

2009 Herman Goldstein Award for Excellence in Problem-Oriented Policing

Agency: Northern Illinois University Department of Public Safety

Project Title: CAMPUS (Community Assault Mitigation Program for University Systems) Program

On February 14, 2008, the campus of Northern Illinois University experienced a deadly shooting. A heavily armed gunman entered a large lecture hall and began shooting. Five students and the shooter lost their lives. Eighteen members of the campus community were injured physically and hundreds were injured emotionally. As the campus recovered, the Department of Public Safety was dealing with several issues, including making students feel safe. The CAMPUS program was implemented during that process. Many understand the CAMPUS program by drawing parallels to the Federal Sky Marshall Program. Just as Sky Marshalls enter planes incognito and blend in as normal passengers, university police officers have enrolled in classes and attend those classes as regular students. The officers take tests, complete homework, and do all other things that the remaining students do. The officer is not identified as a member of the CAMPUS program. The officers are armed and undergo intensive training to become proficient in handling a shooting or equally precarious scenario. This training includes specialized marksmanship and high stress decision making. The job of a CAMPUS officer is more challenging than a Sky Marshall, in that a plane has limited space and no exits. A university academic building is more open and less controlled. Those entering the classroom are not screened nor are their bags checked. Therefore the officers are also trained in how to handle an active shooter encounter. They have received training in Special Weapons and Tactics (SWAT). For an officer to be part of the CAMPUS program, they must be an Emergency Medical Technician. These officers spend their time between semesters training in the aforementioned subject areas as well as High Risk Entry procedures and how to engage a suspect in close quarters. They do not intervene in low level incidents, such as a verbal argument between students. The success of the program hinges on the quality of the officers assigned and the identity of these officers remaining confidential.

The success of this program is measured through the campus climate and the reduced fear of crime. University academic buildings are now a hardened target. Students have expressed that they now feel safe attending class again in part due to this program as well

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as their confidence in the overall safety and security employed on campus. Nobody knows if a CAMPUS officer is in their class. Nobody knows how many CAMPUS officers are in the program. Much like the Sky Marshall program, part of the deterrent for would be attackers is not knowing if your plan will be foiled by a disguised police officer. This provides an incentive to criminals to take their plans elsewhere.

Scanning:

What was the nature of the problem?

Students were fearful that the previous school shooting would be replicated. They could not focus on class because they were watching persons in the periphery. Students did not feel safe going to class.

How was the problem identified?

The shooting occurred on February 14th. Classes resumed ten days later. During the first few days of classes, counselors were placed in every classroom on campus to provide an outlet for students to address their concerns. Counselors reported an increase in stress levels of students. Some students wanted to arm themselves and felt that was the best method for protecting themselves in class. There was an increased concern that a shooting could happen again. Additionally, the Office of Support and Advocacy was formed through the Division of Student Affairs to specifically address victims' concerns borne out of the shooting. Each student who was physically injured was assigned an advocate in the Division of Student Affairs to connect them to vital services and provide information to the University Administration about the welfare of these students.

Through their respective employee councils, instructional and support staff reported similar feelings to their leadership. Additionally, many employees sought the support and counsel of the Employee Wellness Office, which coordinated counseling services to employees affected by the shooting.

Who identified the problem?

The Counseling and Student Development Center relayed this information to the Department of Public Safety on behalf of the students they interacted with. Human Resources reported similar concerns based off of dialogues they had with employees.

How and why was this problem selected from among problems?

A primary goal of all institutions of higher learning is to provide an environment where students can learn. When students indicate that a roadblock to their learning exists, in this case fear that another shooting will occur, administrators must work to overcome that roadblock. Students and faculty could not focus on their tasks due to the increased level of fear.

What was the initial level of diagnosis / unit of analysis?

Students from all demographic groups reported these feelings. Employees ranging from PhD level professors to a Campus Parking Agent reported high levels of stress centered on this issue. It was determined that the problem was widespread enough that it affected a significant part of the campus population. The Counseling and Student Development Center reported a significant increase in student's seeking supportive counseling. The Counseling Center reported over a 100 percent increase in student seeking services immediately after the shooting.

Analysis

What methods, data and information sources were used to analyze the problem?

In addition to the extensive feedback received from students through the Counseling and Student Development Center, and employees through Faculty Senate, Operating Staff Council and Human Resources, focus groups were formed. The Chief of Police and other members of the Department met with a wide variety of constituencies including resident students, the Black Student Union, members of fraternities and sororities, and commuter students to name a few. An equal number of focus groups were made available to employees. Some examples of these included Faculty Senate, Intercollegiate Athletics and Student Housing and Dining. Qualitative data was gathered through these meetings,

were combined and trends were noticed. Specifically, these included improved residence hall access control, physical security improvements to classrooms and a means to reassure students that they are safe while attending class.

History: How often and for how long was it a problem?

This problem languished for the remainder of the academic term. Initially uniformed security guards were contracted from a private firm and placed in academic buildings during class times. The watchmen quickly lost credibility with the students, and widespread feelings were that they were ineffective and not accomplishing the objective of making the students feel safe. This was primarily because their professionalism and appearance were not consistent with the level of public safety service the students were accustomed to. Increased uniformed police presence was used to provide security in the academic buildings. As the term expired, the University Police knew that a more effective and long term solution would need to be put into place. The CAMPUS program was finalized during the summer term in 2008.

Who was involved in the problem and what were their respective motivations, gains and losses?

Students and employees expressed their feeling, which helped the Department of Public Safety to identify the problem. Widespread feeling was that it was up to the university administration and Public Safety in particular to solve the problem. Administrators realized that if students don't feel safe, they cannot learn, and if students cannot learn at our institution, they will go elsewhere. In order to provide a safe environment, Chief Grady and the Vice President of Finance and Facilities began the process to make the CAMPUS program a reality.

What harms resulted from the problem?

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In addition to students and faculty wanting to arm themselves, fear of further crime harmed the academic achievement of an uncounted number of students. Students were preoccupied with fear and as such could not focus on their studies. This was evidenced by requests from faculty members for officers to post outside of their classroom, increased requests for escorts, and controversy over whether classroom doors should remain open or shut and apprehension when a student would walk into a class late. The success of the institution hinges on the ability to recruit and retain students. The perception that NIU was not a safe place to work or study had the potential to force the institution to reduce in size or even close. Thankfully, administrators saw this and invested in public safety by increasing the size of the agency and providing the resources needed to start the CAMPUS program.

How was the problem being addressed before the problem-solving project? What were the results of those responses?

After the campus shooting, unarmed uniformed security guards were placed in the academic buildings. These guards lacked professional demeanor and appearance. Uniformed officers increased presence in academic buildings for the remainder of the term, but could not be in every building at all times. This was mildly effective because students only had that sense of safety when they saw the uniformed officer. The CAMPUS program would address this problem because not knowing when a police officer is present in the room leads people to believe that there is always a possibility that one is present. People therefore act on the assumption that an officer is present at all times.

What did the analysis reveal about the causes and underlying conditions that precipitated the problem?

Analysis through the focus groups revealed that the undetected entry of the heavily armed gunman into the lecture hall causing the shooting precipitated the problem to the point of causing fear among students and staff.

What did the analysis reveal about the nature and extent of the problem?

This analysis, taken again from the focus groups, revealed that the extent of the problem was widespread throughout the University community, and effected students, faculty and staff. While the CAMPUS program was being created, it was determined that classrooms were not the only place that could be affected if an armed shooter came back to the university. Therefore, a further caveat was introduced. When the CAMPUS officers are not in class, they (like regular students) will frequent other places that students go. Increased protection was provided to places such as the Student Center, Founders Memorial Library and Student Recreation Center. It was further determined that CAMPUS officers should attend athletic events in their role, and large scale contests such as basketball and football were a great place for CAMPUS officers to be.

What situational information was needed to better understand the problem?

Situational information needed to understand and address this problem included determining how to place armed officers into the academic environment. The continued success of the program will be determined on whether these officers can insert themselves in this role successfully. Where and when to place these officers presented an interesting challenge initially.

Was there an open discussion with the community about the problem?

As stated earlier, Sergeants, Lieutenants and the Chief of Police spent many hours with many focus groups from across the university. These included student groups from across campus to include commuter and residence students, cultural and ethnic groups such as the Black Student Union, the LGBT student group, and representatives from the Women's Resource Center. Police administrators attended meetings of student organizations to include Fraternities and Sororities, Academic Groups, and even groups of students who belonged to no formal organization through open meetings. Faculty and

staff were included in these discussions through their employee councils. Finally, the newly created Office of Support and Advocacy provided a forum for those who wanted to make individual comments about this problem or to suggest a method to solve it. A more informal means to solicit feedback was used. Officers were previously given meal cards to be used in the student cafeterias. The caveat was that officers must be eating with groups of students. The question of how to make these students feel safer often came up in this informal setting and that feedback was filtered back to administrators and ultimately was helpful in designing the CAMPUS program.

C. Response

What range of possible response alternatives were considered to deal with the problem?

In addition to the CAMPUS program, other alternatives that were considered included the widespread installation of video cameras in all hallways and classrooms. Documented cases, such as the Columbine shooting, point out that cameras provide no deterrent value to a school shooter, and only record the incident. Physical security surveys have been conducted on every building on the campus. These surveys determined that installing and monitoring all of these cameras would have been difficult and somewhat intrusive. While the camera is there at all times, it would merely record an incident for solving the crime after. It might provide early intervention if a problem were occurring but response time would still need to be accounted for. The call for arming students and staff was quickly ruled out, because in the event of a shooting, responding officers would be unsure of who was a shooter and who was trying to intervene. Requiring clear backpacks was considered, but was ruled out based on student feedback. Placing uniformed officers in classes was considered but quickly deemed as not as effective because a uniformed officer would be easily noticed and those rooms without a uniformed officer would be easily discovered and exploited. Additionally, there have been cases where shooters specifically target armed police officers.

What responses did you use to address the problem?

As stated earlier, the initial response was to place uniformed police on patrol around the campus in higher numbers. Private security guards were placed in the academic buildings. Students who previously worked at the front doors of residence halls were replaced with a private security contractor to conduct access control. After extensive analysis and consideration, the CAMPUS program was deemed the best solution to the problem.

How did you develop a response as a result of your analysis?

The analysis revealed that students were not comfortable with the initial response. They felt that the increased presence of so many assisting police agencies was inhibiting a return to normalcy and increased their anxiety. Additionally the watchmen placed in the academic buildings were not serving a true deterrent to further problems. It was further determined that a uniformed police officer in each building or each classroom was not practical. Creative problem solving determined that the problem was similar to that faced by the aviation industry and thus the solution that was working on airplanes could be modified and used to solve a similar problem faced in the academic environment.

What evaluation criteria were the most important to the department before implementation of the response alternatives?

Effectiveness and credibility were the most important criteria. The program needed to have credibility in the eyes of the community. As the community healed, it was critical that they saw the Department of Public Safety as a credible agency that would protect them before, during and after a crisis. Even though the response efforts to the February 2008 shooting were lauded around the country, the community was looking for reassurance that everything was being done to continue to provide proactive programming to reduce the chance of another incident. The program also needed to be effective. The officers assigned needed to fulfill the roles they were placed in. They

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needed to be inconspicuous yet omnipresent. The officers needed to remain in role and not revealed to the community.

What did you intend to accomplish with your response plan?

The intent was to reduce anxiety among students and staff and to provide an environment where the students, faculty, staff and visitors could move on from the shooting and resume their studies in a comfortable environment. The response plan needed to have a deterrent effect while increasing the capabilities to respond. The response plan also needed to reduce the potential for mass casualties if something were to happen.

What resources were available to help solve the problem?

Thankfully, administrators continued to provide the Department of Public Safety with the resources needed to accomplish the solving of this problem, which included increased personnel, training and equipment. Funding was available to place the needed amount of officers into the program after receiving exceptional training in SWAT (special weapons and tactics) and marksmanship. These officers were already trained as emergency medical technicians at the basic level. Officers placed in the CAMPUS program were trained in Hazardous Materials to the Technician B level.

What difficulties were encountered during response implementation?

The only difficulty initially encountered was keeping the identity of some officers involved in the program private. For the integrity of the program, one officer needed to be removed after it was divulged that he was a member of the CAMPUS program.

Who was involved in the response to your problem?

The administration of the department developed the specific aspects of the program. Sergeants were asked to provide feedback and to solicit information from the community regarding their feelings about the program.

Assessment

What were the results? What degree of impact did the response plan have on this problem?

After the program was disclosed to the media, the community was aware of its intent and purpose. The community was asked for their feedback and it was overwhelmingly positive. Focus groups were visited again by the department and have reported that they felt the program was innovative and creative. They have also reported that the program has made them feel safer. The fact that the students cannot predict if a CAMPUS officer is or was in their classroom was positive. The students reported that in most cases they did not want to know if an officer was in their class. The faculty also responded positively.

What were your methods of evaluation and for how long was the effectiveness of the problem-solving effort evaluated?

Focus groups and active personal solicitation of feedback were used. The Department of Public Safety employs approximately 70 student employees. These employees represent a cross section of the university community. They were extremely helpful in getting a pulse on the student population and their feelings on this program. The sergeants overseeing these employees would frequently solicit feedback from them. The formal meetings with specific constituencies and organizations were used to gain feedback as well. Officers assigned to residence halls attended floor meetings to help gain understanding from residential students. A sergeant was assigned to work closely with the Office of Support and Advocacy. She was given an office within this department, attended their staff meetings and developed positive and lasting relationships with those students directly

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impacted by the shooting. Informal lunch meetings with students using the residence hall meal cards have also been greatly effective in soliciting individualized feedback from students and staff. The solicitation of feedback lasted the entire academic year this program was in place and will continue indefinitely.

Who was involved in the evaluation?

The Coordination, Analysis and Programming (CAP) Division of the NIU Department of Public Safety is charged with gathering feedback about police operations from the NIU community. The officers in this division provide surveys to victims, witnesses and suspects who interact with our officers. As an added responsibility, survey instruments were designed to evaluate the CAMPUS program. The officers solicited feedback from the community about the program, which showed overwhelming support and acceptance of the concept.

Were there problems in implementing the response plan?

Quick coordination of logistics was initially challenging. Officers needed to be selected and trained during the summer prior to classes. This was accomplished but required considerable effort.

If there was no improvement in the problem, were other systemic efforts considered to handle the problem?

The agency felt that this problem would continue unless addressed. Instead of waiting to see if the problem would improve on its own, we decided to be proactive and creative by developing this solution. Leaving it unaddressed was never an option. Other efforts put into place to improve the perception of a safe campus included:

1. Contract security personnel provide access control at the entrance to each residence hall with a focus on access control. These guards check identification of all who enter the residence halls to insure they live in the building they are trying

- to enter. Guests must be with a resident and must be registered. These guards also provide extra eyes and ears for the Department of Public Safety. They are given radios and report concerns to the dispatch center.
2. Many officers are already trained as Physical Security Specialists by the National Crime Prevention Institute at the University of Louisville. These officers conducted extensive security surveys of all campus buildings to analyze the security procedures already in place and to address any vulnerability.
 3. All police officers and many dispatchers are trained as Emergency Medical Technicians as part of the standard training program. This was invaluable during the shooting, as the officers were able to render aid while the scene was not secure enough for paramedics to enter. Some officers are trained as paramedics. New police officers hired by the department are enrolled all officers in EMT class. Several more officers have been enrolled in the paramedic program that commences in August. Having trained medical responders on campus as a first line of care increases the level of patient care provided.

What response goals were accomplished?

Improving the feeling of safety among the students and staff who call NIU their home away from home was accomplished. Focus groups and individual students surveyed report that they feel NIU is a safe place to live, work and socialize.

How did you measure the results?

The results were measured through qualitative data gathered by NIU Public Safety employees during ongoing meetings (formal and informal) they had with a wide variety of student and employee groups. They were also gathered through quantitative data gathered through the surveys.

What data supported your conclusions?

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Enrollment and retention data supported the qualitative information that the Public Safety staff was hearing. No notable reduction in students was noted by the campus office that measures these data. Very few students noted that they left NIU this year due to a fear of crime or because they felt the campus was unsafe.

How could you have made the response more effective?

Perhaps implementing the program sooner may have increased effectiveness. However, the shooting occurred in February and officers needed to be selected and trained. Having the program in place by August 2008 was deemed to be a more achievable goal.

Was there a concern about displacement?

The Department of Public Safety has as its primary goal the safety and welfare of the NIU community. The prospect of a shooter choosing another university because the CAMPUS program deters them from choosing NIU as the site of another shooting has been addressed. There have been numerous inquiries from other universities about the program and assistance has been sought from those universities about how to implement the program elsewhere. The department remains committed to providing guidance to any other university that solicits such assistance. It is hoped that if similar programs are in place at many schools, the problem will not be displaced but instead eradicated.

Will your response require continued monitoring or a continuing effort to maintain your results?

The program will need to be constantly evaluated. Its success hinges on having the proper officers assigned, new students being aware of the program and constant advertising to insure it remains effective. Through an online training program, students will be exposed to the CAMPUS program along with ways to seek assistance should they need it.

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Appendix 1: ANNOTATED BIBLIOGRAPHY

James N Logue. (2008). Violent Death in American Schools in the 21st Century: Reflections Following the 2006 Amish School Shootings. *The Journal of School Health*, 78(1), 58-61. Retrieved May 11, 2009, from Research Library database. (Document ID: 1423105521).

This article examines the phenomenon of school shootings in America. The author, James Logue, is affiliated with the Pennsylvania Department of Health. This article outlines the October 2, 2006, shootings at the West Nickel Mines Amish School which resulted in the homicides of 5 female students and the suicide of the adult male perpetrator. This was the 19th violent death incident in Pennsylvania schools since 1992 and the 9th such incident of the 21st century in the state, based on data collected by the National School Safety Center. This article provides a much needed background for many other items in this list, including the justification that school shootings are on the rise and research related to them and their effect on responders is lacking.

Lerner, M. D., Volpe, J. S., & Lindell, B. (2004). *A practical guide for university crisis response*. New York: The American Academy of Experts in Traumatic Stress.

Universities are unique entities. Crisis response on campuses differs from life outside of academia. This article discusses some of the finer points in that response. The guide referenced in this report can be useful in my crafting of recommendations.

Albert H Fein, Nancy S Isaacson. (2009). Echoes of Columbine: The Emotion Work of Leaders in School Shooting Sites. *The American Behavioral Scientist*, 52(9), 1327. Retrieved May 11, 2009, from ABI/INFORM Global database. (Document ID: 1680449071).

This article examines data taken over a nine year period from those related to the Columbine School Shooting. It analyzes their understanding about what feelings were appropriate or inappropriate in crisis situations.

James Alan Fox, Jenna Savage. (2009). Mass Murder Goes to College: An Examination of Changes on College Campuses Following Virginia Tech. *The American Behavioral Scientist*, 52(10), 1465. Retrieved May 11, 2009, from ABI/INFORM Global database. (Document ID: 1699099381).

This article examines suggestions made in Task Force reports related to the shootings at Virginia Tech and Northern Illinois University. The author examines the negative consequences that some of the recommendations may have on the campus community and the responders.

Schwarz, Eitan D, Kowalski, Janice M. (1993). Malignant memories: Effect of a shooting in the workplace on school personnel's attitudes. *Journal of Interpersonal Violence*, 8(4), 468. Retrieved May 11, 2009, from Research Library database. (Document ID: 5855627).

The authors, researchers at Northwestern University, used data they gathered from children and staff at a school where a woman came into the school and killed one student and wounded five others. Researchers conducted evaluations at various intervals including five months after the shooting. The research instruments used included: An attitude survey designed by the authors, The *Reaction Index*, which is designed to measure PTSD, and the *Beck Depression Inventory* among other instruments.