

## **CRITICAL INCIDENT PREPAREDNESS AT SACRAMENTO STATE**

### **Background**

In light of the recent tragic events at Virginia Tech, many have asked how the Sacramento State campus is prepared to deal with an event of this nature or other critical incidents. Any event of this magnitude presents formidable challenges to all involved – from those who were victimized to the responders charged with handling the situation. While there is no panacea for such occurrences, having a plan in place ahead of time and remaining vigilant will continue to be our best resources.

The Sacramento State campus has been and remains an extremely safe environment and enjoys one of the lowest crime rates in the CSU system. With more than 300 acres, a population of more than 30,000 students, staff, and faculty, Sacramento State is a reflection of the surrounding community. Our campus, like other publicly accessible institutions, can be vulnerable to unpredictable acts. While it is impossible to prepare for every eventuality, Sacramento State has taken a number of steps to be ready for possible emergencies.

### **State of Preparedness**

Sacramento State has its own police department which is staffed 24 hours a day, every day, by sworn police officers and trained dispatchers. The officers have received specialized training including responding to shootings, disaster preparedness, incident management protocols, and emergency first aid. University Police Officers patrol in marked patrol units, bicycles and on foot. Student Community Service Officers patrol the campus and serve as an extra set of “eyes and ears” for the department. The department also maintains strong working relationships with allied law enforcement and emergency service agencies in the surrounding community. More than 500 members of the campus community have received training on state and national emergency response protocols. Additionally, the campus community is notified of emergencies by e-mail, automated telephone information systems, building coordinators, websites, and various public address systems.

The campus community can report emergency situations to the University Police Department by dialing 9-1-1 from any campus telephone or dialing 916-278-6851 from cell phones and off campus. The campus is currently exploring state-of-the-art information dissemination systems to enhance our notification capabilities. The campus also has its own standalone Emergency Operations Center that coordinates responses to campus emergencies and is fully interoperable with outside agencies, emergency vendors, and other resources. First responders on campus are equipped with emergency radios, cell phones, and satellite communications.

## Personal Action Strategies

The key to personal safety during a critical campus incident is planning ahead.

- **Have a plan.** Think of what your alternatives in a situation would be. Know your personal limitations. Consider your options.
- **Know your environment.** Just as you would look around a parking lot at night or walk with a friend, always take stock of your environment. Where are the exits? How far is it to the door? Are there other ways out of an area? Can the area you are in be secured or provide shelter?
- **Know your resources.** What tools might be available to use as shelter or for defense? Are there means of communication available? What alternate means of escape or shelter are there?
- **Create time and distance.** The best method to stay safe from any threat is create time and distance. Whatever you can do to put distance between you and a threat or lengthen the time it takes for it to reach will help.
- **Shelter in place.** If you cannot put time and distance between you and the threat, use whatever means are available to shelter yourself from the threat. This may mean barricading yourself into a room, hiding as best you can, or covering yourself with materials that might be available. And remain sheltered until such time as you are advised the situation is safe by persons in authority.

### If a Person Appears With a Weapon

ESCAPE FROM THE AREA. Warn others as you go. When you can get to a phone safely, dial 9-1-1, and follow the emergency calls procedure. If you cannot escape – seek cover and try to escape when the opportunity presents itself. If necessary, barricade yourself in an office or other RETREAT location. As you move, try to call in with update information.

### If an Assault Occurs

NOTIFY POLICE AND CALL IN AN ASSAULT, ALONG WITH MEDICAL AID IF NECESSARY.

### Hostage incident

Remain calm and do not panic. Cooperate As Necessary. Do not argue with or challenge a hostage-taker. If Safe – escape QUIETLY, without taking any risks. Warn others as you go. When you can get to a phone safely, dial 9-1-1, and follow the emergency calls procedure. Your observations will be critical to the police and to the safety of others. Go straight to the police or call 9-1-1 to tell them your information immediately.