



SafePlans

Excerpt taken from "Governor's Column" August 24, 2007
by Governor Matt Blunt

Helping Make Every Missouri Campus a Safe Learning Environment

Missouri has a world-class higher education system that attracts students from around the world to become tomorrow's leaders. To help today's students become tomorrow's leaders we have taken action to help our campuses provide the safest environment possible.

Earlier this year we all watched in horror as the students of Virginia Tech endured a terrible shooting on their campus. In the aftermath of the senseless shooting, my prayers went out to all those affected by the Virginia Tech shooting. And my thoughts turned to Missouri and what we could do to help prevent a tragedy like this in our state.

Almost immediately I created the Campus Security Task Force to evaluate our current campus emergency response plans and to improve communications between our higher education and public safety communities. I placed the task force under the direction of Public Safety Director Mark James and Higher Education Commissioner Robert Stein. We wanted to learn about what went wrong at Virginia Tech. We also wanted to collect best practices from campuses across the state to help protect the students and educators. All of our colleges and universities were doing something to stop such violence, and the task force was charged with helping them learn from one another.

The vast majority of colleges and universities have already developed emergency plans. But everyone agreed that we could do more to improve campus security. This month the task force issued its report with 33 recommendations for making every Missouri campus a safer learning environment.

One of the task force's recommendations is the establishment of multi-disciplinary teams with members from faculty, law enforcement, and the mental health community to share and review information about members of the campus community who are perceived as exhibiting behavior causing concern. We know that the events at Virginia Tech were perpetrated by an evil young man who had exhibited signs of potential violence on several previous occasions. These multi-disciplinary teams will be charged with helping students with these problems, and, in the process, protecting others. Overall, the task force recognized the important role that mental health services play in campus security and emergency planning.

The task force recognized that it is equally important that adequate police protection is available on campuses across our state, and they recommended increased collaboration between campus and local emergency responders in the development and practice of emergency plans.

Another recommendation is that every campus should have a designated official to coordinate emergency and homeland security operations, and all colleges and universities should use the Emergency Response Information Program (ERIP), an Internet-based tool, to construct their all-hazard plan. Missourians may view the entire report and recommendations by visiting <http://www.dps.mo.gov/CampusSafety/index.htm>.

We help emergency planners, at the local and facility levels, develop customized all-hazards emergency plans. By integrating proven strategies, innovative thinking and the last technology, we can help you keep your communities safe.

To receive an assessment of your emergency plans or to discuss how we can help you create new ones, please contact us for a free consultation:

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