

Stonehill College Emergency Preparedness Review

As a result of the tragic events of April 16, 2007 at Virginia Tech, all colleges and universities began the process of a comprehensive review of their institution's emergency response plans.

Stonehill College began its review process this summer and has completed a draft of a detailed Emergency Management Plan that addresses many of the areas of concern in the Virginia Tech Report. This draft is currently under review and will be presented to the President for final approval. Once approved, the plan will be tested through a number of table top exercises conducted by the Emergency Response Team. The Crisis Management Committee will assess the effectiveness of the plan.

The review process and final report on the Virginia Tech incident, commissioned by the Governor of Virginia, compiled over 70 recommendations directed to colleges, universities, mental health providers, law enforcement officials, emergency service providers, law makers, and other public officials in Virginia and elsewhere.

Below is a review of 37 of the recommendations that have a direct impact on colleges and universities and should be addressed in their policies and procedures.

Virginia Tech Recommendations	Stonehill College Response
Universities should do a risk analysis (threat assessment) and then choose a level of security appropriate for their campus	Stonehill College is in the process of reviewing its campus access points, security surveillance camera placements and gate house security. FY09 budget will propose security equipment and personnel additions.
Virginia Tech should update and enhance its Emergency Response Plan and bring it into compliance with federal and state guidelines.	Stonehill College has completed a draft of a detailed Emergency Management Plan which includes a Crisis Communication Plan and addresses issues related to mental health.
Virginia Tech should have a threat assessment team that includes representation from law enforcement, human resources, student and academic affairs, legal counsel and mental/health functions.	Stonehill College has implemented an Emergency Response Team that is responsible for threat assessment levels. This team includes representation from the recommended areas listed in the VT report.

Virginia Tech Recommendations	Stonehill College Emergency Response
Students, faculty, and staff should be trained annually about responding to various emergencies and about the notification system that will be used.	Stonehill College currently trains Campus Police, Residence Life, and other Student Affairs staff annually on emergency response protocols.
Universities and colleges must comply with the Clery Act, which requires timely public warnings of imminent danger.	Stonehill College, which has already been in compliance with the Clery Act, has implemented a Crisis Communication Plan that addresses timely notification to college constituent groups, including emergency text messaging.
Campus emergency communications systems must have multiple means of sharing information.	Stonehill College's Crisis Communication Plan includes multiple methods of sharing emergency response communication coordinated through a Crisis Communication Team.
In an emergency, immediate messages must be sent to the campus community that provides clear information on the nature of the emergency and actions to be taken.	Stonehill College's Crisis Communication Plan calls for an emergency fact sheet to be compiled outlining the nature of the emergency and action steps being taken to help facilitate an immediate response.
Campus Police as well as administration officials should have the authority and capability to send an emergency message.	Stonehill College has implemented this recommendation.
The head of campus police should be a member of a threat assessment team as well as the emergency response team.	Stonehill College has implemented this structure in its Emergency Management Plan.
Campus Police must report directly to the senior operations officer responsible for emergency decision making.	Stonehill College has created an Associate Vice President for Operations position. The Chief of Campus Police, who is responsible for coordinating emergency responses, reports to this position.
Campus Police must train for active shooter emergencies.	Stonehill College is investigating adding an armed police unit within Campus Police that will be trained in active shooter emergency situations.
The mission statement of Campus Police	Stonehill College will review the mission

should give primacy to their law enforcement and crime prevention role.	of Campus Police and will recommend a crime prevention position in the FY09 budget process.
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Virginia Tech Recommendations	Stonehill College Emergency Response
Universities and colleges should promote the sharing of information internally, and with parents, when significant circumstances pertaining to health and safety arise.	Stonehill College currently has a process of reviewing student incidents with personnel from Campus Police, Residence Life, Counseling and Testing and other departments as needed. Consistent with FERPA compliance, Stonehill has a statement in its Disclosures to Parents/Legal Guardians of students that states, "Parents/legal guardians may be notified when their student is involved in a health or safety emergency."
Institutions should review current policies relating to recognizing and assisting students in distress.	Stonehill College annually reviews its policies for identifying and assessing students in distress.
Institutions should review current policies relating to student code of conduct, including enforcement.	Stonehill College upholds its Community Standards which outlines the College's expectations of student conduct and calls students to accountability for their actions.
Institutions should review current policies relating to judiciary proceedings for students including enforcement.	Stonehill College reviews its disciplinary procedures on an annual basis.
Institutions should review current policies relating to university authority to appropriately intervene when it is believed a distressed student poses a danger to himself and others.	Stonehill College annually reviews its current policies and protocols related to intervention with distressed students.
Universities must have a system that links troubled students to appropriate medical and counseling services either on-campus or off campus and to balance the individual's rights with the rights of all others safety.	Stonehill College has a process that allows us to work cooperatively with external medical and counseling services.
Incidents of aberrant, dangerous, or threatening behavior must be documented and reported immediately to a college's threat assessment group, and must be acted upon in a prompt and effective manner to protect the safety of the campus	Stonehill College has created a Needs Assessment Team so that incidents of aberrant, dangerous, or threatening behavior of students or staff will be responded to in a timely and appropriate manner.

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Virginia Tech Recommendations	Stonehill College Emergency Response
Policies and procedures should be implemented to require professors encountering aberrant, dangerous, or threatening behavior from a student to report them to a dean.	Stonehill College will develop procedures and educational materials for professors regarding the reporting of incidents of aberrant, dangerous, or threatening behavior (anticipated completion: August 2008)
Reporting requirements for aberrant, dangerous, or threatening behavior for resident hall staff must be clearly established and reviewed annually.	Stonehill College annually trains the Residence Life staff on reporting student behavioral issues to Campus Police and/or Student Affairs.
Repeated incidents of aberrant, dangerous, or threatening behavior must be reported by Judicial Affairs to the threat assessment group.	Stonehill College has established a Needs Assessment Team. The Director of Community Standards is a member of this team and reports repeated incidents of aberrant, dangerous or threatening behavior to this group.
Repeated incidents of aberrant, dangerous, or threatening behavior should be reported to the counseling center and reported to parents.	Stonehill College has established a Needs Assessment Team. The Director of the Counseling and Testing Center is a member of this team. Consistent with FERPA compliance, Stonehill has a statement in its Disclosures to Parents/Legal Guardians of students that states, "Parents/legal guardians may be notified when their student is involved in a health or safety emergency."
The law enforcement agency at colleges should report all incidents of and issuance of temporary detention orders for students (and staff) to Judicial Affairs, the threat assessment team, the counseling center and parents.	Stonehill College Campus Police currently reports all known incidents involving a student arrest or placement of protective custody to the Office of Student Affairs.
The College's Counseling Center should report all students who are in treatment pursuant to a court order to the threat assessment team.	Stonehill College Counseling and Testing Center will report students in treatment pursuant to a court order to the Vice President for Student Affairs and the Needs Assessment Team if a health or safety emergency exists.

Virginia Tech Recommendations	Stonehill College Emergency Response
Schools should ensure that law enforcement and medical staff (and others as necessary) are designated as school officials with an educational interest in school records.	Stonehill College considers its Campus Police, Residence Life, Health Service and Counseling Center and Testing staff as designated school officials with an educational interest in school records.
Universities and colleges should make clear in their literature what their policy is regarding weapons on campus.	Stonehill College has a clearly defined Weapons Policy which prohibits any type of weapon or any item that may be used as a weapon on campus.
In the preliminary stages of an investigation, the police should resist focusing on a single theory and communicating that to decision makers.	Stonehill College has added a new detective position to Campus Police to handle investigations. Campus Police will review its current investigative procedures.
All key facts should be included in an alerting message, and it should be disseminated as quickly as possible, with explicit information.	Stonehill College's Crisis Communication Plan requires a fact sheet to be completed and used for alerting the community with accurate information and response steps.
Recipients of emergency messages should be urged to inform others.	Students, staff and faculty will be trained in their responsibility to inform others in an emergency situation.
Universities should have multiple communication systems, including some not dependent on high technology.	Stonehill College's Crisis Communication Plan addresses several methods of communicating including web, email, text messages as well as broadcast voicemail and fax notifications.
Plans for canceling classes or closing the campus should be included in the university's emergency operations plan.	Stonehill College has incorporated college cancellation and closing procedures in its Emergency Response Plan.

Virginia Tech Recommendations	Stonehill College Emergency Response
Campus Police everywhere should train with local police departments on response to active shooters and other emergencies.	Stonehill College Campus Police currently train with local police and other college police departments. Campus Police is investigating the option to add an armed police unit within Campus Police and increase its training with local law enforcement agencies. This additional training would include how to effectively respond to active shooters and other emergencies.
Dispatchers should be cautious when giving advice or instructions by phone to people in a shooting or facing other threats without knowing the situation.	Stonehill College has converted the former Switchboard function into a dispatcher function (communication officers) and requires formal training for handling emergency situations. Communication officers will also be provided a fact sheet to relay accurate information of emergency incidents.
Police should escort survivors out of buildings, where circumstance and manpower permit.	Campus Police training and protocols will include the handling of survivor evacuation methods.
Schools should check the hardware on exterior doors to ensure that they are not subject to being chained shut.	Stonehill College is currently assessing the hardware on exterior doors.
Take bomb threats seriously. Students and staff should report them immediately, even if most do turn out to be false alarms	Stonehill College bomb threat procedures requires all bomb threats to be treated as a serious incident.