

OKLAHOMA CITY COMMUNITY COLLEGE

**TIMELY EMERGENCY
COMMUNICATION
TASKFORCE**

SUMMARY REPORT

SUBMITTED TO

DR. PAUL W. SECHRIST, PRESIDENT

MAY 7, 2010

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TASKFORCE SUMMARY REPORT

TIMELY EMERGENCY COMMUNICATION TASKFORCE (TECT)

SUMMARY OF INCIDENT

On February 26, 2010 Oklahoma City Community College (OCCC) experienced a crisis situation on campus. A false report of a gunman on campus triggered a lockdown. Simultaneously, a fire alarm was wrongfully activated and a security officer accidentally fired a handgun. As a result, confusion spread across campus and questions arose about OCCC's communication process during a crisis.

INTRODUCTION

Oklahoma City Community College has a unique opportunity to make its campus a safer environment for all. As a result of the campus incident that occurred February 26, stakeholders from every area of the College were encouraged to join together to suggest recommendations for improving campus safety in multiple areas.

OCCC President Dr. Paul Sechrist established a Timely Emergency Communication Taskforce (TECT) that included college students, faculty, staff and outside resources. The taskforce met weekly for two months to determine the best method(s) to communicate with faculty, staff, students and visitors on campus before, during and after an emergency situation. TECT addressed the following concerns:

- How best to communicate there is an emergency and the nature of the emergency
 - How best to communicate what to do (may be location dependent)
 - How best to continually inform everyone during the emergency
 - How best to communicate the threat is over, all clear and what to do next
 - How best to communicate what happened and what's next (campus closure, resume classes, etc.)
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TECT PARTICIPANTS

Dr. Sechrist appointed Dr. Marion Paden, Vice President for Enrollment and Student Services and Vicki Gibson, Acting Vice President for Information Technology to co-chair TECT.

It was imperative that TECT individuals from every area of campus be engaged in the work of the taskforce. Faculty and staff, as well as students, were encouraged to volunteer if they had an interest in the taskforce and were available to meet on each Friday morning from March 26, 2010 through May 7, 2010. Two employees from each geographic area on campus

were randomly selected to participate. Participants and their corresponding campus locations included:

- Arts and Humanities Center
 - Dianne Broyles and Jennifer Harrison
- College Union
 - One representative from Carson's Catering and one from Student Life
 - Corrine Aguilar and Katie Treadwell
- Family and Community Education Center
 - One representative from CDC&LS and one from Community Education
 - Brannon Dresel and Kendra Miller
- Health Professions Center
 - Harvey Conner and Rodney Johnson
- John Massey Center
 - Brenda Carpenter and Denise Stewart
- Library
 - Barbara King and Michael Reeves
- Main Building
 - Chris Thornton and Vicky Wilson
- Science, Engineering and Math Center
 - Greg Hall and Max Simmons
- Social Sciences Center
 - Cecilia Pittman and Susan Tabor
- Visual and Performing Arts Center
 - Michael Boyle and Mark Schneberger
- Other - Aquatic Center
 - Roxy Butler

In addition, six students volunteered to participate and all six were included in TECT. Student participants included:

- Ethan Burchett
- Michael Caves
- Jennifer Pearsall
- Alison Pruett
- Mark Smith
- Rebecca Whitson

Furthermore, TECT had internal and external resources available throughout the two-month process. Resources included:

- Dave Anderson, Director of Information Technology Infrastructure
- Pat Berryhill, Executive Director of Institutional Advancement
- Paula Gower, Director of Marketing and Public Relations
- J.B. Messer, Director of Facilities Management
- Carlos Robinson, Extended Services Coordinator

- Ike Sloas, Director of Campus Safety and Security
- Lisa Vaughan, Coordinator for Risk Management
- Karen Wicker, Senior Vice President, Schnake Turnbo Frank | PR

TIMELINE

The following timeline was used to reach the goals and objectives of the group:

- March 3, 2010: Formation of taskforce announced
- March 3, 2010 - March 12, 2010: Solicit volunteers
- March 22, 2010: Identify participants
- March 26, 2010: First meeting (subsequent meetings held every Friday)
- May 7, 2010: On or before, submit recommendations to President Sechrist

RECOMMENDATIONS

After studying and discussing emails submitted via safetysuggestions@occc.edu and public forum comments, the taskforce split into five subgroups and each subgroup compiled a list of recommendations relevant to its subgroup emphasis to be considered by the entire taskforce.

The subgroups were:

- Subgroup 1 – Identification
- Subgroup 2 – Notification
- Subgroup 3 – External Communication
- Subgroup 4 – Internal Communications
- Subgroup 5 – Training

Recommendations that were time sensitive and most critical to everyday safety were submitted previous to this report. As a result, the work of the subgroups resulted in the development of 43 recommendations. The 43 recommendations were ranked by the members of TECT using the following criteria:

5 – The recommendation is very important to ensure timely emergency communication occurs at OCCC. Its importance suggests that it should be done as soon as possible – preferably in FY 2011.

4 – This recommendation is important to ensure timely emergency communication occurs at OCCC. Though the implementation can be delayed one or two years this rating assumes that the recommendation eventually will be carried out.

3 – While recommendation with a “3” rating may contain good ideas, implementation may be delayed from 1 to 3 years. Eventually, some form of the

recommendation probably should be implemented. A recommendation with this rating could also become more or less important as circumstances warrant.

2 – Though recommendations with a “2” rating may be important on a departmental or division level, a clear connection with institutional priorities is absent. Recommendations with this rating need more research and should be brought into closer alignment with other emergency communication initiatives.

1 – Recommendations with a “1” rating provide no clear relationship to ensuring timely emergency communications and should not be forwarded as a recommendation from the Timely Emergency Communication Task Force.

TECT reviewed the ranking of the 43 recommendations and determined that several of the recommendations were redundant in concept and, therefore, decided to combine several of the recommendations. (The language of the original recommendations was retained to ensure that the intent of the subgroup was not lost.)

TECT asserts that the following recommendations should be carried out as soon as feasible and, certainly, within the next 2 years to ensure timely emergency communication occurs at OCCC.

- All evening/weekend supervisors and staff should be trained with emergency procedures.
- Develop and implement a series of preapproved emergency communication messages with the assistance of Marketing and Public Relations, Safety and Security and other knowledgeable departments. Establishing the correct message in advance of the situation will allow the command center to activate the message if PR is unable to do so. Pre-established messages should include specific directions for all campuses and OCCC community members (i.e., “ALL CAMPUSES should shelter in place...do not come to any OCCC campus,” or “MAIN CAMPUS ONLY should shelter in place...all other campuses may continue normal operations,” etc.) Wording for “Shelter in Place” alert is confusing. It now says “Emergency warning, armed person on campus, shelter in place or exit the building immediately.” A suggestion is to end the warning with “...If you are within fifty feet of an exit leave immediately, otherwise shelter in place.”
- All faculty (fulltime and adjunct) should include an overview of Emergency Procedures during the first meeting of every class section, whether it is a 16-week, 8-week, Fast Track or Intersession class. This overview should include the information posted in each classroom by the IP phone, as well as information about the phones and what kinds of messages might be broadcast. There should be discussion about the location of shelter areas for persons in that classroom. The necessity of following the procedures during drills and the importance of drills should be emphasized. Supervisors of fulltime and adjunct instructors should be responsible for

communicating to instructors the requirement to provide information regarding Emergency Procedures.

- All course syllabi required to contain a statement about Emergency Procedures. This should become part of the Syllabus Check List in all divisions.
- Continued training and drills that emphasize different scenarios and that all alarms must be taken seriously.
- Signage for identification of safer areas for severe weather. Better education (more signage) on location and existence of emergency stairwells in the Main Building, Arts and Humanities, and the Health Professions Building to facilitate traffic flow during an evacuation. Directional signage to safe areas and to areas that are not safe and brightly-colored signage at stairwells for wheel chair users should be placed.
- Periodic equipment checks to find non-functional phones.
- Implement a unified alert/communications system to incorporate text messages to cell phones, e-mail to all OCCC accounts and phone calls or voicemail to cell phones. These should run immediately (not hours later) and simultaneously. Text messages and phone calls should be conducted on an opt-in basis, while e-mail should be sent to all OCCC accounts. These three tools would provide added communication to those in common areas of the campus, in addition to communicating vital information to those off campus (and keeping those individuals off campus).
- Two persons should be designated (alter number for size and location) for all buildings and two persons should be designated for all floors to serve as the official individuals to relay messages to other faculty, staff and students in times of emergency. These designated individuals will wear a special college ID or uniform (in the case of security guard) and will serve as the official persons to give all clear messages or other emergency communications. Each area of the college should identify key personnel, Emergency Wardens (EW), who will have specific duties during an emergency situation.
 - 1) The EW's should be people who can reasonably be expected to be in their specific area of responsibility the vast majority of the time. Operationally this means that these will be hourly employees (such as office workers, those employed by Recreation and Fitness, or lab personnel). During evenings and weekends when many offices are closed lab personnel will be even more important, particularly in the main building.
 - 2) Duties include:
 - a. Picking up and using the "emergency communication kit"
 - b. In cases of evacuation or weather related movement - directing individuals in pre-assigned common areas on where to go and what to expect.
 - c. Assisting Safety and Security and Facilities Management in communicating during a situation (fire evacuation or storm shelter situation) including communicating all clear or other appropriate messages.

- d. If appropriate, assist in all clear communications during shelter in place situations.
- 3) Although they may not be officially designated as Emergency Wardens it is probable that Administrators (Supervisors, Directors, Deans, President Cabinet Members) will assume that role if present, so they should all be trained accordingly.

The Emergency Wardens should work with others in their areas to train staff, faculty, and students in emergency procedures. The Emergency Wardens should try to ensure that their areas are in a state of preparedness at all times when the College is open. The Emergency Wardens should work with the division and others to develop Community Emergency Response Teams (CERT), learn from experiences in drills and real situations, and adjust training as needed.

- A working phone should be installed in ALL safer areas (including bathrooms and locker rooms). The phones should be set to BOTH speak and display the warning and all-clear messages—rather than only displaying the message. These phones should be tested monthly or at regular intervals.
- To ensure the college is aware of its personnel resources during an evening emergency, a list of fulltime and part time faculty and staff who are working in the evening should be generated each semester (updated when necessary, such as for five week and intersession class times) and provided to the Evening Administrator
- All OCCC new hires, including student employees, should be required to complete the Emergency Procedures training prior to employment.
- Areas should be equipped with an “emergency communication kit” that includes at least the following:
 - 1) Walkie-Talkies with earphones and charger. These should not be on the standard Safety and Security or Facilities Management channels. However, SS or FM should have access to the channel these radios operate on in order to give out information as needed including all-clear.
 - 2) Garment (hat or vest) that identifies the person as an employee (EW) of the College.
 - 3) First Aid Kit
 - 4) Lantern
 - 5) Bullhorn if appropriate

This kit should be easily available to EW’s as they respond to each type of emergency.

To support identification of employees during an emergency situation, a security box should be installed at the end of each hallway and perhaps inside each classroom to be accessed during emergency situations. At the time of the emergency, faculty/staff or others are to open the box, put on their brightly colored vests or other identifier, and follow the designated security plan. Only those with vests will be able to give

messages. Each division would be responsible for designating how the box of materials would be accessed—who has the keys.

- Continue use of Facebook/Twitter to disseminate information to the public.
- Shut down regular College phone lines to incoming calls – redirecting them to a recorded message. Research and implement a possible answering system to automatically answer incoming phone calls with emergency situation instructions (i.e., do not come to campus, watch local media, check website, etc.). This would eliminate distractions or added noise in departments while providing appropriate instructions to those off campus.
- Tie in existing fire alarm systems with speakers if possible.
- Accurate information and training for college operator.
- Strobe lights and P.A. system in Aquatic Center, College Union, & Arts and Humanities.
- The Health and Safety training program should be expanded to include Emergency Procedures training.
- In addition, the Emergency Procedures training should be accessible through MineOnline and the Employee Homepage.
- Current OCCC employees should be required to complete the Emergency Procedures training twice a year.
- Use (and expand number of) existing “flat screen” monitors to give visual cues (flashing light etc., and written instructions).

TECT further asserts that some form of the following recommendations should be implemented to ensure timely emergency communication occurs but implementation could, if necessary, be delayed from 1 to 3 years.

- Working satellite phones for Incident Commander and Public Information Officer.
- Establish partnerships with local radio and television media sources and communicate with those sources in the event of an emergency. While some

partnerships may already exist, listing those sources on the OCCC website would direct the campus community to turn to those sources for additional emergency information.

- Designate a Library staff person to clear 2nd floor during all alerts. This could be library staff or division of IT staff or both.
- Walkie-Talkie repeaters for Campus emergency vehicles.
- Identify and train multiple representatives at all satellite campuses (John Massey Center and FACE), in addition to key individuals responsible for evening and weekend operations. In the extreme event that the Main Campus and/or Marketing and Public Relations are unable to communicate, these individuals would be trained to provide basic information and emergency communications updates to the external community.
- OCPD Radio in OCCC command post.
- To aid in ensuring communications during emergency situations is coming from a designated source and to ensure that communications is two-way, the college should examine the National Pyramid Communications procedure.
- The College should work with OKC to gain access to the traffic light control boxes on May and on 74th so that they can be bypassed by SS or FM to facilitate rapid evacuation of the parking lot.
- All staff and faculty should wear a name badge clearly visible on their persons while serving in their official duties. This is only a suggestion and not recommendation.

TECT asserts the following recommendations may be important on a departmental or division level; however, a clear connection with institutional priorities is absent. These recommendations need more research and should be brought into closer alignment with other emergency communication initiatives.

- Install automatic gates at all campus entrances (Main Campus, John Massey Center, FACE). Gate would be an automatic arm that normally remains in the upright position, but could be lowered remotely (via command center) to keep traffic off campus in the event of an emergency. Gates would still automatically open to let those on campus exit the property. (Although this recommendation is not directly related to external communications, the group also feels that it is vital to continue researching and developing a more in-depth evacuation plan for emergency situations to help with traffic control.)
- Instead of a computer generated voice, we need a human voice on alerts so that students will take them seriously.

CONCLUSION

Dr. Paul W. Sechrist has articulated that OCCC's top priority is the safety and security of students, employees and visitors. TECT submits the recommendations delineated in this report in full support of the priority and believes that, once implemented, the combination of recommendations will advance the college's desire to become one of the safest institutions of higher education in the nation. While the incident of February 26, 2010 was unfortunate, the process of the taskforce has strengthened the campus and served as a tool to create a culture of preparedness for the future.