students, arm the faculty, build a wall around the college. The Board posted security at their meetings. Faculty raged that it was taking too damn long to improve the locks.

(continued on page 4)

EMERGING LEADERS' PERSPECTIVES

Unfortunately, acts of mass violence continue to occur and make headlines across the nation. Recent episodes of community college campus violence, including the 2015 shootings in Oregon, North Carolina, and Pennsylvania, raise candid questions about campus safety and whether there are any reasonable steps for improvement. As a result, college leaders must remain mindful that keeping our college campuses safe must continue to be a most critical priority. We posed the following question to emerging and national leaders; their answers appear below:

Cheryl M. Hagen, MA, LPC

Vice President, Chief Student Affairs Officer
Schoolcraft College
Livonia, Michigan

Scarce resources for security and mental health are a reality for all community colleges. Whenever horrific incidents of school violence occur, the terror, distress, and anguish are quickly followed by a sense of helplessness. There is no way to protect against random acts of violence. But studies have shown that prior to most incidents, others on campus knew about the attacker's plans and/or were concerned about threatening statements or behavior. Here are three things colleges can do, then, to help create a culture of reporting among students, faculty, and staff.

In order to encourage the campus community to report anything that seems aberrant or concerning, it's important to eliminate old perceptions – apprehensions about being a "snitch," raising false alarms, overreacting, or violating FERPA. Despite numerous faculty training sessions, an English professor recently asked whether or not it was appropriate to report a student whose writing was becoming more strange and violent. Embedded in this question is concern for the student—what will happen to him/her if the faculty member files a report? Because they are in the front lines, faculty and staff multiply the effectiveness of campus police and mental health counseling staff. But they will not report unless they have some knowledge about how the information will be used.

Second, make it easy to report and provide appropriate follow-up. If there is confusion about how and to whom reports should be directed, the easiest course of action is not to bother. A centralized system works well, where everything flows to a single person who can triage and route cases to the appropriate staff for follow-up. Some cases may require outreach from a counselor. Some may need a quiet and confidential investigation from campus or local police. Anyone receiving a report should express appreciation for the information, reassuring the reporting party that the situation will receive immediate attention.

Finally, strengthen the partnership between campus police and student services. A highly functioning, well-trained, and collaborative Behavior Intervention Team (BIT) to assess threats and concerns is critical. Several useful rubrics are available to help determine threat level, which helps standardize responses.

It's not likely any of us will be receiving additional resources, but a culture of reporting can serve as an important and proactive line of defense. As Brian Van Brunt states in his book, *Ending Campus Violence* (2012), "The need to break the code of silence that surrounds potentially dangerous behavior must be reinforced...Telling keeps people safe."

QUESTION OF THE MONTH:

What strategies can college leaders promote to protect their colleges and manage public safety for students, staff, and visitors?

Dustin Heuerman, EdD

Faculty, Criminal Justice/Program Coordinator
Lake Land College
Mattoon, Illinois

At a time when a plethora of important issues are affecting the operations of community colleges nationwide, it typically takes a major incident such as the Umpqua Community College shooting in Oregon for us to regain focus on campus security. Unfortunately, many colleges become complacent with an "it can't happen here" approach, but then it does. Violent

events at community colleges throughout the nation over the last few years have proven that major campus violence incidents can happen anywhere.

I have heard many notions from community college colleagues to help improve campus safety, some of which include installing metal detectors at every entrance, arming college faculty members with firearms, and employing returning Veterans to provide security to our facilities. However, before the majority of us turn to extreme and somewhat unconventional means in the name of campus safety and security, there are some more realistic actions each of our campuses can be taking to help prevent violent campus events.

One of the more important practices our community colleges can be adopting to help prevent violent incidents is to be as proactive as possible. If your campus does not have a behavioral assessment team, it should have! Many times violent campus incidents do not happen without warning, we just have trouble seeing the warning signs until it is too late. Behavioral assessment teams are many times comprised of a variety of campus employees and are charged with reviewing concerns from employees and students regarding potentially violent behavior.

In addition to having a threat assessment team, visible campus security or police are important to thwarting violent acts on campus. If unable to deter major incidents by mere presence, campus security or police officers can immediately address the issue when it occurs. It is important, however, to adequately prepare these first-line defenders with the appropriate tools. A

campus police department can have access to needed tools while still being student-focused and providing a welcoming environment to students and staff.

A major violent incident on campus is not solely a campus issue; it is an issue that requires collaboration with faculty, staff, law enforcement, and other first responders. Not all incidents of campus violence can be prevented. For those that cannot, having a solid plan in place is imperative. Though the main focus of community colleges may be learning, we cannot forget

our obligation to provide a safe learning environment to our students and employees.

Many times violent campus incidents do not happen without warning, we just have trouble seeing the warning signs until it is too late.

~ Dustin Heuerman, EdD

Cheryl M. Hagen, MA, LPC, is Vice President and Chief Student Affairs Officer at Schoolcraft College in Livonia, Michigan. Her areas of expertise include strategic enrollment management, workplace climate, and leadership and compliance issues, where she is frequently called upon as a presenter or panelist at regional and national conferences. Cheryl received her MA from Eastern Michigan University and is currently pursuing a Doctorate in Community College Leadership at Ferris State University.



Dustin Heuerman, EdD, is a criminal justice faculty member and Coordinator of Criminal Justice Programs at Lake Land College, located in Mattoon, IL. During his professional career, he has amassed a wealth of experience in both local and campus law enforcement. Dr. Heuerman received his MS in Criminology/Criminal Justice from Indiana State University, Terre Haute, IN, and his EdD in Community College Leadership from the Ferris State University DCCL Program.



NATIONAL LEADER PERSPECTIVE

Unfortunately, acts of mass violence continue to occur and make headlines across the nation. Recent episodes of community college campus violence, including the 2015 shootings in Oregon, North Carolina, and Pennsylvania, raise candid questions about campus safety and whether there are any reasonable steps for improvement. As a result, college leaders must remain mindful that keeping our college campuses safe must continue to be a most critical priority. We posed the following question to emerging and national leaders; their answers appear below:

QUESTION OF THE MONTH:

What strategies can college leaders promote to protect their colleges and manage public safety for students, staff, and visitors?

Daniel J. Phelan, PhD

President and CEO
Jackson College
Jackson, Michigan

Each time one of these horrific campus shootings occurs, college leaders ask themselves the necessary, albeit obvious, question: "How vulnerable is my college?" I'm willing to bet that most of us would likely respond with something akin to, "more than I would like." Trustees and employees often ask the same question, seeking some level of assurance. Concerns are heightened even more with the present campus implications of open and concealed-carry gun laws. Subsequently, we quite often will establish committees to discuss and evaluate relevant issues, strategies are formulated, funds are allocated, and we make some operational adjustments. Over time though, other campus priorities intervene and conversations about safety begin to fade. A month or so may pass, yet another campus shooting incident occurs, the media wield their cameras, and concomitantly with them, public attention, and our collective stress rises once more.

Heinous college campus violence, while tragic and heart-wrenching, cannot be the sole safety focus of the community college leader. Rather, the principal strategy for leaders is to prepare and guide their institutions through a thoughtful, comprehensive, and balanced approach to college safety, while doing their best to abate emotional responses and panic. Fortunately or no, campus leaders stand at the fulcrum of balancing responsibility for employee, student, and guest safety, together with the practical reality of limited budgets and other essential and competing priorities. The introduction of a modicum of perspective can often illuminate the matter for others, creating an environment for a more deliberative discussion and outcome. Consider, for example, the context-setting statistic that the likelihood of being shot on a college campus in any particular year is about 1:2,000,000, compared to the 1:700,000 odds of being struck by lightning.

[T]he principal strategy for leaders is to prepare and guide their institutions through a thoughtful, comprehensive, and balanced approach to college safety, while doing their best to abate emotional responses and panic.

In addition to the attention-focusing 'active-shooter' situations, discussion and college safety planning must also include the potential for fire, tornado, hurricane, flood, disease, water contamination, strong lightning and wind storms, power outages, heavy snow and ice, pedestrian and vehicular circulation, clear sight lines, gang violence, campus unrest and riots, as well as cyber-violence and attacks. The potential for any of these additional tragedies to occur is likewise real and thus, they must also be featured in the college's safety plan.

Furthermore, and in all cases, critical to the process of developing a college safety action plan, is the involvement of all employees and

students. Helping all employees to know their responsibilities, expectations, and steps they can take to help abate matters, can go a long way in helping to mitigate personal feelings of helplessness and fear. To that end, the safety plan should be well-understood by all, suggesting a steady diet of training, professional development, and simulations so that, should the worst befall your campus, most will know how to respond. Critically important is the involvement of local law enforcement and professionally-trained campus safety

professionals in the plan's development. Relatedly, a clear delineation of chain of command, as well as coordination and communication strategies for working with the press, law enforcement, mental health professionals, the community, and other key stakeholders is likewise essential. The plan should also address the post-crisis and recovery strategies with cost estimates to sustain them. I doubt that any of our budgets are designed to handle the multitude of financial demands should a campus crisis occur. Still, consideration must be given to the potential sources of funds needed to work through the innumerable challenges of a significant college event.

To help keep the topic of safety central in college operations, consider including the topic regularly in many of the college's standing meetings, regularly schedule simulations, conduct security audits annually, and allocate resources to make progress. Additionally, consider opening college meetings and events, particularly those including campus guests, by reviewing safety procedures. For example, inform guests under 'housekeeping' announcements, where the exits, restrooms, AEDs, and fire extinguishers are located, as well as where to go for sheltering, if needed, and designate a safety officer for the meeting, one who will direct everyone in case of an emergency.

Finally, as college leaders, know that despite all the preparation, training, equipment, and other investments, your institution is still far from being 100% safe...indeed, no college can be. Thus, college leaders should also ensure that their plans, training, and related practices do not provide a false sense of security for employees and guests. Unfortunately, constant vigilance, practice, and attention to college safety is the new order of the day in our changed reality.



Dr. Daniel J. Phelan is President and CEO of Jackson College in Michigan. Phelan is Chair-Elect of the Board of Directors for the American Association of Community Colleges (AACC), is Co-Chair of AACC's Higher Education Act Reauthorization Task Force, and is Chair-Elect of the Higher Education Research and Development Institute (HERDI). He serves as a Board member for the Center for Community College Student Engagement (CCCSE) and the Phi Theta Kappa Honor Society (PTK), and is a founding Board member for the international organization, US-Brasil Connect (USBC). Continuous innovation, quality, service, and vision for an improved future of student success have continued to define Phelan's contribution to the community college movement. His new book, *Unrelenting Change, Innovation, and Risk: Forging the Next Generation of Colleges*, was published in January 2016. He holds a PhD in Higher Education Administration from Iowa State University and an MBA from St. Ambrose University.



QUICK TAKES
Highlights
from the Field

Balancing Student Privacy, Campus Security, and Public Safety: Issues for Campus Leaders

By Lesley McBain

While not recent, this paper is still most timely today. It provides background information on student privacy and campus security, and also reviews best practices that college leaders may consider to help ensure that a system is in place to simultaneously maximize an open community and manage public safety preparedness and responsiveness. Read the complete article here:

<http://bit.ly/1WbZrz5>

Guide for Developing High-Quality Emergency Operations Plans for Insitutions of Higher Education

by U. S. Dept. of Education

Since emergencies often occur with little to no warning, colleges should plan ahead to help ensure safety and general welfare. Included are principles of college emergency management planning; a process for developing, implementing, and continually refining the EOP; a discussion of the content of EOPs; and a review of key topics that support emergency management. Read the complete article here:

<http://1.usa.gov/1Kg3X8N>



Published by the Alliance for Community College Excellence in Practice, Ferris State University, Doctorate in Community College Leadership Big Rapids, Michigan

EDITORIAL STAFF

Jeanne Bonner, PhD, Editor
Mara Jevera Fulmer, EdD, MFA, Design & Production Editor

To send comments or receive a copy of this publication, please contact us at: ccallian@fsu.edu

Keeping Your Head Above Trauma (continued from page 1)

I felt the burden of not feeding that anger and learned how to respond when well-meaning citizens suggested that God caused the killings at UCC because Roseburg supported public, not parochial, schools.

I threw the turquoise jacket I was wearing on October 1 into the trash. Other UCC staff threw out their October 1 clothes. We felt stronger – we could control our trash.

The Aftermath. After stumbling over terms like “the deceased,” we used the phrase The Umpqua Nine – deliberately not counting the killer. Instead of talking about “the massacre,” we would say “October 1.” We agreed not to use the killer’s name and not to diminish his acts by calling him “the shooter.”

Since the logos for UCC and for the victim relief fund were similar, many people believed they were giving funds to the college, when they were actually giving funds to the victims. I walked a tightrope. While we earnestly supported fundraising for victims, our campaign for a much-needed building would wait. UCC could not be perceived as competing with our victims.

Our student leaders shouldered a huge burden. While other students exercised their right to miss or drop a class, their leaders organized tributes and food baskets, wrote eulogies, and gave press interviews. I regret that I did not provide them with more support.

We postponed our accreditation visit, ...and shelved our strategic plan. Instead, we learned how to respond to suicide threats and teach traumatized and wounded students.

Everywhere I went, people hugged me and asked if UCC was back to normal yet. These people felt compelled to tell me where they were on October 1 and most wept while they hugged me. I balanced my answers between the fact that classes were in session and the fact that many staff were traumatized, absent, retiring early, or looking for other jobs.

I ignored my September File. We postponed our accreditation visit, paused our presidential search, and shelved our strategic plan. Instead, we learned how to respond to suicide threats and teach traumatized and wounded students. My door was always open to grieving parents and wounded students. And now I met on a regular basis with our District Attorney about threats to our staff and students in crisis.

I learned to ask for and accept help.

What Helped. The Board established six advisory committees that delayed sensitive decisions until there was community consensus. Each committee was charged with a divisive topic: what to do with Snyder Hall, whether to give posthumous degrees, how to honor The Umpqua Nine, how to plan a surely emotional commencement, how to prepare for the start of academic year 2017, and how to mark the one-year anniversary.

During the first few days I approved Lutheran comfort dogs to come on campus. This was the *only* noncontroversial decision I made. Everyone loved the dogs. We paid nothing and they required no logistical support. They just showed up and began comforting.

Parisian university students, Virginia Tech, Columbine, Marysville, and Franklin high schools all reached out to help us. Their advice about anniversary threats, anger, misinformation, depression, and hope were invaluable.

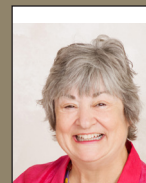
College leaders never know how they will perform under pressure. It helps to focus on building resilient communities; creating flexible leadership teams; and strengthening relationships with the agencies that will help you...

President Mary Spilde of neighboring Lane Community College provided counselors and staff to assist with security, financial aid, and payroll. She was my confidant. She was my connection to the State Capitol, AACC, and Washington, D.C. She drove me to funerals and brought me food when I was too numb to feel hunger. Without Lane, UCC could not have reopened in one week. Without Mary, I could not have been my best self.

Reflections. The minute a killer puts your college in his sights, the values you cherish are under attack. While your college is focused on learning, the killer is analyzing your security protocols with the sole intent of wreaking carnage. While you are focused on student success, he is amassing his arsenal and preparing for media glory. His anger will bring your college to its knees.

College leaders never know how they will perform under pressure. It helps to focus on building resilient communities; creating flexible leadership teams; and strengthening relationships with the agencies that will help you, especially law enforcement. It also helps to remember the strength of determined community college students who will return to class and not let yet another obstacle limit their dreams, no matter how catastrophic.

The Cow Creek Tribe held a ceremony to purify our campus. Soon after, as I was leaving my office one evening, I watched a family of deer peeking into the library window, attracted by the glow of the lights and our students studying within. It was in this peaceful moment when I knew in my heart that UCC would recover.



Dr. Rita Cavin, PhD, recently completed a second appointment as Interim President of Umpqua Community College, Roseburg, Oregon. A community college educator since 1973, Dr. Cavin became the sixth President of Linn-Benton Community College (OR) in September 2003, where she oversaw a district spanning almost 3,000 square miles, serving over 26,000 students, and over 1,000 full and part-time employees. She retired and was named President Emerita in January 2010. Since her retirement, Dr. Cavin has focused her professional career on community college leadership development, serving as a career counselor for the Future Leaders Institute. Her administrative career began in California where she served as Vice President of Instruction at Mt. San Antonio College, 1997-2003, and as Vice President of Instruction at Citrus College, 1992-1997. Dr. Cavin holds a PhD in higher education administration from Claremont Graduate University and two master’s degrees, one in Library Science from Immaculate Heart College in Los Angeles and another in English from University of Redlands.